

**COUNTY OF GREENE
DEPARTMENT OF
EMERGENCY SERVICES**



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I am here today in a dual role. Not only am I representing Greene County Emergency Management, but I am also making a brief statement on behalf of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP).

You all have received a memo dated August 14, 2012 concerning comments on House bill 2562 from CCAP. I will only mention the highlights of this memo so as not to reiterate the total contents of something you all have already read.

It is important to note at the outset the counties' pivotal role in emergency management. For decades, going back to the old civil defense statutes, counties were seen as the level of government best able to plan for and coordinate the response to area-wide disasters. This role was reinforced in the current statute, and was expanded by subsequent enactments including the Public Safety emergency Telephone act under which counties and their telecommunications partners built the state's 911 system, the Hazardous Material Emergency Planning and Response Act under which counties are responsible for hazardous materials inventories and hazardous materials incident response planning, and Act 227 of 2002 which gave counties a key role in planning for homeland security. While municipalities, volunteers, and others – and in some circumstances state and federal resources – form the core of our disaster response and have their own planning responsibilities, the primary planning and coordination role is ours. This fundamental public safety task is one which our counties undertake with utmost conviction and diligence, and one which they fulfill with professionalism and care.

Title 35 and related statutes, regulations, and guidelines set out the interrelationships and prerogatives among state, county, and local government,

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and how their respective responsibilities are to be accomplished. For the reasons noted, we concur that revision of Title 35 is necessary. The question is whether technical, terminology, and practice updates are sufficient, or whether there also needs to be any fundamental change in the relationship among the Title's governmental partners. The draft before you at the moment does both and, while we concur with most of the terminology and practice changes, we offer several thoughts and questions about some of the current language.

These changes, line by line, are spelled out in detail in the aforementioned memo. Therefore, I will not use the committee's time to reiterate them.

While I put on my other hat of being a county Emergency Management Director, I concur with my colleagues that the rewrite of Title 35 is needed and has been accomplished in such a manner that is beneficial to the residents of the Commonwealth.

I apologize for not using my allotted ten minutes, however, this concludes my testimony and I am willing to accept any questions.

Thank you,

Greg Leathers, Director

Greene County Emergency Management.