

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
HEARING

STATE CAPITOL
HARRISBURG, PA

MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
140 MAJORITY CAUCUS ROOM

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2016
8:33 A.M.

PRESENTATION ON
PA TURNPIKE COMMISSION'S RESPONSE
TO TRAFFIC TIE-UP DURING
WINTER STORM JONAS

BEFORE:

HONORABLE JOHN TAYLOR, MAJORITY CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE LYNDY SCHLEGEL CULVER
HONORABLE JULIE HARHART
HONORABLE KATE HARPER
HONORABLE DOYLE HEFFLEY
HONORABLE TIM HENNESSEY
HONORABLE MARK KELLER
HONORABLE JIM MARSHALL
HONORABLE RON MARSICO
HONORABLE JEFF PYLE
HONORABLE MARGUERITE QUINN
HONORABLE MICHAEL REESE
HONORABLE STAN SAYLOR
HONORABLE KATHARINE WATSON

* * * * *

*Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*

BEFORE (continued):

HONORABLE WILLIAM KELLER, DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE BRYAN BARBIN
HONORABLE TIM BRIGGS
HONORABLE MIKE CARROLL
HONORABLE MARIA DONATUCCI
HONORABLE STEPHEN KINSEY
HONORABLE ROB MATZIE
HONORABLE MICHAEL SCHLOSSBERG

COMMITTEE STAFF PRESENT:

ERIC BUGAILE
MAJORITY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
BETH SICKLER
MAJORITY RESEARCH ANALYST
DAVID KOZAK
MAJORITY RESEARCH ANALYST
BONNIE GLATFELTER
MAJORITY ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

MEREDITH BIGGICA
DEMOCRATIC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ERIC NELSON
DEMOCRATIC RESEARCH ANALYST

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SUBMITTED WRITTEN TESTIMONY

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(See submitted written testimony and handouts online.)

P R O C E E D I N G S

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3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Good morning,
4 everyone. I would like to call this meeting of the House
5 Transportation Committee to order.

6 This morning, before we have our Members
7 introduce themselves, I just wanted to lay out our
8 agenda.

9 We are here to hear from the Pennsylvania
10 Turnpike Commission as well as the Pennsylvania State
11 Police with regard to problems that occurred on the
12 Pennsylvania Turnpike during our major snowstorm Jonas,
13 which happened back in January.

14 And we're also going to vote a resolution, time
15 permitting. If we don't have the time to do that, we will
16 reconvene probably off the floor later this afternoon. The
17 resolution, based on a hearing we had on Monday, I think is
18 important, and Chairman Keller and I want to see if we can
19 get that moving before we leave town for Appropriations
20 meetings.

21 With that, let me start to my far right, and if
22 our Members can introduce themselves. Representative
23 Kinsey.

24 REPRESENTATIVE KINSEY: Representative Kinsey
25 from Philadelphia County.

1 REPRESENTATIVE SCHLOSSBERG: Good morning.

2 Mike Schlossberg from Lehigh County.

3 MINORITY CHAIRMAN W. KELLER: Bill Keller,
4 Philadelphia County.

5 REPRESENTATIVE M. KELLER: Mark Keller, the
6 86th District, which is Perry and Cumberland Counties.

7 REPRESENTATIVE MARSHALL: Good morning.

8 Jim Marshall, Milepost 0, Beaver and Butler
9 Counties.

10 TURNPIKE CHAIRMAN LOGAN: You speak our language.

11 REPRESENTATIVE PYLE: Good morning.

12 Jeff Pyle, 60th Legislative, Armstrong, Butler,
13 and Indiana.

14 REPRESENTATIVE HENNESSEY: Good morning.

15 Tim Hennessey from Chester County in the
16 southeast.

17 REPRESENTATIVE REESE: Good morning.

18 I'm Mike Reese. I represent Westmoreland and
19 Somerset Counties.

20 REPRESENTATIVE HARPER: Kate Harper. My district
21 runs from the Plymouth Meeting exit to the Lansdale
22 Interchange.

23 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you.

24 We'll proceed in a second, and I'll ask Chairman
25 Keller for some remarks in a second.

1 I guess Chairman Keller and I and others, our
2 Senate counterparts, were on a call, I guess Saturday
3 midafternoon of that weekend, and really we were informed
4 at that time of the situation going on. I guess at that
5 point, you guys were in the middle of it.

6 And I think just Members of the Committee,
7 particularly our Members from out west, got a lot of calls
8 about what exactly happened and how it was rectified and
9 ways we could handle it differently, if there are such
10 ways, because, you know, it wasn't just a logistical
11 problem but with the storm, the way it was coming.
12 Certainly for us in the east, it was very, very difficult
13 that day.

14 So we're looking forward to hearing that. We'll
15 try to move through, you know, our entire group of folks
16 that are here to testify, and then we'll ask some
17 questions.

18 Chairman Keller.

19 MINORITY CHAIRMAN W. KELLER: Thank you,
20 Mr. Chairman.

21 I agree with Chairman Taylor's remarks. I think
22 we're just here to actually find out what happened. It was
23 a major storm and a major problem. And a lot of Members
24 had questions, and I think that's what we're here to find
25 out, and hopefully we can get started on that.

1 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you, Chairman
3 Keller.

4 So we have with us, I guess all at once, which
5 is good, our Chairman of the Pennsylvania Turnpike,
6 Commissioner Sean Logan. Mr. Chairman, thanks for being
7 here.

8 TURNPIKE CHAIRMAN LOGAN: Thank you.

9 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Their CEO, Mark
10 Compton. Mark, thanks for being here.

11 And Craig Shuey, their COO.

12 Also, from the Pennsylvania State Police we have
13 Maj. Edward C Hoke, the Bureau of Patrol Director. Major
14 Hoke.

15 MAJOR HOKE: Good morning.

16 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: And Cpt. David Cain.

17 CAPTAIN CAIN: Good morning, sir.

18 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: In the course of your
19 testimony, if there is anybody else that wants to add
20 further information, feel free to, you know, act somewhat
21 informally, I guess, in terms of communicating back and
22 forth, and then we'll hear what you have to say and then
23 the Members will have some questions.

24 Chairman?

25 TURNPIKE CHAIRMAN LOGAN: Okay.

1 Thank you, Chairman Taylor, Chairman Keller, and
2 Transportation Committee Members. On behalf of the entire
3 Turnpike Commission, I want to thank you for convening this
4 hearing.

5 As I said, on Sunday evening, the 24th, I do want
6 to offer on behalf of the Commission my sincere apologies
7 to all the travelers who were stranded for that time period
8 on the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

9 I said that no motorist should have to endure
10 that on any Pennsylvania road, especially a road that you
11 pay for. That evening, I also promised a thorough analysis
12 and review of the events that led up to the incident,
13 because we do want to learn from that issue.

14 I would also be remiss if I didn't thank all our
15 partners and literally hundreds of volunteers who stepped
16 up and helped us manage what turned out to be really a
17 record-setting blizzard, and you can see some of the
18 agencies and organizations, more than 40 entities, that
19 helped.

20 Federal, State, local, private entities were out
21 there working with our team throughout the entire crisis,
22 including volunteers from, as I said, local fire and
23 ambulance companies as well as some of the other travelers.
24 These men and women helped make sure there were no
25 fatalities and there were no serious injuries, despite the

1 magnitude of the emergency.

2 As many of you saw from the coverage, people in
3 our system saw fellow travelers in need, and they went out
4 of their way to assist them in many ways: pulling a truck
5 driver from a steep hill, offering shelter in a warm truck
6 cab, or just simply by offering their cell phone to someone
7 to call a loved one.

8 Our team -- and please understand this -- our
9 team recognizes that we need to be held accountable for our
10 management of this emergency. We are here today to provide
11 as many answers as we possibly can to the appropriate and
12 legitimate questions that have been raised over the past
13 weeks.

14 We do welcome the scrutiny. As Chairman, I can
15 assure you that we made every effort and took every step
16 possible to keep our customers safe, but I realize we can
17 do more. We have some work ahead of us to make sure we are
18 better prepared for the next emergency.

19 Now I'd like to talk to you about the two-phase
20 process involved in the After-Action Review, or the AAR,
21 that I promised and that is currently underway.

22 The purpose of the AAR is to review every
23 decision made and every action undertaken. We want to
24 identify what worked and what didn't work. We want to
25 improve operations and response where applicable.

1 The AAR Team is being directed by our CEO,
2 Mark Compton, and it's being coordinated by Michael Baker
3 International, our general consulting engineering firm.

