

SUE SERINO
COUNTY EXECUTIVE



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DUTCHESS COUNTY GOVERNMENT

September 9, 2025

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Duffy:

In 1966, the federal government recognized a critical gap in our nation's ability to respond to medical emergencies and took bold action through the National Highway Safety Act. Under the leadership of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and its National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), modern Emergency Medical Services (EMS) were born – with standardized training, regional trauma systems, and federal oversight that transformed emergency care across the country. This federal investment and vision quite literally built the EMS systems Americans have relied on for nearly six decades.

Today, however, EMS is at a breaking point. Across the nation – and here in Dutchess County – we face unprecedented recruitment and retention challenges, rising operational costs, aging equipment, and increasing call volumes. In just the first half of 2025, our EMS system responded to 21,505 calls, on pace to meet or exceed last year's total of 41,114 calls. Average Priority 1 response time is just over 8 minutes, with nearly one-third of calls exceeding the 9-minute benchmark, and 8% taking more than 15 minutes. Even with a \$1.47 million County investment in supplemental coverage this year, 9% of calls result in 'inability to respond,' forcing mutual aid and risking delays in critical care.

Just as DOT and NHTSA once led the way in establishing EMS as a professional, standardized service, your leadership is again needed to stabilize and strengthen it. I urge you to explore reestablishing a dedicated federal funding stream for EMS – one that supports training and certification programs, modernizes equipment, invests in

recruitment and retention, and enables system upgrades that reflect today's public safety realities.

This is not a matter of convenience; it is a matter of life and death. When seconds count, the availability of a trained EMT or paramedic can mean the difference between tragedy and survival. I would welcome the opportunity to share the steps we are taking here in Dutchess County, as well as the challenges we cannot solve without renewed federal partnership.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to public safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Susan J. Serino". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S".

Susan J. Serino
County Executive