



## HERKIMER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

No. 328

### RESOLUTION ADVOCATING AGAINST OSHA REFORMS IN NEW YORK STATE FOR FIREFIGHTERS

**Sponsored by: Committee on Public Safety & Emergency Management  
Committee on Administration/Veterans' Affairs**

WHEREAS, Herkimer County, nestled in the heart of New York State, is a rural county with a population of 60,139 individuals spread across 1,458 square miles, relying heavily on the essential services provided by its twenty-one (21) independent fire departments and two (2) ambulance corps; and

WHEREAS, these twenty-one (21) fire departments, comprised of eighteen (18) entirely volunteer organizations and three (3) paid departments and two (2) ambulance agencies, serve as the lifeblood of our community, dutifully responding to 17,787 emergency calls in the preceding year, embodying the spirit of selflessness and dedication that defines Herkimer County; and

WHEREAS, the personnel of these departments, comprised of 600 volunteers, 49 career firefighters, and 9 coordinators, form the backbone of our emergency response apparatus, tirelessly working to ensure the safety, security, and well-being of our residents, often at great personal sacrifice; and

WHEREAS, Herkimer County acknowledges, with gratitude, the commendable efforts of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in initiating measures aimed at enhancing the safety and welfare of our invaluable emergency responders; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the strides made in bolstering emergency responder safety, Herkimer County harbors legitimate concerns regarding the future accessibility, affordability, and efficacy of emergency services within our jurisdiction; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that Herkimer County, mindful of its responsibility to safeguard the interests and welfare of its constituents, hereby expresses its reservations and respectfully requests that OSHA, in conjunction with our esteemed state and national officials, give due consideration to the following points of contention and areas of improvement pertaining to the current proposed OSHA 1910.156 document:

1. Extending the public comment period beyond the prescribed deadline of June 21, 2024 by a minimum of 45 days, thereby affording our officials adequate time to meticulously review the voluminous 608-page document and formulate comprehensive, fact-based comments reflective of our community's unique needs and circumstances;
2. Facilitating the organization and conduct of in-person public comment sessions to provide a platform for stakeholders to voice their concerns, insights, and recommendations in a transparent and inclusive manner;
3. Ensuring equitable and substantive representation of volunteer firefighters in the proposal process, proportionate to their significant contribution to emergency services nationwide, thereby fostering a balanced and representative discourse that accounts for the diverse perspectives and interests at play;
4. Simplifying and expediting the incorporation of referenced standards (22 in total) into the proposed standard to enhance clarity, accessibility, and comprehension, thereby facilitating widespread dissemination and implementation across our diverse emergency response landscape;

5. Reevaluating the intended audience and scope of the standard to accommodate the varying regulatory frameworks and classifications of volunteer firefighters across different states, ensuring equitable treatment and compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
6. Transforming the proposed standard into a dynamic, adaptive "living document" capable of evolving in tandem with emerging national needs, technological advancements, and best practices, thereby obviating the need for periodic overhauls and updates to address obsolescence and inefficiency;
7. Identifying and prioritizing additional safety measures and protocols that can be expeditiously implemented with minimal resource expenditure and manpower requirements, thereby augmenting the resilience and effectiveness of our emergency response infrastructure;
8. Collaborating closely with stakeholders to develop a standardized framework that strikes a judicious balance between economic feasibility and technical efficacy, thereby ensuring the sustainability and viability of our emergency response initiatives in the long run;
9. Instituting a formal, structured negotiation process characterized by transparency, accountability, and active engagement, thereby fostering a culture of collaboration, consensus-building, and mutual respect among all parties involved;
10. Embracing these recommendations and initiatives in a concerted effort to uphold the safety, well-being, and resilience of our dedicated emergency responders, while concurrently safeguarding the interests and resources of our taxpaying constituents.

and, be it further

RESOLVED, that in adopting this resolution, the Herkimer County Legislature reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the principles of safety, equity, and inclusivity, and pledges to work collaboratively with all relevant stakeholders to address the pressing concerns and challenges confronting our emergency response infrastructure in the pursuit of a safer, more resilient, and prosperous future for all; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this Resolution be forwarded to Governor Kathy Hochul, Assemblyman Brian Miller, Assemblyman Robert Smullen, Senator Mark Walczyk, Senator Joseph A. Griffo, NYSAC, OSHA, and the National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health.

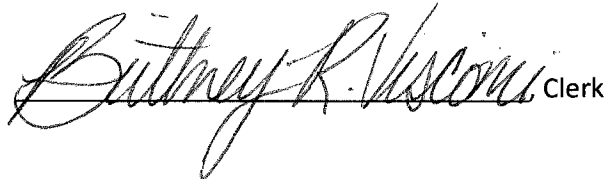
Dated: October 2, 2024.

STATE OF NEW YORK            )  
COUNTY OF HERKIMER        )     SS.  
LEGISLATURE CHAMBERS        )

I, BRITTNEY R. VISCOMI, Clerk of the Legislature of Herkimer County, do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing copy of Resolution No. 328 with the original duly adopted by the Herkimer County Legislature at a regular session held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of October, 2024, and that the same is a true copy of said original and of the whole thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name and affixed the official seal of said Legislature on this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of October, 2024.

L.S.

 Clerk