

**ILLINOIS SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION
RESOLUTION 2003-4**

**Resolution To Prevent Illinois Law Enforcement Officers from Being Burned to
Death in Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptors**

WHEREAS, each year, officers are injured and killed during roadside stops and at construction sites when inattentive, drunk and/or distracted drivers rear-end parked police cars;

WHEREAS, the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor is a vehicle utilized by Illinois Police Departments throughout the State of Illinois;

WHEREAS, in the past years, thirteen officers around the country have been killed when they were burned to death in the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor;

WHEREAS, more police officers have been burned to death in the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor than all of the civilians who were burned to death in the Ford Pinto before a recall of the Ford Pinto was announced;

WHEREAS, on November 13, 1992 Officer Ed Truelove from Connecticut died when the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor he was driving was rear-ended and erupted into flames and he burned to death;

WHEREAS, on February 9, 1996 PFC Vincent Julia from Delaware died when the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor he was driving was rear-ended and erupted into flames and he burned to death;

WHEREAS, on July 26, 1997 Trooper Robert Smith from Florida died when the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor he was driving was rear-ended and erupted into flames and he burned to death;

WHEREAS, on May 5, 1998 Trooper Hung Le from Louisiana died when the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor he was driving was rear-ended and erupted into flames and he burned to death;

WHEREAS, on December 9, 1998 Trooper Juan Cruz from Arizona died when the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor he was driving was rear-ended and erupted into flames and he burned to death;

WHEREAS, July 26, 1999 Deputy Steven Agner from Florida died when the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor he was driving was rear-ended and erupted into flames and he burned to death;

WHEREAS, February 18, 2000 Trooper Floyd 'Skip' Fink, Jr. from Arizona died when the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor he was driving was rear-ended and erupted into flames and he burned to death;

WHEREAS, on July 26, 2000 Trooper Lynn Ross from Tennessee died when the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor he was driving was rear-ended and erupted into flames and he burned to death;

WHEREAS, on August 12, 2001 Officer Stephen Linen from California died when the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor he was driving was rear-ended and erupted into flames and he burned to death;

WHEREAS, on May 29, 2002 Officer Jefferson Davis from Florida died when the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor he was driving was rear-ended and erupted into flames and he burned to death;

WHEREAS, on June 12, 2002 Officer Robert Nielsen from Arizona died when the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor he was driving was rear-ended and erupted into flames and he burned to death;

WHEREAS, on October 23, 2002 Officer Patrick Metzler from Texas died when the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor he was driving was rear-ended and erupted into flames and he burned to death;

WHEREAS on December 19, 2002 Trooper Robert Ambrose from New York died when the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor he was driving was rear-ended and erupted into flames and he burned to death;

WHEREAS, in most, if not all, of these accidents, the officers would have otherwise survived the accidents, but were burned to death;

WHEREAS, there have been other accidents where law enforcement officers have been burned when the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor they were driving was rear-ended and erupted in flames;

WHEREAS, there have been other fuel fed fires where the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor being driven by the officers was rear ended and erupted in flames, but the Officers were fortunate to escape injury.

WHEREAS, for years, Ford Motor Company has, despite the deaths and injuries, continued to publicly deny that there is any safety concerns regarding the placement of the fuel tank in the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor;

WHEREAS, some of these fires were the result of trunk equipment penetrating the trunk and tank walls; others have been the result of bolts, protruding metal, and undercarriage structures; others have been a combination of both.

WHEREAS, despite the public denials of any safety concerns with the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor, Ford Motor Company has announced the availability of a system of shields.

WHEREAS, to date, this proposed fix has not been subjected to independent testing.

WHEREAS, there have been punctures of the fuel tank in rear-end accidents when equipment from the trunk pierced the trunk and the fuel tank;

WHEREAS, Ford Motor Company has announced it will make available for purchase a trunk pack to place tools of law enforcement addition,

WHEREAS, rather offering this trunk pack for free, Ford Motor Company has publicly announced that it intends to offer the trunk pack at cost, estimated to be \$50 per car

WHEREAS, testing of available technology for improving fuel tank integrity is prohibitively expensive for individual or collective departments to undertake

WHEREAS, the testing of fire suppression technology is prohibitively expensive for individual or collective law enforcement departments and municipalities

WHEREAS, until and unless there is independent testing of the available technologies, law enforcement officers remain at risk of horrific and catastrophic injuries or death as a result of fuel fed fires.

BE IT RESOLVED this 27th day of January 2003:

1. The Illinois Sheriffs Association calls on Ford Motor Company to permit and fund independent testing of the proposed shield system under appropriate engineering standards;
2. The Illinois Sheriffs Association calls on Ford Motor Company to permit and fund independent testing of the alternative technologies meant to improve fuel tank integrity;
3. The Illinois Sheriffs Association calls upon Ford Motor Company to permit and fund independent testing of the alternative technologies for fire suppression;
4. The Illinois Sheriffs Association recommends that police departments in Illinois consider a moratorium on the purchase of any new Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptors until such time that Ford agrees to fund independent testing with experts acceptable to law enforcement;
5. The Illinois Sheriffs Association calls upon Ford Motor Company to offer any additional technology intended to improve safety due to fuel fed fires, including trunk packs, free to police departments and municipalities;

AND BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED, THAT THE ILLINOIS SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION JOINS THE OTHER PARTIES AS A PLAINTIFF IN THE CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT FILED AGAINST THE FORD MOTOR COMPANY IN RELATION TO THE ABOVE MENTIONED MATTER.

Sheriff Jim Olson, President

Greg Sullivan, Executive Director