



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Hearing Statement of Emergency Management & Technology Subcommittee Ranking Member Troy Carter (D-LA)**

### ***Stakeholder Perspectives on OSHA's Proposed Rule to Update the Fire Brigades Standard***

**June 4, 2024**

I want to thank our witnesses for being here today to discuss the Occupational Safety Health Administration's (OSHA) proposed rule to update the Fire Brigades Standard. I want to say from the outset that I fully support first responders and I appreciate the first responder witnesses before our Subcommittee today.

My understanding is that OSHA's proposed rule on the fire brigades standard is not necessarily a new idea and has its origins in some of the government's evaluations after September 11, 2001. I understand that the comment period for the proposed rule was issued by OSHA in February and the deadline for submitting comments has been extended. I encourage all stakeholders to provide feedback to OSHA on this proposed rule so that the Biden Administration, in its efforts to enhance the work environment for first responders, is well-informed with diverse perspectives.

I am eager to hear from our witnesses on how to strengthen this new proposed rule. Your insights will be valuable in ensuring that the standard effectively enhances the safety and health of all emergency responders. Along the same lines of looking at issues that impact first responders, I feel it important to acknowledge that hurricane season started on Saturday. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) warned that the United States could face one of its worst hurricane seasons in two decades.

I represent New Orleans, a place that is no stranger to disasters. The city has been at the forefront of disasters from Hurricane Katrina to Hurricane Ida. The aftermath of these hurricanes was nothing short of devastating, and climate change will only lead to more frequent and intense natural disasters.

More recently, across the United States, we have had an increase in tornado activity with "tornadoes touching down on all but two days between April 25 and May 27, which is 94 percent of days." In fact, last month was the most active month for severe weather since 2011. Over the Memorial Day weekend, deadly tornadoes killed at least 24 people, including children.

I take this Subcommittee's oversight duties very seriously. As we continue to see evidence of climate change, it is important for this Subcommittee to focus on our Nation's preparedness for disasters and I would encourage the Chairman and colleagues on the other side of the aisle to make addressing climate change a priority.

I, also, think it is important for the Subcommittee to confront cuts to FEMA's preparedness grants that were pushed by House Republican leadership. The 10% cut to the grant programs, including the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program, is a significant hit to our first responders. Congress can and should do better to support those who help our communities and I hope this Subcommittee will do more oversight of these grants.

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