



Testimony Regarding Rising Fire Apparatus Costs and Extended Delivery Times Fairview Township Fire Department – New Cumberland, Pennsylvania

Good morning,

I appreciate the opportunity to speak regarding a significant challenge facing the Fairview Township Fire Department and fire service agencies across Pennsylvania and the nation: the rising cost of fire apparatus and the dramatic increase in manufacturing and delivery times.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, fire apparatus could generally be purchased at substantially lower costs and delivered within a predictable timeframe. Depending on the type of apparatus, departments often experienced delivery periods of approximately 16 to 24 months, allowing municipalities to plan replacement schedules, manage budgets, and maintain reliable emergency response capabilities.

Since COVID-19, however, the fire apparatus market has changed significantly. Departments now face increased costs driven by inflation, supply chain disruptions, labor shortages, higher raw material prices, and increased demand for specialized emergency equipment. Components such as chassis, electronics, steel, aluminum, pumps, and computer systems have all experienced cost increases and availability issues.

At the same time, delivery schedules have expanded considerably. Apparatus that once arrived within a year may now require 3.5 to 4.5 years from order to delivery, depending on manufacturer production schedules and component availability. These delays make it difficult for fire departments to replace aging equipment on time and force departments to operate apparatus longer than originally intended, increasing maintenance costs and reliability concerns.

For Fairview Township Fire Department, this issue directly impacts long-term planning, budgeting, and emergency preparedness. Fire apparatus are not discretionary purchases; they are essential public safety assets that protect residents, businesses, schools, and emergency responders. Delaying replacement due to cost increases or manufacturing

delays can affect operational readiness and create challenges in maintaining dependable emergency response capabilities.

In practical terms, a vehicle that may have cost significantly less prior to 2020 can now cost hundreds of thousands of dollars more, requiring municipalities and departments to reconsider funding strategies, capital improvement planning, and procurement timelines. Because of lengthy manufacturing delays, departments must now begin planning years in advance rather than months.

This testimony is not intended to suggest mismanagement or unnecessary spending, but rather to explain the economic realities currently affecting emergency services nationwide. Fairview Township Fire Department must continue to plan responsibly to ensure that firefighters have safe, reliable apparatus available to respond to emergencies while balancing fiscal responsibility to taxpayers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Eric Hawkins

Fire Chief

Fairview Twp Fire Dept