4 Phase I began on January 25th and it ended
5 on February 8th, this past Monday. As part of the
6 information-gathering process of Phase I, the AAR Team met
7 internally with the three maintenance sheds involved in the
8 storm operation from start to finish. That was Everett
9 Maintenance, Kegg Maintenance, and Somerset Maintenance.

10 I personally visited the sheds with the COO and
11 CEO along with our maintenance personnel, and these
12 locations employ more than 90 personnel at these three
13 sheds. These sessions involved a lengthy and thorough
14 discussion about preparations, actions taken, and a review
15 of the timeline pertaining to the maintenance response.

16 In addition, the AAR Team conducted 10
17 fact-finding meetings, which included dozens of
18 representatives from our internal departments: Traffic
19 Engineering and Operations, Fare Collections, our senior
20 executive team, the State Police Troop T, and PennDOT.

21 As part of Phase I, a questionnaire was also
22 prepared by the team and sent to dozens of response
23 agencies. It featured 14 questions, and it focused mainly
24 on the response strategy and the timeline. And we have
25 received roughly about 80 responses back to that

1 questionnaire.

2 Phase II of this two-phase process began on
3 Monday, February 8th, and again, we began meeting with all
4 the external Federal, State, and local agencies examining
5 the decisions made and the actions taken before, during,
6 and after the event. More than 300 professionals and
7 volunteers are assisting us with this effort.

8 Also, interviews with outside partners will help
9 develop a complete picture of the massive response and
10 rescue effort. The AAR Team will begin its analysis of the
11 response and decisionmaking procedures and offer a series
12 of recommendations for future consideration as part of the
13 Phase II work.

14 The Commission expects to conclude Phase II later
15 this month or early in March. A Phase II report will be
16 made public after the AAR Team completes and the Commission
17 approves the review.

18 So with that, I would like to turn it over to our
19 COO, Craig Shuey, who will present the Committee regarding
20 the chronology, the geography, and the causative factors
21 pertaining to this; and then our CEO, Mark Compton, will
22 discuss procedural changes that have occurred as well as
23 some initial lessons.

24 MR. SHUEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 Thank you to everybody who has come out today to

1 hear a little bit about how we manage this operation and
2 what we're going to do going forward.

3 This slide just kind of gives out, lays out a
4 little bit of the initial timeline of planning. I just
5 want to tell you that whenever there's a storm of this
6 magnitude, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, like
7 PennDOT and others, begins planning for this process well
8 before it occurs. Equipment is readied. Staffing plans
9 are put in place. Materials and other things are
10 double-checked to ensure that they are open or ready for
11 use.

12 One highlight on this slide just is what we made
13 known to the public. We had planned for a midnight speed
14 reduction and planned for a heavy or a double-trailer and
15 empty-trailer ban at midnight. Snow hit the Commonwealth
16 much earlier and heavier. It was actually planned for
17 about that same time, but it hit heavier than expected, and
18 so we moved up those timelines accordingly.

19 Locally, you had the Everett and Kegg Maintenance
20 units in plow-patrol mode from 7 a.m. through the end of
21 the 3 p.m. shift, and they were treating the roadway as
22 necessary. The snow did begin to fall in different places
23 around 2 o'clock. You had, by 4 p.m., you were in plowing
24 mode in the Kegg area where the incident occurred, and plow
25 trains were hitting the road. The grouping that you see in

1 that photo, the group of trucks that work together to plow
2 the road, is called a plow train, and they began around
3 8 o'clock in that Keggs section.

4 Primary event locations. There were a couple of
5 incidents that occurred during the course of the evening
6 that impacted how this all played out, the first of which
7 happened about 20 miles from the incident site at
8 Milepost 155 -- actually about 30 miles from the incident
9 site, Milepost 155.

10 You can see in that picture there's a
11 tractor-trailer across the road. It took about an hour and
12 a half to move that truck. As you see there, there's a
13 human chain that was formed by travelers who were trying to
14 assist the truck driver getting up the very steep slope
15 there. The location, the type of crash that occurred
16 there, added to the amount of time it took to clear that.
17 And during that timeframe, about a 5-mile backlog built
18 behind the 155 crash.

19 Around 7:40, so before the traffic starts to
20 clear at the 155 crash, we're beginning to see
21 tractor-trailers having trouble climbing the mountain
22 around 126. That is a very steep approach to the Allegheny
23 Tunnel. Those who travel from the west are very familiar
24 with it. And there is a project there, working on a slide
25 mitigation. It's called the New Baltimore Slide, and there

1 are two-lane westbound -- or, yeah, a westbound
2 configuration there through the construction area.

3 Also around this time, we had some multiple
4 disabled tractor-trailers in the eastbound direction, to
5 the east of Somerset, that were pooling some resources,
6 State Police and our team as well as towers, to keep the
7 traffic moving in that direction.

8 At about 9:07, we recognized that the traffic was
9 stopped at the 226 Milepost and that as a part of our
10 pre-planned construction operations plan, we stopped
11 traffic at Kegg Maintenance, and this gave us some
12 operational flexibility to move traffic off of the system
13 at the Kegg Maintenance facility during the course of the
14 recovery effort.

15 Just a quick, you know, hash on the snowfall.
16 This was expected to be a significant snowfall.

17 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Craig, could you just
18 go back one slide?

19 MR. SHUEY: Yes, sir.

20 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: And I'm looking for
21 the spot where you said that -- you said it was Kegg
22 Maintenance?

23 MR. SHUEY: Kegg Maintenance is---

24 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Where does that fit?

25 MR. SHUEY: Let's see; if it moves backwards.

1 That is Keggs Maintenance. There we go. That's
2 Keggs Maintenance, the last one that pops up.

3 MALE VOICE: The third from the left.

4 MR. SHUEY: Does that make sense, or---? It's
5 that one that just popped off.

6 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: There it is. All
7 right. Thank you.

8 MR. SHUEY: Yep.

9 So we had heavy snowfall beginning earlier than
10 forecast. I think that affected both our plans for
11 restrictions on traffic as well as the motorists
12 themselves. They were watching forecasts all day. We did
13 have a pretty good increase in traffic around that
14 timeframe.

15 You noted a lot of the people who were stuck were
16 buses coming from a rally in Washington, DC. I think they
17 were all planning to get past this area before the heaviest
18 of snowfall came, and so that had an impact on their plans.

19 The 5-mile backlog all moved together from that
20 incident at 155. So by the time it reached the, approached
21 the Allegheny Tunnel, it was pretty heavy congestion. That
22 traffic doesn't split up and move as freely as it does
23 under normal conditions, so that had an impact.

24 We did have, by virtue of trucks getting stuck in
25 the right lane, which was the lane they were restricted to

1 through the construction area, and the right two lanes
2 above the construction area approaching the tunnel, they
3 were using all lanes, and eventually, as they became
4 disabled, blocked all of our access for both commercial --
5 or both passenger vehicles and our plows to move through.

6 The other, the final contributing factor here is
7 that we were in a full-blown storm response, so every unit
8 that we had was out trying to maintain the roadway
9 throughout the timeframe.

10 Again, just a look at some of the weather, and I
11 think the most significant points on this are that we had
12 snowfall rates of 1 to 2 inches an hour throughout the
13 evening on Saturday and in excess of 2.2 inches an hour
14 between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. on the day of the -- on the
15 Saturday of the storm.

16 This is just as site situational information.
17 This was the RWIS at Milepost 120. It's our closest
18 location. As you can see, we had at 7:40 p.m., we did have
19 1.85 inches per hour registered at that location. There
20 was 8 inches on the ground by midnight. And Saturday, we
21 did have that 2-plus-inch per hour, and Somerset itself
22 indicated a 35.8-inch total snow accumulation.

23 These slides, or these pictures, were taken at
24 the construction area at the New Baltimore Slide. They are
25 focused on the mountain. They are part of the construction

1 management process. They're measuring whether the mountain
2 is actually moving. So they're not designed to give us
3 information about the roadway, but there was a little bit
4 of a picture of the roadway travel on there, so we thought
5 they might be useful explaining.

6 TURNPIKE CHAIRMAN LOGAN: If I can for a second.

7 For the guys from out west, Representatives
8 Marshall and Matzie, when you're traveling down and see
9 what looks like kind of a hunting shed on the hill, that is
10 actually this camera. Many times people ask what that is,
11 and that's this camera here.

