

RESOLUTION OPPOSING OSHA'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE STANDARD AS CURRENTLY PROPOSED

WHEREAS, the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recently released its proposed Emergency Response Standard, outlining new standards for emergency response personnel and agencies, both volunteer and paid; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Forestburgh's emergency response leaders have shared grave concerns with one another and this Board about this proposal, should it be enacted; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Forestburgh echoes the sentiment of the Sullivan County Legislature's Resolution 396-24; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Forestburgh's Fire Departments are completely volunteer and operate on small, taxpayer-supported budgets; and

WHEREAS, the proposal's "one size fits all" approach makes it virtually impossible for rural fire districts to implement without significant tax hikes and costly procedural changes, including the hiring of clerical staff and as much as a 40% increase in annual budgets in order to maintain compliance; and

WHEREAS, the time given to review the proposal has not been sufficient, with comments due by July 22, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the NYS Association of Counties, Conference of Mayors, Association of Towns and other large organizations have agreed this proposal threatens to deeply harm, even shut down, struggling fire departments across New York State and beyond;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Forestburgh joins firefighters and advocacy organizations in demanding OSHA make changes to this proposed rule that would not be unduly burdensome on our volunteer first-responders serving rural areas such as ours; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town of Forestburgh requests the comment and review period be extended at least to September 21, 2024, as requested by the Sullivan County Legislature, to permit a thorough understanding of the impacts of this proposal; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town of Forestburgh asks our Federal representatives to join it in advocating for an OSHA proposal that is technically and economically feasible for small-sized emergency response agencies such as those that serve the Town of Forestburgh and Sullivan County.