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From: Patenaude, Bernard Chief <bpatenaude@eastgreenwichri.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 2:39 PM
To: House Finance Committee
Cc: Scott Kettelle; Nota, Andrew
Subject: Bernard Patenaude, Fire Chief, 2021-H5118, For the bill
Attachments: Support letter for 2021--H5118East Greenwich Fire Department.pdf

Town of East Greenwich

FIRE DEPARTMENT

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February 24, 2021

Testimony for: **2021—H5118**

Bernard Patenaude, Fire Chief, 2021-H5118, For the bill

The East Greenwich Fire Department is in favor of 2021--H5118 and urges passage.

The Narragansett Bay Marine Task Force (NBMTF) is a group made up of fire department boats from shoreline communities to provide mutual aid, search, rescue, and firefighting assistance to all incidents on and adjacent to Narragansett Bay.

The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) response to the upper bay is 45 minutes to one hour, and they do not have firefighting nor advanced life support capabilities. The NBMTF is a force multiplier for the USCG allowing vessels with trained crews to be on scene quicker. The task force often trains with the USCG.

A recent example of the value of the NBMTF is the large fire on Prudence Island earlier this month. All of the off-Island firefighters were transported to the island

on NBMTF boats. The main water supply to fight the fire was provided by a NBMTF boat with many other NBMTF vessels standing by to provide more water if needed, shuttle equipment, or provide emergency medical aid and transportation to the firefighters.

Millions of gallons of petroleum and hazardous materials are transported to the ports of Providence, East Providence, Quonset, and Tiverton every year. The Task Force boats train to render aid in spills and to put booms into place to prevent further environmental disaster. Many of the vessels are CBRN qualified vessels crewed with Hazardous Materials technicians.

The costs to purchase, maintain, and operate, these vessels and to train the crews are born by the individual communities. No community has the resources to protect their stakeholders without mutual aid assets.

East Greenwich operates one of the NBMTF vessels, but it is currently out of service while we find funds for engine repairs. The funding available to us through this bill will be invaluable in instances like this and to keep our members trained to work in this environment.

Your passage of this bill helps all communities in Rhode Island by keeping our waterways and the commodities shipped through our ports safe.

Bernard L. Patenaude

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