

California Fire Service Leadership Alliance



CALIFORNIA
VOLUNTEER & COMBINATION
FIRE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION



California Tribal
Fire Chiefs' Association



LEAGUE OF
CALIFORNIA
CITIES

CALIFORNIA
CONTRACT COUNTY
FIRE CHIEF AGENCIES

February 20, 2025

National League of Cities
1301 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Members of the National League of Cities and Distinguished Members of Congress,

We, the undersigned members of the California Fire Service Leadership Alliance—comprising the California Fire Chiefs Association, the California Volunteer & Combination Fire Chiefs Association, the California Tribal Fire Chiefs Association, the Fire Districts Association of California, the League of California Cities Fire Chiefs Department, the California Contract County Fire Chief Agencies, and the California Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association—write to express our collective concern regarding the significant and growing crisis in the fire apparatus manufacturing and supply chain, as highlighted in a recent New York Times article, "Fire Departments Struggle as Private Equity Firms Acquire Equipment Suppliers"(February 17, 2025).

This issue, which stems from the increasing consolidation of fire apparatus suppliers by private equity firms, has led to severe production delays, cost increases, and a decline in the quality of essential firefighting equipment. The consequences of these disruptions are far-reaching, undermining our ability to ensure timely and effective responses to emergencies and ultimately compromising public safety.

Fire Chief Chris Nigg, President of the League of California Cities Fire Chiefs Department, has been a leading voice on this issue, and we fully support his efforts to raise awareness and advocate for meaningful action. We, as a coalition of California fire service leaders, firmly agree that the ongoing challenges facing fire departments nationwide are of urgent concern, and we call for immediate attention to the following issues:

Production Delays and Supply Chain Issues

Fire departments are facing extended delays in receiving critical equipment, which is impacting our ability to respond quickly to emergencies and serve our communities. We urge policymakers to prioritize initiatives that support a stable and reliable supply of fire apparatus.

Escalating Costs

The increased concentration of fire apparatus manufacturers under private equity ownership has led to inflated prices, creating financial strain on local budgets. This makes it more difficult for fire departments, particularly those in rural or underserved areas, to access the necessary equipment to protect lives and property.

Declining Equipment Quality

We are also deeply concerned about reports of reduced quality control in the manufacturing of fire apparatus, which has serious safety implications for firefighters and the communities they serve. We call for stronger oversight to ensure that fire equipment meets the highest standards of safety and reliability.

To address these critical concerns, we encourage the National League of Cities, members of Congress, and other key stakeholders to take the following actions:

- Support policies that foster competition – Encouraging a more diverse and competitive marketplace will help drive down costs and improve quality, ultimately benefiting fire departments and enhancing public safety.
- Facilitate legislative action to strengthen the supply chain – We urge legislative efforts that ensure fire apparatus manufacturers are held accountable for timely deliveries and high-quality production, ensuring that fire departments can respond to emergencies without delays.
- Advocate for funding to support fire departments – The rising costs of fire apparatus and the difficulties in procurement necessitate additional financial support for local fire agencies to help them maintain operational readiness and protect their communities.

Our fire service coalition is dedicated to the safety and well-being of the public, and we believe that addressing the growing crisis in fire apparatus manufacturing is a critical step in ensuring the continued effectiveness of our emergency response capabilities.

We look forward to collaborating with the National League of Cities, members of Congress, and other stakeholders to resolve this matter and strengthen our collective fire service efforts.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent issue. We remain committed to working together for the betterment of public safety.

Sincerely,

California Fire Chiefs Association


President Chief Brian Fennessy

Fire Districts Association of California


President Chief Eric Walder

Metropolitan Fire Chiefs


Chairperson Chief Dan Munsey

Tribal Fire Chiefs


President Chief Jason Keeling

Volunteer and Combination Fire Chiefs


President Chief Gilbert

Cal Cities Fire Chiefs Department


President Chief Chris Nigg

Contract County Fire Agencies Chiefs


Chairperson Chief Jason Weber