12 MR. SHUEY: And just so you know, this is a still
13 camera. It doesn't transmit information. It's being
14 recorded for the construction. We didn't see it until
15 probably Monday or Tuesday after the event.

16 But anyway, this is prior to, 5 p.m. prior to on
17 that Friday evening. You can see traffic is moving. The
18 roadway looks black. There is already snow on the ground,
19 but there was already snow on the mountain at that
20 particular time during that week anyway.

21 5:25: Still moving.

22 6:40: You can start to see the heavy snow,
23 darkness. Traffic is moving, appearing to move freely.

24 8:25: If you look in the left corner of that
25 slide, it looks like you're seeing the traffic more

1 congested than it had been. We believe that's what was
2 sort of the start of the traffic having come from the
3 155 incident all sort of together moving up through that
4 area.

5 8:40: Much heavier congestion again.

6 10:10 and after that: The traffic does not
7 appear to be moving through that section. The lights all
8 appear to be in the same locations for the most part
9 throughout that timeframe.

10 This is 6:55 a.m. on Saturday morning. Again,
11 you can see the traffic about in the same location it was
12 earlier.

13 And then 6:40 on Sunday morning: All cleared
14 out. And those prisms, those lights on the hill, is what
15 the camera is actually there to show, is measuring any
16 movement on that slide area.

17 So a couple of points on decisionmaking.

18 We have been asked about roadway closures. You
19 know, we had made a plan for the ban on trucks at midnight,
20 expecting that to be the worst of the storm. By the time
21 it was apparent that that was going to be ineffective, the
22 trucks were on the road. There wasn't an easy way to stop
23 traffic throughout that timeframe. We like to give some
24 warning to that. The communities around the area need
25 warning to be able to prepare for that.

1 Conditions throughout both our State and Maryland
2 and Virginia were also impaired, so our normal planned
3 X routes and closure routes were affected equally by the
4 storm we were dealing with. And we balance, as we make our
5 decisions about closure, we balance that with how that's
6 going to impact local communities and the ability for them
7 to respond to incidents in their area.

8 We did have the traffic stop at Keggs Maintenance.
9 That was a planned traffic stop when the conditions got to
10 where they were. So there was a plan in place for stopping
11 at Keggs Maintenance to be able to maintain some level of
12 control of the situation. That worked effectively.

13 We began turning a gate at 1:30 a.m. on Saturday
14 morning at the Keggs Maintenance shed once we could clear
15 that area out and turn traffic back to Bedford and send
16 them, hopefully, to hotels and other locations where
17 traffic could be held safely.

18 8:30 a.m.: We opened another location at 138
19 and began moving traffic off of there. And at 129, the
20 129 Milepost gate, that became open at 1:10 p.m. and was
21 moving traffic.

22 Throughout this process, when we asked for help
23 from PennDOT to clear those areas, they did respond and
24 effectively helped us start turning traffic in those
25 areas.

1 Some of the gates in this area, and people, there
2 were many that mentioned, I saw a gate; I don't understand
3 why you wouldn't let me off. There were several locations
4 where those gates led into State Game Lands, led on to dirt
5 roads, were not suitable to take traffic off of, so
6 decisions were made not to begin using those gates during
7 that time. Those gates are primarily there for us to move
8 equipment around.

9 A lot of questions about median barrier removal.
10 These decisions were made after the roadway was closed in
11 each direction. That would be from Breezewood to
12 New Stanton in both directions. That had occurred around
13 11 a.m. on Saturday morning.

14 State Police was incident command at that time.
15 They made -- they helped us direct decisions about when to
16 begin pulling barrier.

17 For reference, a section of barrier weighs about
18 6,000 to 8,000 pounds. It is in some cases embedded into
19 the roadway by the repavements that have occurred; requires
20 a loader and several people to guide the loader. So the
21 conditions have to be pretty good in order to do that
22 effectively.

23 The loaders themselves were being used to
24 re-equip the trucks with salt and to dig out vehicles
25 around the area that were being turned. So the same

1 resources needed to turn traffic at gates would have been
2 necessary to pull barriers, so we did make some decisions
3 about best utilization of those resources at that time.

4 Captain Cain, you were incident command at that
5 time. Is there anything you wanted to add at this juncture
6 or do you want to wait until the end?

7 CAPTAIN CAIN: You're fine right where you're at.

8 MR. SHUEY: All right.

9 Mark, I'm going to turn it over to you to run
10 through where we're going from here.

11 MR. COMPTON: Great. Thank you, Craig.

12 There has been a lot of discussion, too, about
13 the incidents that happened on our roadway back in 2014.
14 They, too, were -- legislative hearings were put in place
15 as a result of those. We have done extensive After-Action
16 Reviews, and the question is, what did you learn from that,
17 what did you put in place for that, and did that help you
18 on this event?

19 And there is no question about it: There were
20 things that were put in place, a lot of things that were
21 put in place. The Turnpike has not rested on our laurels
22 or sat on our hands since the incidents back in 2014, a lot
23 of things that came into play that day as a result, and we
24 have some of these listed for you here today.

25 I'll go through these very briefly, and if you

1 want to park on any of these, we certainly can.

2 But the Emergency Transportation Operations Plan,
3 really, a lot of that is a series of checklists: making
4 sure that folks from our Operations Center, making sure the
5 folks on the roadway, are asking and doing the right things
6 they need to do at the right times whenever they have the
7 understanding that the situation is what the situation is.
8 Are we pooling our resources appropriately? Are we
9 elevating the conversations to PEMA? Are we elevating up
10 our ranks to get the necessary folks involved? And that
11 clearly was in play that day.

12 We're going to spend a little more time on the
13 backlog monitoring on a future slide. But this, once
14 again, was a key part and a key role for our partners who
15 at the evening, or late in the evening of Friday night,
16 this was called into play to ask for our local partners
17 who, and I think the press was appropriate to say were
18 heroes in this event, to make sure that we were checking on
19 folks.

20 It can't be lost about the third bullet: improve
21 coordination with PSP, who we are embedded with every day.
22 The Corporal for Troop T at the Watch Desk sits in our
23 Operations Center, and the partnership and the coordination
24 with PSP is as good as it has ever been in my time here,
25 and our professionals who have been with us for 20,

1 30 years say the same thing. Our relationship with Troop T
2 is tremendously strong. We can't do what we do without
3 them.

4 Very early on in the morning of Saturday,
5 coordinating calls being led by the Governor's Office and
6 Rick Flinn started offering every available assistance they
7 possibly could to us in the very early morning hours.
8 There's a good chance I'm married to Rick Flinn and don't
9 know it with the amount of time we spent together through
10 those early hours.

11 PennDOT Secretary Richards was with us. We had
12 Scott Christie at PEMA and Jon Fleming and General Carrelli
13 from our National Guard. The resources that were made
14 available to us were made available to us early, and that's
15 a large reason why there were no injuries and there were no
16 fatalities as a result, was because of all the partners
17 that came to help us. So we really appreciate the
18 relationship that we have with not just the State
19 coordinating entities but also the locals who came.

20 A little bit inside baseball for you. But a
21 retooled Traffic Engineering and Operations Center, really
22 making sure that we've got folks at the Operations Center
23 who are well trained to be able to see what they're seeing
24 with the cameras and what they're hearing from the folks on
25 the roadway. That was put in place as a result of 2014 and

1 came into play.

2 The last two bullets there: the incident command
3 training. This is an internal and external component. We
4 train a lot of our folks. One of the things that we do,
5 when PEMA gets a sense that something is coming up, they go
6 live; they activate. A big role for us is what is called
7 going into EPLO, which is making sure there's a Turnpike
8 representative that's embedded at PEMA as well as we have
9 in our own Operations Center.

10 We spend a lot of time working with those folks
11 who get called in to that role from us, as well as making
12 sure that we do this with local partners: what are the
13 resources we have on the road with the fire police and the
14 like?

15 Increased use of social media. What we learned
16 back in 2014 is the first notification that we had to our
17 customers came through TRIP Talk, because as we were
18 updating our internal computer, that's connected. So that
19 piece was also made live. It's one of the best
20 communication tools that we have with our customers.

21 Since then, too, we have got into a relationship,
22 as has PennDOT now, with Waze, who is the app that has the
23 map. It's navigation, and it is known for the way it
24 navigates you around incidents and accidents. So we feed
25 them information, and we're able to see their information

1 as well. So that became a key part of getting notification
2 out to our customers.

