



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PENNSYLVANIA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

April 21, 2017

The Honorable Randy Vulakovich
Senate of Pennsylvania
Chair, Veterans Affairs & Emergency
Preparedness
168 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

The Honorable Jay Costa
Senate of Pennsylvania
Chair, Veterans Affairs & Emergency
Preparedness
535 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

The Honorable Stephen Barrar
PA House of Representatives
Chair, Veterans Affairs & Emergency
Preparedness
18 East Wing
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

The Honorable Chris Sainato
PA House of Representatives
Chair, Veterans Affairs & Emergency
Preparedness
30 East Wing
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Chairmen:

As the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) prepares for the 2017-2018 fiscal year, we are dedicated to using our limited resources wisely and efficiently, in support of a cooperative and seamless government that works for all Pennsylvanians. To that end, the Governor's budget will allow us to improve services to the public while aggressively controlling costs and we are eager to collaborate with the General Assembly to create a spending plan that supports this mission.

However, as my staff and I reviewed the budget recently passed by the House Republican Caucus (House Bill 218, Printer's No. 1236), we have deep concerns about the impact that it would have on the capability and efficiency of PEMA. A spending cut of this magnitude, unfocused and on top of the changes we have already proposed, would cause significant difficulties, as listed below:

Reduction of GGO Funds:

PEMA leverages multiple funding sources to support its operation and staff. For instance, grant administrative and program staff are funded by the grants they administer, and technological hazards staff are funded by hazardous materials and nuclear power plant fees. The remaining PEMA complement are funded with a combination of Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) and General Government Operation (GGO) funds. The EMPG provides 50 percent of the salary and benefit costs for these staff, which doubles the impacts of GGO cuts on PEMA's complement, and if enacted will seriously degrade its ability to perform its core responsibilities. The proposed 6.5 percent GGO

reduction in House Bill 218 will result in the furlough of 6 staff. The positions that will go unfilled or furloughed are filled by members of our agency who are responsible for staffing the 24/7 Commonwealth Watch and Warning Center (CWWC), training and exercise staff, specialized deployable equipment and communications technicians, and Area Office staff directly responsible for supporting the 67 counties across the Commonwealth during times of disasters and emergencies.

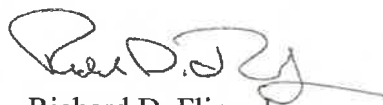
Reduction of Disaster Relief Fund:

The House-proposed budget cuts \$4.7 million in disaster relief funding that is necessary to meet the federally required match for the Commonwealth to receive the \$38 million in damages available to the 43 eligible applicants located in Bradford, Center, Lycoming, and Sullivan counties that were devastated by the October 2016 flooding. Without this match, funding the rebuilding efforts in these communities after the flooding will not be able to happen.

Along with the cuts being proposed at the state level, PEMA is also facing potential cuts at the federal level. In the proposed budget from President Trump, there is an elimination of \$667 million to state and local grant funds administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The proposed cuts would have an impact on the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) by 25 percent, and a proposed 20 percent reduction to the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG). The Commonwealth is facing a loss of nearly \$10 million in federal funds across both programs. HSGP provides dollars to counties organized in nine regional counter-terrorism task forces throughout the state, and EMPG supports state and local activities, including PEMA staff, as well as county emergency management agency grants. If these cuts occur, PEMA will lose funding for nearly 15 percent of our complement, resulting in the potential loss of 20 positions. In addition, the cuts would mean losing funding for 35 emergency management positions at the county level. The loss of funds would also have an impact on municipalities, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security, and Pennsylvania State Police.

Thank you for taking the time to review our concerns with House Bill 218, Printer's No. 1236, and for your continued support of PEMA and the citizens we serve. I look forward to meeting with you to further discuss these matters and answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Richard D. Flinn, Jr.

Director, PA Emergency Management Agency

cc: The Honorable Dom Costa, PA House of Representatives
The Honorable Frank Farry, PA House of Representatives