

**Statement for the  
House Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee  
August 14, 2012**

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE COMMISSIONER

Edward A. Mann, State Fire Commissioner

Chairman Barrar, Chairman Sainato, and members of the Committee, I am Ed Mann, the State Fire Commissioner. I am pleased to provide this statement regarding House Bill 2562 which will amend the Emergency Management Services Code, commonly referred to as Title 35.

As many of you know, I have served as the Fire Commissioner since June of 2000 when Governor Ridge appointed me to the position. The Office of the State Fire Commissioner (OSFC) is a separate state agency from the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA). Despite being separate agencies, we are located in the same building and PEMA provides administrative support to OSFC. Both PEMA and OSFC have a close day to day working relationship. In addition, during disasters or emergencies, OSFC usually will have staff working in the State Emergency Operations Center.

Since my appointment as Fire Commissioner, I have witnessed and been part of many disasters and emergencies that have impacted Pennsylvania. The last

significant changes to Title 35 occurred in 1996. As Fire Commissioner, I know that the requirements of emergency management professionals in 2012 are very different than those in 1996. Therefore, I would highly recommend that you consider updating Title 35 to address any shortcoming or gaps that the current Title 35 has in relation to the natural and man-made disaster threats in today's world.

An example of one of the new and emerging emergency management aspects in Pennsylvania is related to Marcellus Shale. As you know, the Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission issued its report in July 2011. In that report, there were unanimous recommendations, that OSFC and PEMA receive funding to provide planning, training, coordination and support for our first responders and emergency management personnel in areas with unconventional gas wells. The recently enacted HB 1950 (Act 13 of 2012) provides funding for OSFC and PEMA to implement the recommendations in the report. OSFC will be working in collaboration with PEMA Director Glenn Cannon and his staff to develop a comprehensive and first class program to ensure that our citizens are protected in the event of any Marcellus Shale incidents. I thank you for your support in getting OSFC the funding to enhance public safety in regions of the Commonwealth that are hosts to this growing industry.

Another relatively new collaborative effort with PEMA, is the All Hazards Incident Management Team (IMT). OSFC is charged with the operational responsibility for the IMT, which can be used to support local command authorities when they are overwhelmed by an incident. While their actions rarely make the news headlines,

PEMA coordinated the deployment of several IMTs to areas of the northeast during the flooding from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee in August-September of 2011. Those IMTs did a terrific job during the flooding and play an important role during times of major emergencies or disaster.

I knew Glenn Cannon before he became the Director of PEMA. Since he has been Director, we have had a terrific working relationship on a number of matters including the ones I just mentioned. I frankly believe his leadership during Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee played a large role in the state's successful response to those devastating storms. He knows the emergency management business from top to bottom. Prior to becoming PEMA Director, he worked in the emergency management business from the first responder side, the local government side, the county government side, and the private sector. In addition, after Hurricane Katrina, he was hired as an Assistant Administrator in the Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help fix the problems that happened during FEMA's response to that disaster. My advice to the Committee is to strongly consider what he has to say about the proposed amendments to Title 35 and any recommendations he may have. I think the citizens of Pennsylvania are fortunate to have someone with his ability and stature heading PEMA.

Governor Corbett has made public safety a top priority in his Administration because he believes it is a core function of government. I believe this re-write of Title 35 is another important step in further enhancing public safety. During the

drafting of the proposed changes to Title 35, PEMA reached out to me and my staff to review and discuss the changes. I believe the changes to Title 35 are appropriate and that any issues OSFC may have had regarding proposed changes were addressed. Therefore, I strongly support HB 2562 and urge that you work to move the bill out of Committee as quickly as you can.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement in support of HB 2562. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding this matter.