3 One of the things that we want to talk about here
4 and what happened since 2014, slides 1 and 3. It was
5 really tabletop exercises with a lot of our key partners in
6 the region. So obviously PSP was a part of that, as they
7 always have. But it's the realization, really, that at
8 times, the Turnpike can't do it all ourselves. So it's
9 making sure that when we get into these incidents, making
10 sure that the local partners know what resources we have to
11 bear; we know what resources they have to bear. And as a
12 result of 2014, we did tabletop exercises with a lot of our
13 larger partners.

14 And this area that we did as well, the picture
15 that you see there. Two hundred and seventeen
16 first-responder partners were part of our TIM's training,
17 which was out in the region that was affected back in late
18 January.

19 It's also important to note, I know movable
20 barrier has become a large conversation tool. On
21 March 15th, we're going to deploy our first movable barrier
22 in a construction project on the Northeast Extension, and
23 it will be in place around the March 15th timeline. The
24 reason for this is there's a large-scale paving operation
25 that's going to be taking place up there. So we identified

1 this as one of the areas to first try this.

2 The reason why we're trying it here is because
3 we'll have the opportunity to have staff around us with the
4 fact that it's a live construction zone. So we'll be
5 anxious to see how this works and, if needed, how it will
6 be called into play.

7 A couple of things that we learned and a couple
8 of things that we know that we need to change as a result
9 of this.

10 What we did on site was really go to our partners
11 and say, you begin the backlog checks and kind of point
12 them in one direction. That would have worked back -- it
13 did work back in 2014 when you have someone start at the
14 eastbound working towards west and someone working
15 westbound towards east and we'll meet in the middle. Here,
16 because the traffic, as Craig pointed out, there was really
17 two different queues, if you will. So the communication
18 with our partners on where to go on that backlog, we need
19 to do a better job in making sure that we're aligning our
20 partners to the right areas to make sure that all the
21 background checks, or backlog checks are being done, the
22 wellness checks.

23 I liken it to what PennDOT does with their
24 Adopt A Highway program, if you will, to where an entity
25 comes in and says, you got this mile of road; this is yours

1 to take care of. We believe if we would have been able to
2 organize in a better manner to say, you're going to take
3 mile marker 125, you're going to take mile marker 126; let
4 us know what you're seeing, we think we could have been a
5 little more effective than just sending them out and
6 dispatching. So we're working on that and already have
7 plans in place to do so.

8 The one thing that we also need to take a look,
9 and Craig also pointed out that all of our maintenance
10 employees were out taking care of their part of the
11 roadway, and I hope it doesn't go unnoticed that the other
12 540 miles in a 36-inch snowstorm were taken care of and
13 take care of well. But all those resources were deployed.
14 So we as an entity need to find a way to get auxiliary
15 staffing, auxiliary resources, into an area to where it may
16 be needed, with the understanding that if you pull that
17 from a neighboring shed, which in this case we did, but if
18 you pull that from a neighboring shed, then you've left
19 that shed in that area flat-footed, if you will, to have
20 the opportunity to treat their part of the roadway and then
21 things begin to change.

22 So we're taking a real hard look at how we're
23 going to stock and store equipment. For instance, if we
24 had loaders, things could have probably moved a little
25 quicker if we had access to more loaders.

1 Making sure we've done, as part of our planning,
2 we've taken a real hard look at regional deployment and
3 where we can get those resources, but we also need to take
4 a look at how we're going to stockpile those resources
5 ourselves.

6 We're working on using our training sites, which
7 actually we have two different ones in different locations,
8 one east, one west. That may be an opportunity to store
9 more equipment and also keep the utilization up, because
10 you can use them as a training tool. So we're going to
11 take a real hard look at what's the amount of equipment
12 we're keeping in case these things happen again.

13 We continue to take a look at the equipment that
14 we have in each shed, in each location: what we need; what
15 we continue to need. As our road has evolved, much of the
16 sections that you see that are under construction today are
17 going from four lanes to six lanes. We continue to take a
18 look at our plowing operations and expand with things like
19 tow plows, with things like wing plows. But as it relates
20 to the amount of equipment that we're adding, we're not
21 adding equipment at the level that the road is expanding.
22 So we have to take another look at that.

23 One of the things that kept coming up is really
24 the key understanding of, what's the size and scope of the
25 event that you're dealing with? And these folks, and I was

1 very clear and want to be very clear, these folks worked
2 the problem and worked tirelessly until it ended. These
3 folks didn't stop until roughly 5, 6 o'clock Sunday night,
4 and they started, as Craig pointed out, 7 o'clock, many of
5 them 7 a.m. on Friday morning. They worked tirelessly and
6 they continued to work the problem.

7 But we didn't gain an understanding of how large
8 this is, because when you work the problem, the old adage
9 "the forest and the trees." We continued to work on the
10 one tree hoping that would be the one; hoping that would be
11 the one. So we've really got to spend some time and figure
12 out, when these events ensue, how big is it and how soon
13 can we find out how big it is?

14 One of the vehicles -- or sorry; I shouldn't use
15 the term "vehicle" here. One of the areas that we used to
16 do this was whenever we had customers who were in the
17 backlog who were calling into the Operations Center, what's
18 going on? what's going on? So starting to really fine-tune
19 how we use those conversations; how we can use ways to get
20 a real sense of where the stoppages are occurring and how
21 long those stoppages are. So we're spending a lot of time,
22 a lot of time on that effort.

23 Interagency communication and coordination. All
24 these things come down to communication. And I do want to
25 point out the changes and the way in which communication

1 and coordination came to life with our partners like
2 PennDOT, who, again, were a great help, PEMA, and
3 others.

4 But when you take a look at this, should we be
5 sharing equipment and find a way to share equipment was
6 some of the local partners as a better way of coordinating
7 and to get those things in place, and we need to continue
8 to look at that all throughout our regions.

9 We continue to work as well on the winter weather
10 plans and maintenance plan operations the way in which we
11 do our sequencing of plowing operations, the way in which
12 we go about making sure our timing is right from one plow
13 train to another.

14 Incident Unified Command continues to be an area
15 of focus for us. Kathleen Kane was out on site with us,
16 and we had our maintenance folks who were out there, led by
17 our superintendent. We also thought if we would have asked
18 for another resource to coordinate: the buses who came to
19 take care of the people, someone who was there to just
20 coordinate wellness checks; making sure we got the right
21 folks on site; and, most importantly, when resources come,
22 know where they go. So we're going to continue to work on
23 that.

24 Median-barrier access is something that we're
25 also going to continue to take a hard look at. Six to

1 eight thousand pounds is tough to move, even with a loader,
2 when there's 3 feet of snow. So we're taking a look at
3 that process. But more importantly, I want to continue to
4 talk about the safety aspect of this component.

5 When you move barrier, you're putting people into
6 your lane of traffic that was cleared for emergency
7 purposes. So when you do that, making sure that that road
8 is clear to put traffic in it is something that we can't
9 take lightly.

10 And we're going to look at the barriers and we're
11 going to look at the gates, but that's a process that, as
12 you're moving barrier, frankly, is a success story here.
13 Because in 3 feet of snow, you really don't want people to
14 leave your service plazas in that type of event, but that's
15 an access onto the roadway. When all the gates are open,
16 that's access onto the roadway. So whenever you're moving
17 that barrier, that's a vulnerability that you've got
18 vehicles coming, could be coming in both directions.
19 That's when the safety aspects truly come into play.

20 So we're going to take a hard look at access, but
21 we're also going to make sure we do it, knowing that we
22 have a closed system, yes, but knowing that we have a
23 tremendous amount of access points that folks can get on
24 the roadway. So taking a hard look at that.

25 Communication is something that in this process

1 we've taken a real, real hard look at, meaning, what, when,
2 how can we communicate with the customers who are in that
3 queue; what, when, how can we communicate with those
4 customers before they get into that queue?

5 I know and I'm sure Troop T will talk a little
6 bit about our Plan X procedure, when we go into place,
7 pooling resources to do that. The easiest mechanism to get
8 to folks is typically through our TRIP Talk, through the
9 radio, something on the smartphone. Those pieces we're
10 okay with, but we also need to make sure that they know,
11 even if we don't have all the information at our fingertips
12 yet, that we're providing them adequate information, and
13 most importantly, if they need to get information to us,
14 they can do that. So we're still spending a lot of time on
15 that, because I don't think anyone up here is saying that
16 we have that, we have that right yet.

17 With that, I think at this point we'll go ahead
18 and turn it over to Troop T, and then we can go to
19 questions, if that's okay, Chairman.

