

## **Resolution No. 28**

### **COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT: Occupational Health & Safety**

#### **Re: Toxic Chemicals in PPE**

1           WHEREAS, cancer continues to be the leading  
2           cause of death among firefighters; and

3           WHEREAS, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances  
4           (PFAS) have been linked to cancer and other  
5           illnesses; and

6           WHEREAS, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) was  
7           proven in a court of law to be linked to testicular  
8           cancer and many of the same illnesses which are  
9           affecting firefighters at alarming rates; and

10          WHEREAS, the personal protective equipment  
11          (PPE) industry voluntarily phased-out the use of  
12          PFOA by 2016, but failed to alert firefighters of the  
13          dangers associated with PFOA exposure; and

14          WHEREAS, the PPE industry has replaced PFOA  
15          with other PFAS chemicals which have not yet been  
16          adequately studied, but are also thought to be  
17          harmful to human health and the environment by an  
18          independent and impartial community of scientists;  
19          and

20          WHEREAS, the PPE industry has long been  
21          closely associated with the IAFF through  
22          sponsorships and donations, while simultaneously  
23          providing firefighters with products containing  
24          unregulated toxic chemicals which may be  
25          contributing to the firefighter cancer crisis; and

26          WHEREAS, it has been alleged that the PPE  
27          industry has utilized biased science conducted by the  
28          industry themselves, as well as distributing

29 misleading and incomplete statements and  
30 documents which have obscured the facts uncovered  
31 by independent scientists and activists; and

32 WHEREAS, the National Fire Protection  
33 Association (NFPA) Technical Committee has the  
34 authority to limit and/or eliminate the use of these  
35 toxic chemicals, but has failed to do so; and

36 WHEREAS, all firefighters, regardless of  
37 location, are affected equally by this issue, due to the  
38 constant and unavoidable exposure to toxic PPE  
39 which is intended to provide safety; therefore be it

40 RESOLVED, That the IAFF will no longer accept  
41 sponsorships from the chemical industry, textile  
42 manufacturers, or PPE manufacturers, unless that  
43 money is used to directly replace turnout gear made  
44 with toxic chemicals with alternatives which have  
45 been independently studied and deemed non-toxic,  
46 once those alternatives are available; and be it further

47 RESOLVED, That the IAFF will issue an  
48 advisory to the fire service in order to stop the  
49 practice of sending used and/or expired PPE to  
50 communities that are unable to purchase new gear  
51 and equipment and shall work to ensure that the  
52 firefighters in those communities are provided with  
53 new and safe PPE through grants and other funding  
54 provided by the PPE industry; and be it further

55 RESOLVED, That the IAFF will issue an  
56 advisory based on the recommendations of  
57 independent scientists, who have no affiliation to the  
58 PPE or chemical manufacturing industry, to all  
59 members alerting them of the known link between  
60 PFAS chemicals and human illness, including cancer,  
61 and will work in conjunction with the IAFF Division

62 of Occupational Health, Safety and Medicine  
63 advising members on proper handling procedures of  
64 their PFAS-containing gear; and be it further  
65 RESOLVED, That the IAFF will ensure that the  
66 health and safety of its members is placed above all  
67 else, and will ensure that the IAFF Division of  
68 Occupational Health, Safety and Medicine will  
69 closely monitor the PPE industry and will utilize  
70 independent and impartial science to ensure that the  
71 fire service is provided with PPE that is not made  
72 with chemicals that are hazardous to human health  
73 and the environment.

Submitted by: IAFF Local 1314, Fall River  
IAFF Local 2509, Nantucket

Cost Estimate:

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

**CONVENTION ACTION:**