



State of Connecticut

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

STATE CAPITOL

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

The Honorable Ned Lamont
Office of the Governor
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

September 9, 2019

Dear Governor Lamont:

We write to urge you to approve the bonding of the Valley Fire Chiefs Regional Training School, a truly worthy, necessary, and important investment for public safety and this region. While politics all too often moves slowly, our volunteer firefighters respond to calls without hesitation at all hours, in all conditions, to protect those experiencing danger, distress, and tragedy. Fire training is time consuming, academically and physically rigorous, and expensive for volunteers who also hold full time jobs and have families. The State Firefighters' Association listed the Valley Fire School's construction and the PTSD bill as their top two priorities for the 2019 legislative session. With PTSD passed, it is now time to turn our full attention to ensuring proper emergency response training and public safety for southwestern CT.

To give you a bit of background, the Valley Fire School lost its location 20 years ago when it was discovered to be environmentally unsafe and toxic. Despite this, the Valley Fire School continues to operate (with much logistical difficulty) in a nomadic fashion--training volunteer and career firefighters, law enforcement personnel, fire police, EMS personnel, boards of education, various youth programs including but not limited to the Boy Scouts, and babysitting programs. Volunteer fire service in the Valley is not only deeply engrained in the region's culture (as many citizens and families support the service), but it is also a critical, free workforce that these municipalities cannot otherwise afford. Having a fire school to maintain, train, and draw new volunteers is vital to keeping this essential service going for the region.

It is also important to note that this school does not simply teach residents who live or serve in the Valley, but often draws firefighters who train at VFS from other regions of the state because of the VFS's strong reputation for high quality and efficient course offerings, including dual-courses, intensive versions of basic courses, and dynamic specialized training not offered at other schools. The courses are professional, highly technical, affordable, convenient, and varied. It is particularly important to note that the Valley Fire School trains more people per man hour than any other fire school in the state and holds the highest graduation rate in the state.

The Bond Committee's original appropriation was authorized more than a dozen years ago, and the Valley Fire School has stood "next in line" in recent years. The state has invested over \$2 million into the purchase of land for the Valley School, geologic and soil testing, and architectural renderings by the contractor. Most recently, the Valley Fire School completed its bid process for the second time, with

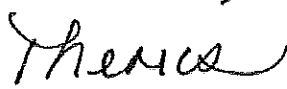
DAS confirming that the project can have shovels in the ground come spring if half of the required funding is released through a fall Bonding Commission agenda.

It is crucial that the Valley Fire School be bonded and we ensure that the volunteer fire services of this region have the facilities needed to keep strong, well-trained forces in place to continue services for our communities. Please do not hesitate to be in touch if you have any questions. We respectfully request that this item be placed on the next bond commission's agenda and bonded as soon as possible for the safety of our first responders and residents.

Sincerely,



Kara Rochelle
State Representative
104th District



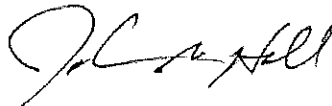
Themis Klarides
House Republican Leader
114th District



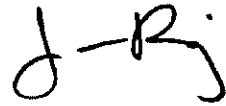
Raghib Allie-Brennan
State Representative
2nd District



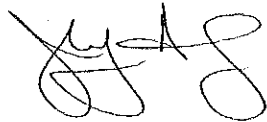
Edwin Vargas
State Representative
6th District



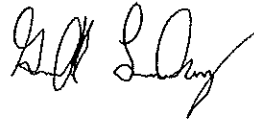
Joshua Hall
State Representative
7th District



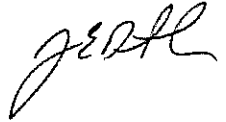
Jason Rojas
State Representative
9th District



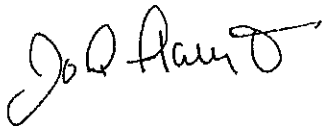
Jeff Currey
State Representative
11th District



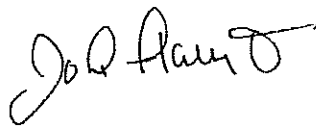
Geoff Luxenberg
State Representative
12th District



Jason Doucette
State Representative
13th District



John Hampton
State Representative
16th District




Gary Turco
State Representative
27th District



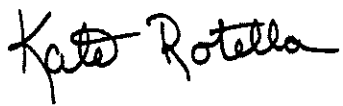
Kerry Wood
State Representative
29th District



Anthony Nolan
State Representative
39th District



Christine Conley
State Representative
40th District



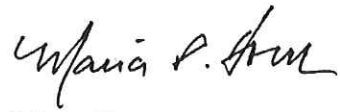
Kate Rotella
State Representative
43rd District



Pat Boyd
State Representative
50th District



Jane Garibay
State Representative
60th District



Maria Horn
State Representative
64th District



Josh Elliott
State Representative
88th District



Michael D'Agostino
State Representative
91st District



Robyn Porter
State Representative
94th District



Juan Candelaria
State Representative
95th District



Sean Scanlon
State Representative
98th District



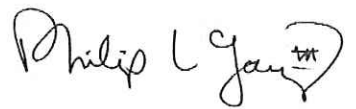
Quentin Phipps
State Representative
100th District



Nicole Klarides-Ditria
State Representative
105th District



Jason Perillo
State Representative
113th District



Phil Young
State Representative
120th District



David Labriola
State Representative
131st District



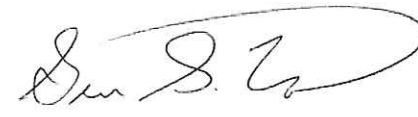
Cristin McCarthy Vahey
State Representative
133rd District



Anne Hughes
State Representative
135th District



Ken Gucker
State Representative
138th District



George Logan
State Senator
17th District



Eric Berthel
State Senator
32nd District

CC: Melissa McCaw, Secretary of the Office of Policy & Management
Jonathan Harris, Senior Advisor
Marc Bradley, Director of External and Constituent Affairs