20 MAJOR HOKE: Thank you.

21 And good morning, Chairman Taylor and Chairman
22 Keller, Members of the Committee. I appreciate the
23 opportunity to appear here this morning and provide
24 testimony on behalf of the Pennsylvania State Police and
25 our response to Winter Storm Jonas.

1 I have a very brief -- and emphasis on "brief" --
2 statement to read to you which I believe will provide some
3 context and some clarity to some of the issues that we're
4 discussing here this morning.

5 The Pennsylvania State Police take great pride in
6 serving the citizens and the visitors of the Commonwealth.
7 Every day across the State, the men and women of the
8 Pennsylvania State Police respond to emergency incidents of
9 varying size and complexity. Whether the incident involves
10 a single vehicle crash where no one has been injured, a
11 mass casualty criminal incident, or a natural disaster
12 affecting the entire State, the goals of the responding
13 Troopers are always the same: protection of life,
14 stabilization of the incident, preservation of property,
15 and the restoration of order.

16 Pennsylvania State Troopers are highly trained to
17 achieve these goals and to manage emergency incidents
18 effectively and efficiently. Department policies and
19 procedures provide the necessary guidance and direction,
20 and perhaps even more importantly, the authority for our
21 personnel to work together with our local, State, and
22 Federal law enforcement and emergency management partners
23 to ensure a positive outcome.

24 The Pennsylvania State Police fully recognize the
25 value of working together with all of these agencies in

1 order to develop strategic goals, establish tactical
2 objectives, and coordinate resources and personnel to
3 fulfill this mission.

4 During the week leading up to Winter Storm Jonas,
5 weather forecasts were closely watched and standard plans
6 for significant weather events went into place. Effective
7 on January 22nd, our Troop operational units were placed on
8 "Alert Condition W," requiring Stations and Troop
9 Headquarters to report situational awareness information to
10 our Department Watch Center.

11 The Department Watch Center had been developed as
12 a result of an internal review of past significant
13 incidents and weather events to provide 24/7 situational
14 awareness throughout the entire PSP command structure. As
15 a result, our Troopers, supervisors, commanders, and the
16 executive officers were able to work with a common
17 understanding of issues happening "on the ground."

18 Throughout the weekend of January 22nd through the
19 23rd, much of Pennsylvania was ravaged by Winter Storm
20 Jonas. Significant snowfall enveloped much of the State,
21 with certain regions of the Commonwealth being particularly
22 hard hit. This was especially true in Allegheny Township,
23 Somerset County, in the area traversed by the Pennsylvania
24 Turnpike.

25 As the snow fell, multiple commercial vehicles

1 traveling west began struggling to ascend the grade at the
2 Allegheny Mountain approaching the Allegheny Tunnel. Their
3 eventual inability to move due to the deteriorating road
4 conditions resulted in a rapid queue development, which
5 immediately became an emergency due to the conditions.

6 Snow continued to fall at the rate of several
7 inches per hour, and the steady addition of vehicles to the
8 backlog exasperated the situation. We estimate that
9 approximately 400 commercial vehicles, 60 tour buses, and
10 100 passenger vehicles ultimately became embroiled in the
11 backlog.

12 Consequently, road maintenance crews were unable
13 to plow or treat the roadway. With traffic flow crippled,
14 the situation worsened. Further complicating the situation
15 was the rural nature of this area, limited vehicle access
16 to the Turnpike, and the construction zone where this
17 occurred, which consisted of "cattle chutes" where the
18 concrete medians were in place.

19 This incident engaged the full resources and
20 attention of Troop T and the command structure of the
21 Pennsylvania State Police. While it has become commonly
22 accepted in such events as these, it is still worth
23 mentioning that the men and women of Troop T performed
24 their duties with outstanding bravery and diligence. Along
25 with our partners in the Pennsylvania National Guard and

1 our local emergency services, Troopers conducted
2 vehicle-to-vehicle welfare checks, delivering food, water,
3 and gasoline.

4 Members and first responders endured hours in the
5 frigid cold while wading through thigh-deep snow to ensure
6 the safety and security of the stranded motorists. They
7 worked tirelessly to stabilize the situation and followed
8 through with many of the tasks until the incident was
9 resolved and the Turnpike was eventually reopened.

10 Simply stated, I could not be more proud of the
11 effort put forth by our Troopers and our partners who
12 provided exemplary service under extremely demanding
13 circumstances.

14 Naturally, identifying and communicating key
15 information, gathering intelligence, and obtaining
16 identifiable resources needed to bring incidents such as
17 these to a timelier conclusion will be the focus of our
18 continued assessment and refinement of protocols. The
19 safety, security, and convenience of motorists traveling
20 our highways will always be our highest priority regardless
21 of the conditions.

22 We are thankful that despite the difficulties,
23 the preservation of life and the stabilization of this
24 complex event, once it began, were successful. No one lost
25 their life, and no one was seriously injured.

1 I appreciate the opportunity to appear again here
2 this morning, sitting shoulder to shoulder with our
3 partners from the Pennsylvania Turnpike. As Mr. Compton
4 had mentioned, we work on a day-to-day basis in a unified
5 command structure while policing the Pennsylvania Turnpike
6 system. Our Troopers are embedded with the Turnpike staff
7 at the Highspire Communications Center.

8 It should be noted that during this event, not
9 only did the Troopers perform exemplary, but every member
10 of the Pennsylvania Turnpike maintenance staff that was out
11 there throughout the course of this actually historic storm
12 performed very admirably, and I want to recognize their
13 efforts as well.

14 Thank you.

15 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you.

16 And I know there are a lot of Members that have
17 questions, and I just want to really kick it off.

18 You know, perhaps in the course of answering some
19 questions, what seemed to be missing in the story is
20 exactly the individual, I guess, detailed procedures of
21 untangling it. I think that, you know, not to find fault
22 with it, but it's an interesting dilemma; like, how did you
23 get out of it? We kind of heard that you were in it and
24 then you were out of it. You know, we kind of touched over
25 it a little bit.

1 But it seems to me that part of it was due to,
2 you know, balancing this departure from the roadway. We
3 from the east, if we're stuck on the Turnpike for any
4 reason, you probably had an alternative that you could have
5 taken that would've been almost as fast, not quite as fast.
6 But we have major roads that would have a host of other
7 personnel, municipalities, clearing the roadway.

8 And I guess our Members from out west understand
9 better, but it seems to me that that particular area, there
10 was not that opportunity. And I think that for the average
11 person, particularly from the eastern part of the State
12 hearing about this dilemma, you think, well, why couldn't
13 they get off more easily?

14 And then we did hear, you know, in individual
15 conversations with many of you that story, and I think that
16 that's an important thing to sort of reemphasize, about why
17 it would not be prudent to put people off of the Turnpike
18 in that particular area.

19 MR. SHUEY: Thank you, Chairman.

20 It's absolutely correct as far as the geography
21 of the situation coming into significant play in this area.
22 The area between Bedford and Somerset is the longest
23 section of the Turnpike that does not have any exits
24 between it. It is a very rural, very mountainous part of
25 Pennsylvania.

1 The places that we do have access gates, which we
2 did use to turn traffic and get them back to the Bedford
3 area, were functional and were useful. But the places
4 where you would be accessing a township road or, as I said,
5 a Game Commission access point, it was very risky to send
6 traffic off in those locations.

7 When we begin making decisions about what we do
8 with the traffic that's on the roadway, particularly with,
9 you know, significant consultation with the Pennsylvania
10 State Police, if there's a feeling that it is not safe to
11 send people off and that being on the roadway, while
12 inconvenient, is better than sending them into unknown or
13 treacherous territory, we do that. We make that call.

14 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: And how often does
15 that occur? I guess that's pretty rare.

16 MR. SHUEY: Well, obviously this is an event that
17 is rare, this size and this scope and the types of
18 incidents that occurred. In this area, it is something
19 that we struggle with and have for many years because of
20 the geography. There are very few options that are -- that
21 make it easy to make those turns and those changes.

22 And understanding that when you make a decision
23 to pull traffic off, it's very difficult to separate the
24 tractor-trailers and the buses and the four-wheel-drive
25 vehicles, for example, from anything else in between. So

1 you have to be ready to send, you know, a Beetle with bald
2 tires off the same as you would a tractor-trailer or an
3 SUV.

4 And, you know, safety is paramount. As the Major
5 indicated, this was inconvenient, but there was not a loss
6 of life. There were not significant injuries. And for
7 that, I think it shows that the decisions to not scatter
8 traffic in areas that weren't sufficient to handle it were
9 wise.

