

Rep. Loudenbeck: Emergency response teams bill heads to governor's desk

Posted on Tuesday, Sep 28, 2021

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Madison- Today, Senate Bill 374, authored Representative Amy Loudenbeck (R-Clinton) and Senator Joan Ballweg (R-Markasan) passed with bipartisan support in both the Assembly and Senate Chambers. The bill will now head to Governor Evers to be signed into law.

Senate Bill 374, (SB 374) makes necessary statutory changes to ensure Wisconsin's specialized emergency response teams, the Statewide Urban Search and Rescue Task Force and the Regional Hazardous Materials Response Teams, are maintained and the individuals serving on them are protected.

The Urban Search and Rescue Team was originally formed in 2005. They specialize in hazard mitigation, search and rescue, and incident stabilization. The team is capable of responding to state and national disasters including earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and terrorist events. Team members are employees of fire departments across Wisconsin, including Antigo, Appleton, Beloit, Chippewa Falls, Green Bay, Janesville, La Crosse, Menomonie, Neenah-Menasha, Oshkosh, and Superior.

Regional Hazardous Materials Response Teams have been in existence since 1995 and may be activated for an incident involving a hazardous materials spill, leak, explosion, injury or the potential of immediate threat to life, the environment, or property. To provide a high level of hazardous materials response capabilities to local communities, there are twenty-one Regional Hazardous Materials Response Teams located across the state.

“SB 374 expands the scope of emergencies the Urban Search and Rescue Task Force can respond to including emergencies like collapse, trench, high angle and swift water rescues. It also streamlines the reimbursement schedule for team deployments, and makes changes to contributions for duty disability for the team members. These changes address concerns brought forward from Fire Chiefs of the participating municipalities.” said Loudenbeck.

“The Wisconsin Fire Chiefs Association greatly appreciates the work of Rep. Loudenbeck and Sen. Ballweg to get SB 374 passed so these specialized teams are able to mobilize when needed to serve and protect Wisconsin’s citizens,” said Green Bay Metro Fire Department Chief David Litton, who also serves as the President of the Wisconsin Fire Chiefs Association.