



**ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES UNION  
LOCAL 449 – RENFREW**

PO BOX 40014 RPO RAGLAN, Renfrew, ON K7V 0B8

1-866-283-0557 | [www.opseulocal449.ca](http://www.opseulocal449.ca)

*We stand together to win.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Union Calls for Reassessment of Renfrew Fire Dispatch Services Decision**

RENFREW, ON - November 8, 2023 - OPSEU/SEFPO Local 449, which represents the Ambulance Communications Officers (ACOs) at the Central Ambulance Communications Centre (CACC) in Renfrew, has voiced concerns regarding the Town of Renfrew Council's decision to outsource fire dispatch services to the Brockville Fire Department.

The union underscores the indispensable role of these ACOs providing local knowledge and expertise in emergency situations, who also have a longstanding history of serving the fire departments across 16 townships, the City of Pembroke, and the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation. "Dispatching is not just about directing emergency services; it's about understanding the community, its people, and the unique challenges of our geography," says Liam Vanderbraak, OPSEU/SEFPO Local 449 President. "Our dispatchers have built relationships and local insight that cannot be replicated from 200 kilometers away."

OPSEU/SEFPO points out that the current service challenges noted by the Renfrew Fire Department, such as safety and reliability, stem from infrastructural limitations, not the quality of service provided by its members. "The current system's deficiencies reflect the need for modernization - a responsibility that falls upon the infrastructure provided by the County of Renfrew, not the commitment of our members," Vanderbraak states.

After ongoing discussions by the County of Renfrew Council on infrastructure improvements to the county-wide fire dispatch system, the decision to update equipment in the CACC but retain the existing system was made, rather than investing in a new radio system like Brockville's. The union notes the forecasted cost increases for Brockville's dispatch services, which are projected to rise 421% by 2026 in comparison to current costs, and expresses its disappointment in seeing local funds reallocated away from the Renfrew community.

"OPSEU/SEFPO Local 449 is committed to the advancement of emergency services that are tailored to the evolving needs of the Renfrew community," asserts David Danone, Vice-President of OPSEU/SEFPO Local 449. "Reinvesting in our local infrastructure is not only fiscally responsible, but it's also an investment in public safety and community well-being."

OPSEU/SEFPO Local 449 urges the Town of Renfrew Council to reevaluate the decision with a perspective on long-term community benefits and encourages collaborative discussions at the County level that prioritize local emergency services' growth and sustainability.



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**About OPSEU/SEFPO Local 449**

OPSEU/SEFPO Local 449 proudly represents over 75 public service employees in Renfrew and Fitzroy Harbour, Ontario. Our members serve essential roles across various provincial ministries, ensuring excellence in public service and fostering community development. As advocates for workers' rights and public sector integrity, we are committed to the prosperity and resilience of our communities.

**For media inquiries, please contact:**

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