10 MAJOR HOKE: Sir, if I may follow up just very
11 briefly here.

12 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

13 MAJOR HOKE: One of the things that I think is
14 important for the Committee to recognize also is the fact
15 that the Pennsylvania State Police and the Turnpike
16 Commission worked diligently to keep this road passable up
17 to the point that, because of the continuing storm, as the
18 hours passed by and we recognized that this was basically
19 coming to a point of critical mass, if you will, where
20 despite our best efforts, that roadway was not going to be
21 able to be kept open.

22 In the context of the Turnpike itself, with
23 regard to the access gates and getting people off of the
24 system, it wasn't just snowing on the Turnpike. That
25 entire area was being hard hit by that storm. PennDOT was

1 out there diligently working to clear the roadways and to
2 make those passable.

3 So to alleviate traffic from that Turnpike system
4 out into those surrounding roadways, and first of all, as
5 noted here, this is in a rural area. Really, the
6 availability to do that did not exist. And even if it did
7 exist at that point, because of the continuing storm, those
8 roads in many of those areas were still impassable as well.

9 So in the context of that, that the effort had
10 initially been focused on keeping that roadway open, we
11 were very successful in doing that up until approximately
12 almost midnight. There were times where commercial
13 vehicles would become stuck and we would, through the use
14 of heavy wreckers, be able to get them moving again and
15 allow some of that traffic to continue on, only to a short
16 time later have additional vehicles come down the roadway
17 and get stuck again.

18 And it got to the point again, if the snow had
19 not continued to fall, we may have been successful in
20 alleviating the situation much sooner than what we did.
21 But because it progressed for almost 24 hours, those were
22 the types of things that the folks out there were dealing
23 with.

24 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks.

25 Chairman Keller.

1 MINORITY CHAIRMAN W. KELLER: Thank you,
2 Mr. Chairman.

3 I don't know who to direct this question to, but
4 I'm just wondering, what agency has the ultimate
5 responsibility for making safety decisions on the Turnpike?
6 Is it the Turnpike Commission or is it the State Police?

7 MAJOR HOKE: Sir, if I may?

8 I think with regard to the incident, the roadway
9 is owned by the Turnpike. When an incident such as this
10 occurs on the Turnpike where it involves life safety, I
11 think the Pennsylvania State Police will take the lead in
12 that type of a situation, and in this instance, we did do
13 that through our unified command structure that exists at
14 Highspire.

15 And also one of the gentlemen, and I don't recall
16 who mentioned it, but the State Emergency Operations Center
17 had been stood up in advance of this storm. And what that
18 means is, there are EPLOs from all State agencies seated
19 under one roof at PEMA to coordinate the request for
20 resources when there's a situation where additional
21 resources are needed. In this case, they were also in
22 place at the time.

23 So there is a unified command structure that is
24 -- that always involves communication back and forth with
25 our partners on the Turnpike to discuss, what is the next

1 step in this? What is the best step in this? So that's
2 the way that it typically plays out.

3 MINORITY CHAIRMAN W. KELLER: So even though
4 there's a unified command structure and it's a coordination
5 of all the agencies, the ultimate responsibility for safety
6 of vehicles and passengers on the Turnpike falls on the
7 Pennsylvania State Police?

8 MAJOR HOKE: We would recognize that as our
9 responsibility for life safety; yes. That's our primary
10 core mission, if you will.

11 MINORITY CHAIRMAN W. KELLER: And with all your
12 knowledge, I agree with you. I think the Pennsylvania
13 State Police, and I argued it on the floor last week, that
14 the Pennsylvania State Police should be in charge of all
15 highway safety in Pennsylvania, and they should be the ones
16 that are coordinated with to make decisions.

17 And I imagine the answer is yes, but to the best
18 of your knowledge, in all your knowledge and your skills on
19 safety, do you feel that you've made the best decision by
20 sheltering people in place and not turning them off onto
21 the highways, other highways?

22 MAJOR HOKE: I do. I do.

23 MINORITY CHAIRMAN W. KELLER: I think that should
24 be the end of the discussion.

25 MAJOR HOKE: Sir, I can tell you that without

1 fail, if a family member of mine had been stuck in that
2 incident out there and I was aware that the Pennsylvania
3 State Police were on the scene, despite the fact that I
4 would be concerned for their safety and worried for them,
5 knowing what I know about our organization, I can tell you
6 that that fear would be considerably lessened.

7 I know that our Troopers worked, some of them
8 worked consecutively out there for over 30 hours. They
9 came on shift on Friday afternoon and did not leave there
10 until Sunday afternoon.

11 Many of them were out there walking car to car,
12 and they were the initial responders there until we were
13 able to get some additional resources out there in the form
14 of the National Guard. Along with many of the maintenance
15 workers from the Turnpike, who once they recognized that we
16 could no longer keep traffic moving on that roadway, that
17 it became a life safety issue, we need to check on these
18 folks, and we need to make sure that they're cared for and
19 that they have the necessary provisions to sustain life.

20 Something as simple as clearing an exhaust pipe
21 as the snow continued to accumulate around these vehicles
22 that were stopped became a legitimate safety concern. We
23 needed to get that information out there to folks, because
24 not everyone would think of that at the time, because
25 they're sitting in their car waiting to get freed up and

1 trying to keep warm. But that is a legitimate concern,
2 because obviously it can lead to a life-threatening
3 situation.

4 And -- I'll let it at that, sir.

5 MINORITY CHAIRMAN W. KELLER: And I totally
6 agree. We can't ask you to be the ultimate decision maker
7 when it comes to safety, and then your decision was to
8 shelter in place. That was what you decided to do. And I
9 think the Chairman said in the beginning, we're not here to
10 criticize or to assess blame; we're just here to see if
11 there is something, if this ever happens again, if there is
12 something we could do in the future to avoid this kind of
13 mess on the Turnpike.

14 TURNPIKE CHAIRMAN LOGAN: Chairman Keller, if I
15 may.

16 Early on on Saturday morning, I said, why are we
17 not moving people off the access gates and why aren't we
18 ripping down the barriers, and the State Police said, these
19 are the 5, 7, 10 reasons not to, and I accepted it and
20 realized that they are actually right, and it did save
21 lives.

22 MINORITY CHAIRMAN W. KELLER: Yeah, and that's
23 what we're here for.

24 I guess the other question is, and I'm sure
25 somebody else will ask it, I've been on -- you know, I

1 drive the Turnpike a lot. I have been on the Turnpike one
2 time when there was a major accident, and of course it was
3 in the summer. What they did was just turn us around.
4 They actually put all the trucks on the side, turned us
5 around, and sent us back the other way and we got off that
6 way. That was impossible at this time, I would imagine.

7 MR. COMPTON: That was done as well, sir.

8 MINORITY CHAIRMAN W. KELLER: It was done?

9 MR. COMPTON: Yeah, at the back end to get
10 towards Bedford. So there were cars turned around in those
11 locations to get them back.

12 MAJOR HOKE: And I'll let Captain Cain speak to
13 that, sir. But in some instances, that was possible, where
14 we were able to actually turn traffic around. But in other
15 areas, you had heard me mention in my testimony that there
16 was construction "cattle shoots," as we refer to them,
17 concrete medians that were in place out there that prohibit
18 a commercial vehicle, and much of the traffic that was out
19 there was commercial vehicle traffic. So it was simply a
20 case where we could not get those vehicles turned around
21 without removing the barrier.

22 And as Mr. Compton had mentioned, there is a
23 concern with that as well. Anytime -- first of all, it
24 takes, even on a good day, it's difficult to remove those
25 medians. In fact, I know they had made several attempts in

1 different locations where they weren't successful because
2 they knew they were frozen or simply could not get them
3 out, despite their best efforts.

4 But Captain, if you don't mind.

5 CAPTAIN CAIN: Once they began the "rescue
6 operation," and that's kind of how I categorize it, the --
7 can you hear me a little better there?

8 MINORITY CHAIRMAN W. KELLER: You might have to
9 push the button.

10 CAPTAIN CAIN: Why don't I just take his.

11 Once they began a "rescue operation," and that's
12 how we categorized it, the incident stabilized, and then we
13 had to go ahead and rescue the people that were in this
14 backlog.

