



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Governor Cuomo Signs Senator Martins' Legislation to Protect First Responders

[JACK M. MARTINS](#) September 17, 2014

Local governments to be notified if fire-susceptible construction method is used in residential structures

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today signed legislation (A1896/S6675) that requires property owners to notify their local governments whenever a newly constructed or rehabilitated residential structure is comprised of a truss type, pre-engineered wood or timber construction. While this construction method is safe for normal use, it can also become fragile and collapse with little or no warning when exposed to fire. This required notification process will allow local governments to provide fire departments and first responder organizations with information about buildings that employ this particular construction design.

“First responders put their lives on the line to protect those around them. It is our responsibility to do everything in our power to ensure that they come home safely, and this law is a crucial way to live up to that charge,” Governor Cuomo said. “This legislation will help ensure that our firefighters and emergency personal are made aware of potentially dangerous situations before it’s too late. I thank Senator Martins and Assemblywoman Schimel for their work on this important issue, and I am proud to sign this bill into law.”

Truss type, pre-engineered wood or timber construction is often undetectable without advanced notice, and there have been multiple occasions in recent years where first responders were injured or killed while responding to fires in buildings that utilize this particular construction method and ultimately collapsed.

Senator Jack M. Martins, the Senate sponsor of the legislation, said, "This new law is an invaluable tool that will help save firefighters' lives. Giving firefighters as much information as possible at a fire helps them fight that fire in the safest and most effective way possible. Thank you to Governor Cuomo for working with us, our fire departments, and our local governments to protect our heroes."

Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel, the Assembly sponsor of the legislation, said, "I want to thank Governor Cuomo for signing the Truss Notification bill into law today. This legislation will save first responders lives, particularly firefighters. On Long Island there have been a number of incidences where firefighters were almost killed while responding to a residential fire in a home where truss construction was utilized. The notification system established by this legislation will enable first responders to take appropriate measures to protect the public and to ensure their own safety when responding to a fire emergency."

Robert McConville, President of the Firemen's Association of the State of New York, said, "Simply put, this new law will help protect the lives of firefighters, fire officers, and the public. Determining the type of building construction in quick fashion dictates how we operate at a fire, so any advantage we are provided is welcomed. I would like to thank Governor Cuomo for recognizing the public safety impact of this law and Assembly Member Schimel and Senator Martins for their hard work and leadership on this issue."

Tom Herlihy Jr., President of the State Association of Fire Districts, said, "The Officers, Directors and members of the State Association of Fire Districts thank Governor Cuomo for

helping keep New York's firefighters safe by insuring that they are aware of the potential dangers of truss construction during a fire in their community."

Under the law signed today by the Governor, property owners outside of New York City must indicate on a building permit application if this construction method is being used, in addition to affixing a sign or symbol to an electrical box on the building's exterior. After being notified by a homeowner of the presence of this particular construction method, local governments must also inform the relevant first responders, including the local fire department, district or company, the county fire coordinator, local 911 and emergency dispatchers. The law takes effect on January 1, 2015.