

After Amazon Tragedy, Stuart/Hoffman Work To Create Warehouse Safety Standards Task Force

by Brian DePasqua

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EDWARDSVILLE – Following a deadly structural collapse at an Amazon warehouse in Edwardsville during a tornado, an initiative led by state Rep. Katie Stuart, D-Edwardsville, and state Rep. Jay Hoffman, D-Swansea, will create a Warehouse Safety

Standards Task Force aimed at developing recommendations to make similar



workplaces safer moving forward.

“Everyone should have the right to a safe and healthy working environment and to return home unharmed at the end of each shift,” Stuart said. “However, recent events have shown that more is required to ensure that warehouse workers are not subjected to avoidable hazards and that their employers are held accountable for meeting acceptable standards of health and safety. That’s why we created this task force. I’m hopeful that by closely studying the issues unique to the warehouse industry, we can improve the safety of workers, reduce injuries and potentially save lives.”

“The tragedy at the Amazon warehouse was a devastating moment for our community, and those who were impacted remain in our thoughts,” Hoffman said. “It’s our responsibility to thoroughly review what happened and take action to ensure something like this doesn’t happen again. Our state has seen a lot of warehouse development in recent years, let’s make sure these are safe workplaces for all employees.”

On Dec. 10, 2021, a structural failure at an Edwardsville Amazon distribution facility during a tornado led to a collapse that killed six employees. The collapse raised questions about whether regulations and building codes need to be updated at warehouses to prepare for similar severe weather incidents.

The newly-created Warehouse Safety Standards Task Force will consider these questions with relevant stakeholders, including representatives from labor, business, local governments, the General Assembly, and the Department of Labor. The group is expected to provide quarterly reports of its findings, discussions, and decisions to the governor and General Assembly, with a final report of recommendations due no later than Jan. 1, 2025.

The Warehouse Safety Standards Task Force was initially proposed under House Bill 1563 but was passed and signed by the governor as part of a larger package in Senate Bill 1720.

