



United Firefighters of Los Angeles City

Local 112, International Association of Fire Fighters

January 20, 2022

Honorable Eric Garcetti
Mayor of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mayor Garcetti:

I'm writing to inform you about the staffing crisis that is currently impacting the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) and the communities that we serve.

Every single day for at least the past month, the LAFD has been forced to close multiple resources (trucks, engines, and ambulances) throughout the city because of our staffing shortage. This means that the LAFD is not operating at full capacity, oftentimes with a dozen apparatus or more being put out of service because we simply do not have the bodies to staff them. Fewer fire trucks, engines, and ambulances operating on our streets equates to longer emergency response times which puts everyone's safety in jeopardy.

It's critical to understand that even before the global pandemic, the LAFD was the most understaffed big city fire department in the country. From 2008 to 2013 our department didn't hire a single new firefighter and we are still feeling the impact of this five-year hiring freeze. Currently, the LAFD has approximately 3,400 firefighters to serve a city of 3.8 million people. For point of reference, the City of Chicago has more than 4,000 firefighters to serve a city of 2.5 million and the City of Houston has more than 4,000 firefighters to serve a city of 2.2 million.

Our firefighters have always worked more hours and busier shifts than our counterparts across the country because we are so understaffed. The pandemic has only exacerbated this problem with so many of our members (like the rest of the public) contracting the Omicron variant and temporarily being unable to work. Our members who are able to work are being forced to fill extra shifts and it's taking a toll on both their physical and mental health. LAFD Firefighters are at a breaking point.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the most accurate picture of what is currently happening in the LAFD. I'm merely informing you as the Mayor of Los Angeles that it is not "business as usual" in the LAFD right now and any reports that you have received to the contrary are simply not true. Resources are being closed and we don't have enough bodies to operate at full capacity.

This week you announced the appointment of Kristin Crowley to serve as the next fire chief of the LAFD. UFLAC supports this selection because Deputy Chief Crowley is a strong firefighter and an excellent leader and we look forward to working with her for the betterment of our Department.

However, as Deputy Chief Crowley goes through the city council confirmation process, UFLAC believes that it is time to have a very real and honest conversation about the staffing crisis in the LAFD. Our firefighters are worn out and worn down. Morale is lower than I have ever seen it in my 32-year career.

Now more than ever, the LAFD is facing enormous staffing challenges that need to be addressed immediately. This starts with an accurate depiction of where our department currently stands. From there, it is our hope that we can take positive steps towards properly staffing our fire department and, over time, expanding our ranks to match the growth in population and emergency calls for service throughout our city.

On behalf of the dedicated members of United Firefighters of Los Angeles City, I want to thank you for your support of the brave men and women of the LAFD. We look forward to working with you and our city leaders to ensure that our department continues to provide the first-class service that the people of Los Angeles expect and deserve both now and in the years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Freddy Escobar', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Freddy Escobar

President

United Firefighters of Los Angeles City