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Erie County Fire District Officers Association

SERVING THE NEEDS OF FIRE DISTRICT OFFICIALS THROUGH EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

Address correspondence to:
ECFDOA
Secretary John R. Wicka
6791 Apollo Drive
Lake View, New York 14085-9636

June 16, 2016

Honorable Edward A. Rath, III
Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street
Buffalo NY 14202

Dear Mr. Rath:

On June 15, 2016, the Erie County Fire District Officers Association (ECFDOA) went on record of being in opposition to proposed changes in the Erie County Charter, specifically recommendation #48, Section 1403 relating to Advisory Boards.

It is our position that the proposed changes to the overall concept of a "homeland security and emergency services advisory board" and the concept of a "sub-board" for fire advisory will be a disservice to the fire service in Erie County and the 94 fire departments which provide a vital service to our residents. The proposed composition of nine to eleven members is questionable inasmuch as it will disenfranchise many, if not all, of the major fire service representations that presently make up the current Fire Advisory Board. Presently, the board consists of representatives from the major fire service organizations (ECFDOA, Erie County Volunteer Firemen's Association and the Erie County Fire Chiefs Association) along with members from the county dispatch centers and town fire chief organizations. The current makeup (25 members) adequately performs its duties effectively and efficiently. It is our belief that reducing and/or eliminating vital and important representation in this important advisory role will reduce the effectiveness and oversight of the fire service in Erie County. We are also concerned that executive appointments, without the input of the fire service community, could lead to political maneuvering detrimental to the overall goals and accomplishments of the emergency response organizations.

As the process of modifying the county charter moves forward, we respectfully request that these concerns play an important and vital role in the discussions about the emergency service response and preparations. On behalf of the ECFDOA, and the Erie County fire service community, we appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward hearing from you soon concerning these issues.

Respectfully,

John R. Wicka
Secretary

Cc: Chairman John J. Mills
County Executive Mark Polancarz
Erie County Fire Districts

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