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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE BILL

No. 592      Session of  
2007

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INTRODUCED BY ORIE, RAFFERTY, FONTANA, O'PAKE, D. WHITE, BROWNE,  
PIPPY, KITCHEN AND RHOADES, MARCH 20, 2007

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REFERRED TO VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,  
MARCH 20, 2007

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AN ACT

1 Providing for grants to public schools to purchase advanced  
2 emergency alerting devices; and making an appropriation.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Legislative findings and purpose.

6 The General Assembly finds that:

7 (1) The United States Department of Homeland Security  
8 has endorsed the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric  
9 Association (NOAA) All Hazards Radio network as the nation's  
10 emergency warning system.

11 (2) Through the NOAA All Hazards Radio network, civil  
12 emergency messages such as 911 Call Outages, Radiological  
13 Hazard Warnings, Shelter in Place Warnings, Evacuation  
14 Immediate Warnings, Civil Emergency Warnings, Local Area  
15 Emergency Warnings, Law Enforcement Warnings, AMBER Alerts  
16 and weather emergency information is broadcast.

17 (3) NOAA has the capability to send a warning to 98% of

1 the population in the United States of an impending disaster  
2 on a county-by-county basis.

3 (4) Currently, only 10% of the population can receive  
4 the NOAA All Hazards Radio network warnings.

5 (5) Radio receivers that meet the Consumer Electronic  
6 Association's (CEA) standard, Receiver Performance  
7 Specification for Public Alert Receivers (CEA-2009), are made  
8 to a higher level of reliability and performance and will  
9 receive broadcasts from the NOAA All Hazards Radio network  
10 reliably and flawlessly.

11 (6) Radio receivers which meet the CEA-2009 technical  
12 specifications for advanced emergency alerting devices bear  
13 the logo "Public Alert."

14 (7) A device bearing the logo "Public Alert" is defined  
15 as a consumer electronics product providing direct access to  
16 commercial-free, government emergency information 24 hours  
17 per day with the ability to automatically prompt users with  
18 audio and visual cues.

19 (8) Without a reliable advanced emergency alerting  
20 device, school personnel have no direct means from which to  
21 learn of a local, regional or national emergency or disaster,  
22 impeding their ability to secure the safety of our children.

23 (9) The use of the advanced emergency alerting devices  
24 in school buildings by school personnel will ensure that all  
25 alert messages are immediately received and that steps can be  
26 taken to address the emergency and protect our children.

27 (10) The General Assembly finds that providing  
28 assistance to school districts in purchasing CEA Certified  
29 Public Alert radio devices will help ensure the safety of our  
30 children.

1 Section 2. Grants.

2 The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency is authorized to  
3 make grants to school districts for the purchase of at least  
4 one, but not more than eight, CEA Certified Public Alert radio  
5 receivers for use in each school district. The amount of the  
6 grant to an individual school district shall not exceed \$350.

7 Section 3. Terms of grants.

8 The recipient of a grant shall enter into an agreement with  
9 the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. The agreement  
10 shall include, but not be limited to, the following terms and  
11 conditions:

12 (1) The radio receiver or receivers purchased with grant  
13 funds must meet the public alert technical specifications for  
14 advanced emergency alerting devices, CEA-2009 or its  
15 successor and bear the CEA public alert certification logo.

16 (2) The radio receiver or receivers purchased with grant  
17 funds must be purchased from a company which maintains its  
18 corporate headquarters in Pennsylvania.

19 (3) At least one radio receiver must be placed in the  
20 school district's administrative offices where it can be  
21 continually monitored.

22 (4) All radio receivers placed in school buildings must  
23 be located in such an area that messages can be continually  
24 monitored.

25 (5) All radio receivers must use the battery backup  
26 feature for use in case of a power outage.

27 (6) Recipient school districts must maintain and test  
28 the advanced emergency alerting device in accordance with the  
29 manufacturer's operational guidelines.

30 Section 4. Public awareness program.

1 The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency shall, with  
2 assistance from the Department of Health, Department of Aging,  
3 Department of Education and the Department of Public Welfare,  
4 provide information on the availability and benefits of radio  
5 receivers that meet the public alert certification standards and  
6 bear the public alert logo. Such information shall be provided  
7 to:

8 (1) Hospitals, long-term care facilities and other  
9 facilities licensed by the Department of Health.

10 (2) Senior citizen centers.

11 (3) Day care centers licensed by the Department of  
12 Public Welfare.

13 (4) Public, nonpublic, private academic, charter,  
14 approved private, chartered for the deaf and blind schools  
15 located in this Commonwealth.

16 Section 5. Appropriation.

17 The sum of \$200,000, or as much thereof as may be necessary,  
18 is hereby appropriated to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management  
19 Agency to carry out the provisions of this act. No more than  
20 \$25,000 shall be expended for the public awareness program.

21 Section 6. Effective date.

22 This act shall take effect in 60 days.