



KEYSTONE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

"Steeped In Tradition With a Vision For The Future"

TESTIMONY

Keystone Emergency Management Association

Before the
House Veterans Affairs and
Emergency Preparedness Committee

HOUSE BILL 2562

Present by:

Roy Shipley Jr.,
Western Area President
Keystone Emergency Management Association

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Pittsburgh, PA

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I am Roy Shipley, Director of the Fayette County Emergency Management Agency, Uniontown PA. I also serve as the Western Region President for the Keystone Emergency Management Association (KEMA). I have been involved in emergency management since 1977 having spent fourteen days assisting during the Johnston Floods and have been the Director of Emergency Management for Fayette County since 1987.

Updating Title 35 has been a KEMA priority for many years, dating back to 2005 when KEMA hosted a joint workshop with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) in State College. The goal of the workshop was to develop a plan to revise Title 35, the Emergency Management Services Code, and Act 227 of 2002, the Counterterrorism Planning, Preparedness and Response Act, which among other things formalized the nine Regional Task Forces across the Commonwealth. Mr. Ed Atkins, the Director of Emergency Services for Chester County was elected by KEMA to chair the committee for drafting the re-write. Mr. Atkins, Mr. Wes Hill our current KEMA President, members of the KEMA Executive Board, PEMA and the emergency management stakeholders across the Commonwealth have worked diligently over the past years to refine and keep Title 35 as a top priority for the emergency management community in the Commonwealth.

I would like to briefly highlight some of the proposed changes that are addresses in this legislation.

Regionalization

Regionalization of Emergency Services has been a topic of discussion over the past several years with the every ending decrease in funding at all levels of government and the decline in volunteers willing to serve their community. The approach outlined in HB 2562 will provided the basis and direction for regionalization of emergency management activities while still allowing for municipal oversight. Regionalization can be a valuable tool in helping counties and locals maintain services to continue to protect the lives and property of the citizens of the Commonwealth.

Worker's Compensation

The proposed HB will provide for more comprehensive Worker's Comp coverage to Duly Enrolled Emergency Management Volunteers. Many of our emergency management programs rely heavily on volunteers, routinely putting their own personal safety on the line to meet the public safety of their community. We must ensure that these individuals and their families are protected in case of an injury or death.

Duties & Responsibilities

The proposed HB includes language that clarifies the actual duties and responsibilities of county and municipal emergency management organizations. This is vitally important to the county and local elected officials and appointed coordinators in that it gives them a blue print to operate by.

Information Sharing

The proposed HB addresses the collection, validation and prompt sharing of all-hazards information by public entities. This is a key element in the planning and preparedness process to be able to share vital information in a timely manner with those who need it.

Planning

The proposed HB contains needed language that strengthens the planning process for dependent care facilities, and states that it shall be coordinated with the appropriate county and local emergency management program, and dedicated emergency response organizations.

In closing I would again like to thank you for allowing me to express KEMA's support for HB 2562. There has been extensive dialogue throughout the process which has allowed us to be assured that the proposed Amendment represents the best of all of our combined thoughts. The proposed amendments to Title 35 are needed and long overdue. KEMA supports its and I ask that you do whatever is possible to make these changes into law. KEMA and its membership stand ready to assist in the process. Thank You I welcome your comments or questions.