

CANCER PRESUMPTION BILL MOVES TO THE FULL LEGISLATURE FOR VOTE

LABOR COMMITTEE MOVES LD 621 TO SENATE FLOOR

LD 621—REBUTTABLE CANCER PRESUMPTION FOR FIREFIGHTERS

On Thursday, April 9, 2009 the Labor Committee, Chaired by Senator Troy Jackson and Representative John Tuttle reported out our cancer bill with a majority vote along party lines. There was extensive and detailed testimony presented by the PFFM and it's allies during Public Hearing and three Work Sessions. Even a Senator opposed to the bill acknowledged that the data and extent of the information submitted was impressive.

The bill has the broad support of Maine's entire fire service organizations including the Professional Fire Fighters of Maine, Maine Fire Chiefs Association, Maine State Federation of Fire Fighters and the Maine Fire Commission. It also has the support of the Maine Women's Lobby, Natural Resources Council of Maine and the Environmental Health and Strategy Center.

The PFFM has worked diligently for over a year to bring support together from these groups and respected members of the Legislature from both parties. *Unfortunately, the Maine Municipal Association and a handful of insurance interests still oppose the bill.*

That is why the PFFM needs your help now!

Please take the time to contact **both** your Senator and Representative and ask them to support LD 621. [Click here to find your legislator](#). Simply send them an email and call to express your support of LD 621. Listed below are some talking points you can use to ask your legislator for support when writing or talking with them. *Remember, you are their constituent and they will listen to what you have to say.*

- **LD 621 provides for a rebuttable presumption for certain occupational cancers in firefighters. It is not a guarantee of claim.**
- **There currently exists rebuttable presumption statues for Maine's firefighters regarding cardiovascular and infectious disease.**

- **This is not a new or novel idea. 28 other states, including neighboring Vermont, recognize some form of legal recognition for a cancer presumption.**
- **Maine Workers Compensation Board report of 3/19/09 on LD 621 anticipates no cost increase to premiums based on firefighter claims records covering 1999 to 2007.**
- **The firefighter must be employed for 5 years to be covered.**
- **Presumption only applies for 10 years after retirement or to age 70, which ever comes first.**
- **For current firefighters to be covered, they must have undergone medical screening for cancer within 2 years of the bills effective date. New employees are screened during their entry examination.**
- **The accepted cancers are targeted towards firefighters and the occupational risk.**
- **The bill is sponsored with broad bi-partisan support.**
- **The bill is supported by Maine firefighters, both paid and volunteer including the Professional Fire Fighters of Maine and the Maine State Federation of Fire Fighters, The Maine Fire Chiefs Association, The Maine Women’s Lobby, Natural Resources Council of Maine, and the Environmental Health Strategy Center.**
- **Independent cost estimates from the NCCI shows a negligible increase in cost to the overall workers compensation system.**
- **Firefighters are routinely exposed to known carcinogens. While protective equipment is used studies show that firefighters still inhale, absorb and ingest these carcinogens.**

Finally, please make sure to forward any email or verbal responses you may receive to [John Martell](#), [Ron Green](#), or [Tom Bull](#) so they can follow up with legislators who may request further information or have additional questions.

If we work together on LD 621, this bill will become law. It will recognize what we all have known for years, firefighters are exposed to many cancer-causing agents while protecting the lives and property of Maine’s citizens.