



October 11, 2018

Honorable Stephen Barrar, Chair  
House Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee  
PA House of Representatives  
Room 18, East Wing Building  
PO Box 202160  
Harrisburg PA 17120-2160

Re: HB 2522 – Proposed Amendment to the PA Workers’ Compensation Act

Representative Barrar:

The Susquehanna Municipal Trust is comprised of seventy-three municipal members in eastern and central Pennsylvania. We have only recently become aware of pending legislation (HB #2522) that proposes to amend the Workers’ Compensation Act regarding coverage for volunteer fire companies. Based upon our reading of the proposed legislation, we respectfully request that you table any action on the bill until the committee has fully consulted with our trust.

The trust stands behind and greatly values the services provided by our paid and volunteer firefighters and auxiliary members. Without the efforts and faithful service of these individuals, each of our communities would be at a loss. It is our municipalities that fully fund the workers’ compensation policies via SWIF, or other insurer, that provides the coverage for the volunteers. Since the volunteer fire companies are part of the fabric of our communities, we would like to be involved in the discussions to assist them in this matter.

The proposed bill is a partial “fix” to previous legislation regarding volunteer and paid firefighters that produced unintended consequences. For the record, our trust opposed the original legislation and the compromise that resulted from discussions with a select group of state organizations that did not include us. We do not mention this fact to rehash past grievances; we simply want to be part of the solution going forward.

We agree that the actions that SWIF has taken in terms of its adjudication of volunteer fire company workers' compensation claims needs to be addressed and corrected. Allow us to partner with other municipal workers' compensation trusts – PennPrime, Delaware Valley Insurance Trust and Keystone Municipal Insurance Trust – to develop a set of solutions that meet the needs of the volunteers, municipalities and the Commonwealth.

As it is currently written, we believe this bill will result in additional unintended consequences for volunteer fire companies and for our municipal trust and our sister municipal trusts.

Our request is not a vote against our friends and neighbors who serve in various capacities for volunteer fire companies. We simply desire an opportunity to work with the committee to offer our input in constructing legislation that meets the needs of all concerned parties. We respectfully request that you carefully consider our position and table the proposed legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Dee Dee McGuire  
Board of Trustees, Chair



Peter Whipple  
Director