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NYS Professional Firefighters Association Joins Momentive Picket Line Today

"Labor for Labor Rally" is held to protest Momentive management mistreatment of workers.

New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association (NYSPFFA) leaders and members of several Capital Region locals today joined the picket line at Momentive Performance Materials in support of 700 members of IUE-CWA Local 81359.

Today marks day 30 since the strike over proposed cuts in health insurance, retirement benefits and vacation time began. Firefighters from around the Capital Region will march from Dick's Automotive at 163 Hudson River Road (Route 4) in Waterford to union headquarters 301 Hudson River Road between 10:30 and 11 a.m. today.

"Our participation signifies two things: We are a labor organization demonstrating solidarity with our brothers and sisters in IUE-CWA Local 81359, and replacing these professionals with unqualified people is a danger to the community," said NYSPFFA president Sam Fresina. "Momentive boasts about corporate responsibility and the importance of being community minded. They demonstrate none of those things by bringing in inexperienced workers while harming hardworking families during the holiday season. It's hypocritical and unconscionable."

Mario Cilento, president of the New York State AFL-CIO, said, "I applaud the firefighters for standing with our brothers and sisters of IUE-CWA Local 81359 and 81380 in their fight against corporate greed. The firefighters are not only supporting these working men and women in their fight for a fair contract, they are rightfully drawing attention to safety concerns over having replacement workers do the jobs of the highly skilled members of IUE-CWA Local 81359 and 81380."

Dominick Patrignani, president of IUE-CWA Local 81359 and a hazardous material expert, said Momentive officials are allowing unqualified workers from out of state to run dangerous manufacturing operations.

"This is a facility that uses vast amounts of chemicals in all types of around-the-clock manufacturing processes. Our team of haz-mat experts train weekly so that we are prepared to respond and mitigate environmental and public-health incidences," Patrignani said. "While we are disturbed that these executives are being unfair to our members, we are equally troubled that they would recklessly risk public safety and the safety of their managers and replacement workers."

NYSPFFA represents 18,000 men and women working full-time as members of municipal fire departments across the state. NYSPFFA advocates on behalf of members who serve in 106 local unions, 41 counties and in the boroughs of New York City.