

ASPINWALL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

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April 10, 2014

State Representative
Dom Costa
6808 Greenwood Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Dear State Representative Dom Costa;

I am drafting this letter on behalf of the Aspinwall Volunteer Fire Department to express our concern and ask for your assistance by looking into the new system the Pennsylvania State Police have put into place for dispatching towing companies to traffic incidents on the state highways which run through our response district; namely PA State Route 28. Our primary concern and mission is the safety of the public we serve and our volunteer emergency responders and firefighters.

It has recently come to our attention that the new procedure the Pennsylvania State Police are utilizing to dispatch a towing company to a traffic incident is as follows:

- The trooper arrives on scene, surveys the incident and the conditions of the vehicle(s), gets statements from the driver(s) and then sends a request for a tow, or more if required, to the PCO at the Kittanning Barracks.
- The PCO then forwards the request to a dispatch company in the State of California who will then chose a towing service and send a computer generated request for services to that towing service.

It goes without saying that our organization was neither advised nor consulted by the Pennsylvania State Police regarding this drastic change in procedure. If we had been we would have gladly given feedback, or at the very least been more prepared for the delays this system has wrought on our emergency responders. Just over the last four months, our department has seen a significant increase in the amount of time spent on the scene of motor vehicle accidents due to the delays caused by this new procedure.

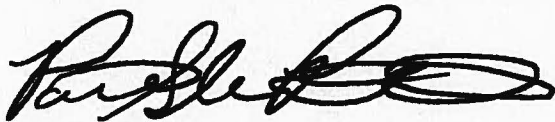
In the Firefighter Fatalities in the United States in 2012, released by the US Fire Administration in August of 2013, 60% of firefighter fatalities at Non-Fire Incidents were at the scene of a motor vehicle accident. The report also shows that over 10% of all the firefighter fatalities in 2012 occurred in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. We do what we are called to do Mr. Costa, and we're proud to serve our community and our neighbors, but we don't see the sense of inviting the risk of injury or death when there are perfectly capable and responsible tow services within a mile of any point along our response area.

We are volunteer firefighters and emergency responders. We give of our time selflessly and without compensation, unlike the Pennsylvania State Trooper. We donate our time and services to the community and when the incident is done we return to work at our paying jobs. This new system of dispatching tow services, currently employed by the Pennsylvania State Police, is putting the men and women of our fire department, at risk with every unnecessary minute we have to spend on the state highways at motor vehicle incidents. The delays we have seen because of this new procedure also put the public at risk; the public being our neighbors, our spouses, and our children.

We have talked with the various Troopers and they and their superiors are aware of the problem. Apparently neither they nor their superiors at the local barracks in Kittanning have any voice regarding this matter. It is for these reasons that we are reaching out to you Mr. Costa. This new system of tow service dispatch and the risk it conveys to the safety of our volunteer emergency responders and the public is unacceptable. We would like to see the program rolled back to utilizing the nearest responsible tow service instead of calling California to get a tow truck to respond in western Pennsylvania.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this issue.

Yours in Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Glen Rockhill". The signature is stylized with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Lt. Patrick Glen Rockhill, EFR, FF2
Secretary, Aspinwall Vol Fire Department