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JOINT PUBLIC STATEMENT ON THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FIRE/EMS STAFFING REALLOCATION PLAN

GREENBELT, MD -- On June 28, 2024, the City of Greenbelt, the Town of Berwyn Heights, and the City of College Park filed a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) in response to Prince George's County's Fire Staffing Reallocation Plan that would reassign career personnel from Fire/EMS Stations 814 Berwyn Heights and Fire/EMS Station 835 Greenbelt. We are very concerned that this plan jeopardizes the safety of our residents, businesses, and fire/EMS personnel. We have raised these safety concerns with the county, but unfortunately, no changes have been made. Therefore, we filed the TRO to allow time for further discussions and a resolution with the County before this plan goes into effect on July 1, 2024.

Earlier today, we misinterpreted the information received from the court clerk's office. As we await our hearing, our top priority is ensuring our communities' safety. Our primary concerns with the County's Fire Staffing Reallocation Plan are twofold:

1. Inadequate Relief for Fire and EMS Personnel:

- Without the details and data, it is unclear that this plan adequately addresses the critical need for relief among our overworked Fire and EMS teams. We deeply value the dedication and hard work of both our career and volunteer firefighters. However, our fire safety personnel are experiencing burnout, and the reliance on volunteers cannot substitute for the essential presence of career firefighters.

2. Ensuring Resident Safety:

- The safety of our residents is paramount. The proposed plan's reliance on volunteers to maintain service levels raises serious concerns about the ability to provide timely and effective emergency responses. Local fire stations have indicated that they cannot meet the coverage needs within the proposed time frame.

We are steadfast in our commitment to work collaboratively with Prince George's County Fire Chief Tiffany Green and County Leadership to find viable solutions that benefit both our residents and our Fire and EMS personnel. We believe input and support must be garnered from all stakeholders, including career and volunteer firefighters, local municipalities, and community members.

We request the following steps to address the current crisis:

- **Establishing a Taskforce:**
 - Form a comprehensive taskforce that includes representatives from municipalities, career and volunteer personnel, and County Fire Leadership to collaboratively develop and implement a sustainable staffing plan that addresses the needs and concerns of all stakeholders.
- **Data Transparency:**

- Share comprehensive data and analysis to understand the true impact of staffing changes and to develop informed strategies that address both operational needs and personnel welfare.
- **Volunteer Support:**
 - Enhance support and incentives for volunteer firefighters, recognizing their invaluable contribution while also acknowledging their limitations in filling extensive coverage gaps.
- **Ongoing Engagement:**
 - Establish regular meetings with all relevant stakeholders to review progress, share updates, and adjust strategies as needed to ensure the plan evolves effectively to meet the community's needs.

We ask County Executive Alsobrooks and Fire Chief Green to reconsider the staffing reallocation plan and work with us to develop a more sustainable, effective solution that prioritizes the well-being of our Fire and EMS personnel and the safety of all residents.

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