

Introduced by Presiding Officer, on request of the County Executive

RESOLUTION NO. 46 -2015, AUTHORIZING AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK AND THE CENTRAL PINE BARRENS JOINT PLANNING AND POLICY COMMISSION FOR THE OPERATION OF A NO-BURN BRUSH FIRE TRAINING COURSE

WHEREAS, Suffolk County has been and remains vulnerable to massive wildfires, such as the 2012 Manorville-Ridge wildfire that destroyed 1,124 acres in the Long Island Central Pine Barrens; and

WHEREAS, these wildfires have injured Suffolk County Volunteer Firefighters in the past, and have proven fatal in other regions of the country, including the tragic deaths of 19 firefighters during one such wildfire in 2013 in Yarnell, Arizona; and

WHEREAS, the Suffolk County Hazard Mitigation Plan updated in 2014 identifies wildfires as a continuing threat to the County; and

WHEREAS, extensive training by firefighters in responding to wildfires with best practices is essential to extinguish these fires and protect and save lives and property; and

WHEREAS, training by firefighters in the deployment and use of specialized trucks to traverse and navigate through brush quickly during wildfires is a best practice in the extinguishing of wildfires; and

WHEREAS, the Suffolk County Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services is tasked by statute and charter with overseeing the training and safety of the more than 10,000 volunteer firefighters in the County; and

WHEREAS, the Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning and Policy Commission is tasked with the management and safety of the Long Island Central Pine Barrens; and

WHEREAS, the Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning and Policy Commission's Wildfire Task Force has conducted the New York Wildfire and Incident Management Academy since 1998, having trained 425 firefighters from Long Island during 2014; and

WHEREAS, Volunteer Fire Departments from throughout Suffolk County continue to request training from the New York Wildfire and Incident Management Academy, which offers its course for free with a nominal charge per student for materials; and

WHEREAS, the County owns sufficient undeveloped acreage adjacent to Suffolk County Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services at 30 East Avenue, Yaphank, N.Y., currently available for use as a brush truck training facility; and

WHEREAS, the County and Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning and Policy Commission desire to enter into an agreement to operate a no-burn brush fire training course on the undeveloped acreage to provide for better training and improved brush fire response in Suffolk County; now, therefore be it

1st **RESOLVED**, that Suffolk County, as SEQRA Lead Agency, hereby classifies the proposal as an Unlisted Action under the provisions of Title 6 NYCRR Part 617 and Chapter 450 of the Suffolk County Code; and, be it further

2nd **RESOLVED**, that Suffolk County, as SEQRA Lead Agency, hereby finds and determines that the proposal, pursuant to Title 6 NYCRR Part 617 and Chapter 450 of the Suffolk County Code, will not have significant adverse impacts on the environment for the following reasons:

1. the proposed action will not exceed any of the criteria set forth in Title 6 NYCRR Part 617.7 which sets forth thresholds for determining significant effect on the environment, as demonstrated in the Environmental Assessment Form;
2. the proposed action does not appear to significantly threaten any unique or highly valuable environmental or cultural resources as identified in or regulated by the Environmental Conservation Law of the State of New York of the Suffolk County Charter and Code;
3. the proposed action will result in an increased ability for firefighters to combat wildfires in Suffolk County safely and effectively;

and be it further

3rd **RESOLVED**, that Suffolk County hereby adopts a determination of non-significance (negative declaration) and the Council of Environmental Quality is hereby directed to circulate and file all necessary notices in accordance with this resolution

4th **RESOLVED**, that the County acting through the Department of Public Works in consultation with the Commissioner of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services is authorized to enter into an agreement with the Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning and Policy Commission in development and use of the abovementioned property at 30 East Avenue, Yaphank, N.Y., for the purpose of training firefighters in the deployment and use of specialized trucks for clearing brush and further; and be it further

5th **RESOLVED**, that said agreement will adhere to all County statutes and legal requirements including environmental, pre-existing contractual, setback, and planning statutes and legal requirements.

DATED: February 3, 2015

APPROVED BY:

/s/ Steven Bellone
County Executive of Suffolk County

Date: February 19, 2015