

Andrew J. Sandor
Fire Commissioner
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Department of Fire
90 Beaufort Place
New Rochelle, NY 10801

City of New Rochelle New York

July 10, 2023

George Latimer, Westchester County Executive
148 Martine Ave.
White Plains, N.Y. 10601

Dear County Executive Latimer:

I write in support of your proposed County legislation regarding Lithium Ion Batteries.

As Commissioner and Chief of Operations for the New Rochelle Fire Department, I am very concerned about the growing prevalence of devices with Lithium Ion Batteries, and the potential they cause for fires that are more difficult to control. Such fires are especially dangerous because of the toxic fumes they generate, and because they burn much hotter and faster than other types of fires.

The City of New Rochelle has had at least five such Lithium Ion Battery fire events, in locations ranging from the back of a garbage truck, to the loading dock of Home Depot, to multi-family apartment buildings. The worst fire, in a multi-family building at 1 The Boulevard (two blocks from City Hall), resulted in the residents of the entire building being displaced for weeks.

I appreciate the County taking action to help prevent Lithium Ion Battery related fires. The proposed County legislation, which requires safety standards for e-bikes and other mobility devices sold within the County, prohibits the use or sale of reassembled or reconditioned batteries, requires point of sale warning notices, and develops a public education and outreach campaign, will go a long way towards alleviating the fire risk caused by these batteries in our community.

In addition, our local Fire Department appreciates the County stepping up to create a battery disposal program. This solves a significant problem faced by our department and by our local residents.

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We strongly support this legislation, and much appreciate that Westchester County is taking a leadership role on this important and growing safety problem.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew J. Sandor".

Andrew J. Sandor, Fire Commissioner
Chief, New Rochelle Fire Department