

OPINION: New Bedford Firefighter weighs in on closing of Engine 8 “Mayor cares more about the dollar than he does about the lives of the people in that neighborhood”

“I have personally been to so many fires in Engine 8’s still area that I lost count. The houses in this section of the city are densely packed, really old, densely populated, and balloon frame to boot – which means a fire in the basement would carry all the way up the walls into the attic.

The citizens, the elderly, and the children in this area will absolutely be at a much higher risk with Engine 8 closed.

There have already been 2 unnecessary deaths in the city as a result of the Mayor’s rolling blackouts. In both cases the water carrying apparatus, those closest to the fire were out of service. The victim’s deaths were unnecessary as the blacked out stations we’re literally right around the corner. Their proximity would have cut their response times by MINUTES.

EVERY MINUTE COUNTS at a fire!!! Every minute the fire doubles in size, and because of the age of these houses, filled with modern plastics make these homes much more susceptible to failure and more conducive to the production of toxic gasses from their burning. More than flames, it’s the breathing in of those gasses that cause most of the deaths.

When your house is on fire, every SECOND counts, so every minute counts even more. Sadly, in those 2 cases, it took the rest of 'their' lives for the next closest apparatus to arrive.

So, with this said, cutting an important and busy piece like Engine 8 would be – and you can quote me on this – grossly negligent of the Mayor.

Yes, our response times are within the so-called 'NFPA's limits' but those extra minutes at a time when minutes matter the absolute most – lives and properties are more likely to suffer.

We love our job and continue to press on for the sake and safety of our citizens, but we are so tired and morale is so low because we keep taking these hits and it seems like the public doesn't see behind the mayor's motives. This is what happens when decisions are made by people who have no idea how to provide for the safety of their fellow citizens. They are only motivated by money which means he cares more about the dollar than he does about the lives of the people in that neighborhood.

Sorry so long. I just really feel like our voices need to be heard by our city. I've been doing this for 15 years, and it literally scares me to see how the mayor is going about this so blindly. This is a HUGE risk – and when our people suffer, so do we." -New Bedford Firefighter.