15 I was out there myself. I got out there about
16 4 o'clock in the afternoon, 4:30. I live in that area. It
17 was very difficult to even get there, let alone everyone
18 else that responded, including the rescue personnel who
19 dealt with the same type conditions just to get to the
20 scene. And I assure you, I don't think any of them
21 probably dealt with an incident this significant or to this
22 magnitude of what took place.

23 But they were able to concentrate on passenger
24 vehicles first and try and reverse them, as Mr. Compton
25 said, and get some of them back to the Bedford interchange

1 from that 132 to 138 area, and that was accomplished. Even
2 they used a small front-end loader. They were able to
3 snake a road back through the traffic, and they could turn
4 some around and come back to 146, which is the Bedford
5 exit, or they could get some off at the Keggs Maintenance
6 area and route them back up over the top of the pike and
7 then come back down and get on and travel eastbound in the
8 eastbound lanes.

9 Once they accomplished that, we had to look at
10 the task in getting the truck-tractors and buses out of
11 there. Now, we're fortunate at Keggs that there's a wide
12 area that we could pull a barrier, and eventually we were
13 able to pull the barrier. But before we could pull those
14 barriers, anywhere along that Turnpike system you have to
15 be sure that traffic is shut down coming eastbound.

16 Now, like Mr. Compton and everyone else here had
17 stated, there is the travel plaza. There are vehicles
18 pulled off along the road. So we're going to have
19 equipment in the eastbound lanes pulling barriers for the
20 westbound. You know, we have to work from the eastbound
21 side.

22 Even after we were assured that the road was shut
23 down, I had a couple of truck-tractors come by me as I'm
24 standing out there in the eastbound lanes. So that's the
25 risk you have to take, and it's a risk that we didn't take.

1 We had to make sure that everybody stopped. It was all
2 done. We sent guys back through there backwards making
3 sure that no one else was coming before we started flipping
4 that traffic.

5 At the 125, we were able to route traffic out
6 where we pulled it, travel up in the eastbound -- travel
7 westbound in the eastbound lanes -- crossing back over at
8 the Allegheny Tunnel.

9 At the 132 to the 138, we had to deal with a
10 significant backlog there. We were able to turn those
11 buses and those truck-tractors. Now, think about it. The
12 truck-tractors have to be able to turn around. They can't
13 just do a U-turn at that Jersey barrier and flip and go
14 back eastbound.

15 But not only did we have to turn them through the
16 parking lot, but each truck, like if you had to shovel your
17 car out Saturday morning? Each vehicle in that mess had to
18 be shoveled out. There was 30 inches of snow around it.
19 It blocked -- and when the engines are running in those big
20 rigs? They left ice blocks in the road that were difficult
21 to get over top of. So they were using a heavy wrecker to
22 push and pull them out. They were using a Hi-Lift to shove
23 them from the rear and get them going, and then we'd get to
24 a car or a bus.

25 And we pretty much got the cars out of there

1 relatively quick once we started working on it. When you
2 think about we're starting to pull barriers at 1700, at
3 5 o'clock, and most of the vehicle traffic was out of there
4 by about 5 in the morning, that's still 12 hours of working
5 on it. And then you can't overlook the fact that they had
6 sat there so long to start with. But once it stabilized,
7 we were pretty successful in getting that operation
8 rolling.

9 But even after it was all cleared by 1100, it
10 took until about 5 o'clock at night for them to get the
11 road back to usable conditions because of so much snow and
12 ice that had built up on that road, and that was a
13 difficult -- it was like a tank trap trying to get those
14 cars around that, and each one had to be pulled separately
15 and dealt with.

16 MINORITY CHAIRMAN W. KELLER: Thank you,
17 Mr. Chairman.

18 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Since the beginning of
19 the hearing, we've been joined by Representatives Matzie,
20 Quinn, Harhart, Barbin, Donatucci, Culver, and Marsico.

21 Next, we're going to turn to Representative
22 Reese.

23 REPRESENTATIVE REESE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 Good morning, gentlemen.

25 TURNPIKE CHAIRMAN LOGAN: Good morning.

1 MAJOR HOKE: Good morning.

2 REPRESENTATIVE REESE: And thank you very much
3 for coming today and offering your thoughts on the event
4 that occurred.

5 So first, I want to say that working with the
6 Turnpike, quite honestly, has been fantastic since I've
7 been in office. Your organization has been good to work
8 with. And the State Police, it goes without saying, you
9 folks do excellent work.

10 I do have a couple questions, because I think as
11 I'm looking at this, and it's really easy to, you know, in
12 the days after, weeks after this event to second-guess
13 decisions that were made, so I'm not going to be doing that
14 at all. But I think it's important, as you have mentioned,
15 that we address any of the shortcomings so that in the
16 future this doesn't happen again.

17 MR. COMPTON: Right.

18 REPRESENTATIVE REESE: And I guess my major
19 concern with this is the communication aspect.

20 If I understand this correct, the Governor
21 declared a state of emergency on Thursday leading up to
22 this storm.

23 MR. COMPTON: That's correct.

24 REPRESENTATIVE REESE: And in that declaration,
25 he gave the PEMA Director the authority to handle

1 preparation for the event, and then of course during the
2 event, any decisions that have to be made. Is that
3 accurate? I'm just checking to make sure.

4 MR. COMPTON: Yeah.

5 REPRESENTATIVE REESE: So Mr. Flinn at PEMA was
6 obviously involved, and Mr. Compton, you talked about being
7 on the phone with him on a pretty constant basis. So you
8 folks were all involved with the EOC at that point, right?

9 MR. COMPTON: That's correct.

10 REPRESENTATIVE REESE: Starting on Thursday?

11 MR. COMPTON: Starting -- I think we started
12 before that.

13 MR. SHUEY: Yeah.

14 REPRESENTATIVE REESE: Before Thursday; okay.

15 MR. COMPTON: We started up on Friday, I believe.

16 MR. SHUEY: Yeah, but there was communication
17 throughout the week.

18 REPRESENTATIVE REESE: Okay. All right.
19 Fantastic.

20 So here, I guess, you know, I wanted to lay that
21 out, because I know that the storm hit before you expected
22 it to hit. You were prepared to shut down and start
23 limiting access to parts of the Turnpike at midnight on
24 Friday evening, right?

25 MR. COMPTON: And that's a shutdown for double

1 tractor-trailers and then empty tractor-trailers was the
2 ban, with speed reductions to 45 miles an hour.

3 MR. SHUEY: The plan was always to keep the road
4 open throughout the event to most traffic.

5 REPRESENTATIVE REESE: Just provide restrictions
6 on who would---

7 MR. COMPTON: Correct.

8 REPRESENTATIVE REESE: Okay.

9 So I can understand that the storm hit before you
10 were thinking that it was going to hit. And of course, you
11 know, we had a tremendous amount of snowfall in a very
12 short period of time in a very difficult part of the
13 Turnpike in a very rural area. I get that.

14 And I actually agree with you. I think if you
15 had put folks off on those side roads -- I know that area
16 pretty well -- they would get stuck on those side roads.
17 There's no doubt about that. So I think that decision was
18 dead on.

19 But who was in control? Who was making the call
20 on what was going to happen, when it was going to happen,
21 on the Turnpike once traffic stopped? And I know probably
22 when it initially got jammed up, there wasn't a thought
23 that folks were going to be sitting on the Turnpike for
24 30 hours. But as the event progressed, who was making the
25 call as to whether we were going to pull the barriers; we

1 were going to stop traffic in New Stanton to Breezewood?
2 Who was ultimately in control of all those decisions? Was
3 there one point person?

4 MR. COMPTON: Do you want to start?

5 MAJOR HOKE: Sure; sure.

6 As the incident evolved, the initial Troopers
7 that were on the scenes in dealing with the vehicles that
8 could not get up the hill, obviously from that point, the
9 Troopers that were working at that other, across the pike,
10 were busy handling other incidents across the pike on a
11 much smaller scale. And even at the time of his initial
12 response to the Allegheny Mountain, that was not a
13 significant concern because the backlog had not yet built.

14 As the incident evolved, more and more
15 Pennsylvania resources, State Police resources, became
16 involved in it. It moved up our command structure; again,
17 in consultation with the Turnpike Commission. And once it
18 was recognized that, again, that we were fighting a losing
19 battle, if you will, to try to keep that roadway functional
20 and keep it passable, the decision then was made not to
21 take people off the access gates because the storm
22 continued to rage on; recognizing that if they got out of
23 our reach, yes, they're off the system, but in order for us
24 to be able to care for them or to check on them at that
25 point, again, now they're again outside of our reach, so to

1 speak.

