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9TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY



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2370 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-5751
(202) 225-5782 FAX

ROBERT A. ROE FEDERAL BUILDING
200 FEDERAL PLAZA, SUITE 500
PATERSON, NJ 07505
(973) 523-5152
(973) 523-0637 FAX

<http://pascrell.house.gov>
bill.pascrell@mail.house.gov

Congress of the United States House of Representatives

November 30, 2018

Mr. Christopher Logan
Acting Assistant Administrator for Grant Programs
U.S. Department of Homeland Security/ FEMA
400 C Street S. W., 3N
Washington, DC 20472-3635

*Application No. EMW-2018-FO-05860

Dear Mr. Logan,

As the Chairman of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus, I am pleased to offer my support for the Leonia Fire Department's (LFD) application submitted to the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. This application is requesting a total of \$638,075 in funding to acquire and maintain eleven mobile and forty-four portable dual band (VHF/UHF) P-25 compliant radios. **This application is one of my top priorities for funding in 2018 in the 9th Congressional District of New Jersey.**

The Leonia Fire Department's number one priority is the safety of its members and the community it serves. The LFD responds to calls from the Bergen County dispatch system, which is incompatible with the LFD's twenty-one year old radio system. This causes conflict when dealing with dispatch calls, as it takes a significant amount of time to receive them. Through the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant, they will be able to update their equipment, which will last for another fifteen years. The LFD has a limited budget and they are unable to raise outside funds, restricting them from purchasing new radios due to budgetary constraints. By granting the LFD the funds they need, they will have the opportunity to focus on responding to each call quickly, efficiently, and safely.

Additionally, the LFD spends a significant amount of money repairing the existing radios, as the make and model of the majority of the radios have been taken out of production. The lack of reliable and efficient communications between firefighters can pose a serious danger to their safety. Several years ago, in a devastating house fire, one of Leonia's bravest ran out of air and lost consciousness while on the fire grounds. An investigative report found that inadequate radio communication was a major contributing factor to the near-death catastrophe. To prevent similar circumstances from occurring again, functioning and effective radios are a necessity.

Throughout my 22 years in the United States House of Representative, I fought at every opportunity to make sure our firefighters have the equipment, vehicles, training, and other resources they need to protect our citizens and their personal property. As the author of the FIRE Act, I understand that fire departments such as Leonia's are an integral part of our emergency management systems and require our utmost respect and assistance in their time of need. Furthermore, The Borough of Leonia is an area that is vulnerable to emergencies, and the urgency to provide safety for its citizens and first responders should not be overlooked.

I am pleased to support the Leonia Fire Department and respectfully ask that you look favorably upon their request, within the boundaries of applicable rules and guidelines. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Pascrell, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress