

June 15, 2008

We are asking firefighters and especially fire companies and fire districts to contact their state legislators to ask them to repeal the law requiring annual audits. We are hearing that these audits are costing \$5,000, \$12,000 and more! This will result in **MILLIONS OF DOLLARS** being spent statewide on these audits. Many fire companies cannot afford adequate protective gear for their members yet are being forced to spend this money each year on an audit.

This legislation was passed as a result of the newspaper reports revealing that Long Island fire departments spend money for lavish trips, x-rated channels and plush hotels while attending conferences. While we agree this was improper, all of these amounted to thousands of dollars in misspent funds. It seems absurd to spend MILLIONS of dollars over some abuses that amounted to thousands of dollars. We feel periodic audits by the State Comptroller's office, as has been done in the past, is sufficient to monitor fire district & fire company spending.

Furthermore, we fear that many excellent treasurers and company officers may resign from their positions rather than go through the hassle of these audits each year. The volunteer fire service is in need of more volunteers for these jobs and this legislation will serve to discourage people from filling these important jobs.

Please contact your local legislators!! Attached is a sample letter which you may use, but we would encourage you to include information specific to your fire company, such as the cost of your audit and what it will mean to you to comply with this audit EVERY YEAR. Also attached is a list of our local representatives and fire associations in our State who lobby in Albany on our behalf.

Please contact your local legislators and ask them to repeal this audit legislation!

Alice J. Fiacco, Secretary
Broome County Firefighters' Association

SENATE:

Senator Thomas W. Libous
1607 State Office Building
44 Hawley Street
Binghamton, NY 13901
phone: Broome: (607) 773-8771
Tioga: (607) 687-3399
Chenango: (607) 336-3401
Email: Senator@senatorlibous.com

ASSEMBLY:

Gary Finch
69 South Street
Auburn, NY 13021
315-255-3045
e-mail: finchg@assembly.state.ny.us
For towns of Lisle, Triangle, Nanticoke, Barker & Maine

Clifford Crouch
1 Kattelville Road
Suite 1
Binghamton, NY 13901
Phone: 607-648-6080
e-mail: crouchc@assembly.state.ny.us
For towns of Chenango, Fenton, Colesville, Sanford, Windsor,
Binghamton, Conklin, Kirkwood and Dickinson

Donna Lupardo
Binghamton State Office Building
17th Floor
Binghamton, NY 13901
607-723-9047
E-mail: lupardod@assembly.state.ny.us
For towns of Vestal and Union and City of Binghamton

Also send letters to these state fire organizations:

Firemen's Association of the State of New York
107 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12210-2269
Telephone: (518) 434-0987
Toll Free: (800) 232-7692
Fax: (518) 426-0139
FASNY@FASNY.com

NYS AFC

New York State Association of Fire Chiefs

1670 Columbia Turnpike

P.O. Box 328

East Schodack, NY 12063-0328

Phone: (800) 676-FIRE or (518) 477-2631

Fax: (518) 477-4430

Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York

LAWRENCE PIERCE, *President*

45 Charlemagne Drive

Mendon, NY 14506

Phone (585) 624 4673

Work (585) 588 2098

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E-mail: LPIERCE@ROCHESTER.RR.COM

[Please put this letter on your personal or fire company letterhead]

June 16, 2008

[Insert name & address of your state senator or representative]

[See attached list of Broome County's State representatives]

Honorable _____:

In 2006, as a result of abusive spending by a few fire departments, the legislature passed legislation requiring fire companies and fire districts with budgets of more than \$200,000 to be audited annually. We have heard from many fire districts and companies that they are finding the cost of these audits will be \$5,000, \$7,000, \$12,000 or MORE for EACH audit! With thousands of fire companies in New York State that need to be audited, the cost will be **MILLIONS OF DOLLARS!**

We are asking the Legislature to repeal this legislation requiring audits. This legislation punishes all fire companies and districts for the abuses of a few. It also places yet another burden on New York State taxpayers! While we do not condone what was done by these few fire companies, we feel it is absurd to mandate spending **MILLIONS OF DOLLARS** each year for audits as a result of **THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS** being misspent.

With many state fire companies struggling to purchase necessary fire equipment, we feel this money would be much better spent on equipment - turnout gear, thermal imaging cameras, PASS devices, or the rope rescue equipment now required by state law - items that would better protect the safety of our firefighters.

We fear that this will also cost us many valuable volunteers- treasurers and company officers who receive little or no money to do their jobs. The hassle of dealing with these audits, which will likely require them to take time off from their "real job", may result in many of them resigning over the additional burden caused by these audits.

Fire districts already file an annual report with the State Comptroller's Office (OSC). While currently fire companies do not, they could be required to submit a similar financial report. Between monitoring these annual reports and periodic audits, we feel there would be sufficient controls in place to prevent such abuses as we saw in Long Island.

We are asking our State Legislators to repeal the legislation that mandates these fire company and fire districts audits and to end this waste of taxpayer money.

Sincerely,

[Your name & signature]