



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 701

Resolution calling on The Regional Emergency Medical Services Council of New York City to review and revise the New York City Mutual Aid Mobilization System Protocol.

By Council Members Crowley, Comrie, Fidler, James, Palma, Seabrook, Gentile, Gennaro, Mark-Viverito and Chin

Whereas, On December 26, 2010, New York City experienced one of the most severe blizzards in its history; and

Whereas, The storm's significant snowfall, in conjunction with powerful winds, overwhelmed the City's emergency management efforts; and

Whereas, During the course of the storm more than 200 ambulances became stuck in the snow; and

Whereas, On December 27, 2010, the New York City Fire Department ("FDNY") reported a 1,300 call backlog of 911 emergency medical calls, while other reports indicated a 3-hour wait for critical medical calls and a 12-hour wait for non-critical medical calls; and

Whereas, According to FDNY Commissioner Salvatore Cassano, the City requested mutual aid from city and state ambulance providers in the early morning hours on December 27, 2010; and

Whereas, The Regional Emergency Medical Services Council of New York City ("REMSCO") is responsible to New York State for coordinating medical services in all five boroughs of New York City; and

Whereas, REMSCO's Mutual Aid Mobilization Protocol sets forth a uniform procedure for the request and utilization of the City's mutual aid partners, which include (i) eighteen voluntary hospitals, (ii) thirty-six community based volunteer ambulance companies, and (iii) fifteen private ambulance companies; and

Whereas, The Mutual Aid Mobilization Protocol is meant to help ensure a reliable and safe response by ambulance resources from New York City Emergency Medical Service (“EMS”) agencies to any incident within New York City; and

Whereas, According to reports, the City’s response to mutual aid was far from optimal with only a few of the city ambulance providers participating beyond what they are contractually obligated to provide; and

Whereas, Some of the ambulance providers who did not participate in the call for mutual aid cited various obstacles that deterred or prevented them from participating in the mutual aid mobilization including: (i) the belief that the FDNY waited too long to call for mutual aid; (ii) the assertion that EMS representatives changed the telephone number required for some ambulance providers to log into the 911 system without notifying providers; (iii) the unwillingness or inability of the City to assist mutual aid partners in freeing their ambulances from the snow; and (iv) the FDNY’s failure to issue radios to ambulance providers prior to significant snow accumulation; and

Whereas, REMSCO’s Mutual Aid Mobilization Protocol has remained unrevised since 2002; and

Whereas, REMSCO should review and revise its Mutual Aid Mobilization Protocol to foster greater mutual aid participation by city ambulance providers in the event of a large scale emergency by (i) establishing greater certainty regarding the appropriate time to call for mutual aid, (ii) ensuring an effective method is in place for participants to access the 911 system, (iii) requiring the FDNY to issue necessary equipment prior to a large scale emergency, and (iv) assuring the City’s assistance in removing other obstacles that may hinder mutual aid participation; and

Whereas, These revisions would assist in enhancing and increasing the level of participation in mutual aid, thereby increasing emergency ambulance service in a large scale emergency; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on The Regional Emergency Medical Services Council of New York City to review and revise the New York City Mutual Aid Mobilization System Protocol.

WJH
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