

August 19, 2024

To members of the New Hampshire Fire Standards and Training Commission,

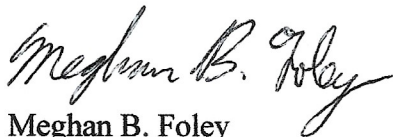
Please accept this letter and attached communication with New Hampshire Fire Academy Director Justin Cutting as written comments in regards to the proposed changes to the Fire administrative rules. These comments are directed specifically to the proposed changes to Fire 703.01 Transfers. I support these changes, which include the addition of subsection (c). My support is based on personal experience, as well as the challenges that I have observed New Hampshire fire departments face with recruitment.

In May, I sent a letter to Director Cutting regarding my concern that as an out-of-state firefighter, I would not be granted the same process as an in-state firefighter when changing employment from one department to another. Specifically, if out-of-state firefighters choose to apply to full-time career New Hampshire fire departments after their Candidate Physical Ability Test certificates have expired, they would have to retake the test. This is not the case for their New Hampshire counterparts. This matter is of particular interest to me, as I am a Vermont firefighter, but am a resident of New Hampshire with a New Hampshire issued CPAT certificate. I also live in area of the state where volunteer and on-call fire departments are struggling to recruit and retain members. These departments will likely have to hire full-time firefighters in the next five to 10 years, if not sooner, to begin addressing this problem. When that time comes, I would like to have the option to be able to help these communities in Southwestern New Hampshire as a full-time firefighter.

As I stated in my letter to Director Cutting, I understand the purpose of the CPAT exam as a requirement for a full-time career firefighter position in New Hampshire, and in other states. I also understand some departments in the state require employees, regardless if they are just beginning their fire service careers, or in the middle of them, to have valid CPAT certificates. However, New Hampshire fire departments have the option to not require candidates transferring from other full-time departments in the state to have valid CPAT certificates. They should also have this option when it comes to out-of-state candidates.

Further, just because a firefighter passed the CPAT at one time, but cannot pass it now, does not mean that firefighter is not physically and mentally able to do the work. Life, the job and overtime shifts do take their toll. Career firefighters wanting to change departments, or return to their home communities that are now providing full-time employment, should not be penalized for that.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Meghan B. Foley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'M' and 'F'.

Meghan B. Foley