



CITY OF NEW YORK  
PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
BOROUGH OF STATEN ISLAND

JAMES S. ODDO  
PRESIDENT

BOROUGH HALL  
STATEN ISLAND, NY 10301

April 15, 2014

The Honorable Salvatore Cassano  
Commissioner  
New York City Fire Department  
9 Metrotech Center  
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Re: Brush Fire Units

Dear Commissioner Cassano:

I hope this letter finds you well.

Last night I had the honor of visiting and sharing a meal with the men of Engine 154 in Travis. As you know, I have a great deal of respect for the men and women of the FDNY and I try to visit with them as often as possible.

As fate would have it, as soon as we sat down for dinner a call came in for a brush fire at Western Avenue and Gulf Avenue, a fire that eventually made it to three alarms. Watching the guys who were on duty rush off to fight the fire reminded me once again that firefighters put their lives at risk with each and every call. The respect I have for all those who fight fires, already high, grew last night as I saw them leave their uneaten dinner to protect their fellow New Yorkers.

With that said, I am writing in reference to Brush Fire Units (BFU). It is my understanding that three out of the five BFU's assigned to Staten Island were destroyed during Hurricane Sandy. To date, those three BFU's have not been replaced. Furthermore, it is my understanding that one of the remaining BFU's is fifteen years old and is prone to breaking down.

Although I am not a trained firefighter, this situation appears to place Staten Island in harm's way, particularly during the current brush fire season.

Simply stated, we need those BFU's replaced as soon as possible.

While I understand that the three BFU's will likely not be available before the end of the spring brush fire season, I am asking that every effort be made to ensure their availability for the fall season.

I don't have to explain the geography of Staten Island to you or our susceptibility to brush fires on both our East and West shores. As a Staten Islander, you know it all too well.

I kindly ask that you provide me with details on when the three BFU's will be replaced so that our firefighters have that those tools available when fighting the inevitable brush fires.

Thank you for your time, courtesy, and consideration.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James S. Oddo', written in a cursive style.

James S. Oddo  
Borough President

JSO:cd