2 REPRESENTATIVE REESE: Right.

3 MAJOR HOKE: I spoke of stabilization of events.
4 In this case, the stabilization of this event would be the
5 ending of the storm. Because of the rate at which that
6 snow continued to come down, again, it was very difficult
7 to even move, for us to even move around out there and to
8 get to folks and to check on them, yet alone move
9 commercial vehicles and/or buses that had been quagmired in
10 the snow because they had been sitting.

11 So to answer your question, I guess the decision
12 to shelter in place was recognized, that this would be the
13 best course of action to pursue in order to preserve life
14 safety. And then once we realized the magnitude of our
15 resources, we continually requested more resources through
16 PEMA.

17 Ultimately, the National Guard became -- was
18 deployed to assist us, as were a number of the emergency
19 management agencies from Bedford and Somerset Counties, who
20 did a tremendous job. Many of those folks are volunteers,
21 and again, out there shoulder to shoulder with the Troopers
22 and the Turnpike Commission folks, checking on people and
23 walking car to car in those adverse conditions.

24 MR. COMPTON: So take a look at the first event
25 that was back in Everett, which was the tractor-trailer

1 crash, the overturned tractor-trailer. That's an event
2 that we're typically used to dealing with, and that
3 communication from the scene is, all lanes are blocked; an
4 hour and a half duration, we should have the road reopened
5 again; okay, we know what we're dealing with.

6 As this evolved, what we had that was a little
7 different was when they got to the scene and the
8 tractor-trailers got stuck, cars were still getting over on
9 the shoulder. If you saw the pictures that we had from the
10 slide project, cars continued to get through. Some of the
11 communication we were getting back is, cars are getting
12 through. When it was finally stop stopped was when we
13 started making the call, okay, close down at Bedford.
14 That's the process.

15 So the issue here, Representative, that we had
16 is, when there's a crash, all lanes are blocked; you know
17 what you got. In this instance, the situational awareness
18 that we talked about was, with cars continuing to creep by,
19 the road continues to be open with the idea that we are
20 sort of the only game in town out here, as you know, by
21 pushing out. Those factors came into play here, which we
22 have got to take another look at in these types of
23 situations.

24 REPRESENTATIVE REESE: Yeah.

25 MR. SHUEY: And PEMA's role was responding to our

1 needs. They were giving us -- they were coordinating the
2 efforts to open shelters. They were coordinating efforts
3 with the Red Cross and other places to get provisions to
4 folks. They were very helpful in getting our -- in adding
5 to our ability to respond, and they did everything we asked
6 them to do.

7 REPRESENTATIVE REESE: Okay. Thank you.

8 Just a quick follow-up on that, Mr. Chairman, if
9 that's okay. Thank you.

10 And that's good to hear. You know, the State
11 Police, the Pennsylvania National Guard, and the local
12 emergency workers obviously did a fantastic job, as did
13 your staff on the Turnpike, for the folks that were stuck
14 there for that long period of time.

15 Can I -- and this is more for the Turnpike folks.
16 So you shut down from New Stanton to Breezewood at some
17 point during this event, which makes a lot of sense to me,
18 obviously. But that's sort of on the back side of my
19 district, and in talking to some of the local emergency
20 services workers in Westmoreland County, it really created
21 an issue at the entrance point---

22 MR. SHUEY: Of New Stanton.

23 REPRESENTATIVE REESE: ---of New Stanton. Folks
24 were backed up going up on the ramp going to the booths
25 there.

1 MR. SHUEY: Yeah.

2 REPRESENTATIVE REESE: And of course, and I'm
3 sure you factor this in to any decision when you're
4 shutting down the Turnpike, there were a lot of vehicles
5 and a lot of traffic in the New Stanton area to the point
6 where the council there had to declare a state of emergency
7 in New Stanton because they had a lot of travelers in their
8 area.

9 Can you -- when you make that decision to shut
10 those areas down, I know this sort of sounds silly, but
11 just having someone out there or blocking the access, you
12 know, off of 70 up onto the ramp, is that something that
13 you look at and consider so that those folks aren't sitting
14 there for a number of hours?

15 MR. SHUEY: There's usually a coordinated effort
16 between the local State Police Troop and our State Troop as
17 well as our maintenance facility folks to manage those
18 areas.

19 Given what was going on, I can't tell you what
20 resources were deployed to do the traffic control at that
21 area. But that's certainly something, as we look at our
22 response to this thing, the traffic control on either end
23 of the system, either in the process of closing the roadway
24 under what we call a Plan X or in general just diverting
25 traffic off of one location, is something that we want to

1 continue to work, both with local partners and with
2 ourselves, to do better.

3 But we'll be happy to maybe follow up with
4 New Stanton Borough to talk about what occurred there and
5 make sure that if there's something that can be improved,
6 we do it.

7 REPRESENTATIVE REESE: I really appreciate that,
8 and thank you again for being here today.

9 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you.

10 We have also been joined by Representatives
11 Briggs, Carroll, Watson, and Heffley.

12 I have four Members that are going to ask
13 questions. The Secretary of Transportation expects us
14 outside at a little after 10 o'clock, and I promised her we
15 would try to do that.

16 So I'm going to go to Representatives Keller,
17 Barbin, Matzie, and Marshall. I'm going to start off with
18 Representative Mark Keller.

19 REPRESENTATIVE M. KELLER: Thank you,
20 Mr. Chairman.

21 I think the testimony that was given today is
22 very informative. We appreciate that and appreciate the
23 service that you gentlemen have given.

24 And I also think that, you know, Mr. Compton
25 alluded to the question I'm going to ask, and that is the

1 fact that the incident that took place at 5:41 at Everett,
2 and not to use a pun on words, was the snowball effect of
3 this whole deal, okay?

4 MAJOR HOKE: Sir, to your point, that did add to
5 this, to the incident that occurred at the 125, or the 122
6 to 126, because the traffic queue that had built from that
7 traffic crash then moved westward toward this area that
8 we're talking about, and that added to the queue that was
9 created there when the vehicles were unable to move.

10 REPRESENTATIVE M. KELLER: Because the photograph
11 that was shared here, it looks to me as though the highway
12 still is showing black, that it wasn't really covered that
13 much. It probably was slick at that time, but, you know.
14 So there shouldn't have been -- if that incident wouldn't
15 have happened, it would have been a whole different
16 scenario.

17 MR. SHUEY: We think that had a significant
18 change to the traffic behavior, because everybody was
19 bunched together, and I think that had a big part in what
20 happened. Because the trucks that were, you know, required
21 to stay in the right lane, as they got stuck, the guy
22 behind them, you know, he's going to naturally get out
23 there. You know, it's not illegal to be in that lane, but
24 the reality is, if you're pulling up that mountain and you
25 lose momentum, you know what happens.

1 REPRESENTATIVE M. KELLER: Right.

2 MR. SHUEY: And so it started, as you said,
3 snowballing a little bit.

4 MR. COMPTON: And we kept them together because
5 we had a plow train following ahead of them, or they were
6 following the plow train, which led to them continuing to
7 bunch.

8 REPRESENTATIVE M. KELLER: All right.

9 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Representative Barbin.

11 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: Yes. Thank you,
12 Mr. Chairman.

13 Thank you, gentlemen. And the State Police, you
14 did an incredible job.

15 CAPTAIN CAIN: Thank you.

16 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: I'm from the area
17 generally. And so did the volunteer firemen. So did the
18 National Guard.

19 CAPTAIN CAIN: Sure.

20 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: And you did protect
21 safety. And it was really good, because your other
22 problem, and it was just the Right for Life march.
23 Everybody was coming back from Washington.

24 CAPTAIN CAIN: Yep.

25 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: And that gets to my

1 question, which is, you have a problem at 5 o'clock on
2 Friday, and you know there's a snowstorm. You don't know
3 how bad it's going to be. It gets to be beyond what you
4 think it's going to be. But was there any decision made to
5 pull the tour buses?

6 I noticed there were 60 tour buses, and I'm
7 assuming they were coming from the March for Life rally.

8 MR. SHUEY: A large amount were.

9 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: So was there any decision
10 made about pulling people off at Breezewood and keeping
11 them on the Turnpike on 30, because that used to be -- you
12 know, that was run by the Turnpike for awhile. Did you
13 make that decision -- why wasn't that decision made?

14 MR. SHUEY: I think--- You got it?

15 MR. COMPTON: Go ahead.

16 MR. SHUEY: Certainly separating any kind of
17 traffic off at an interchange is extremely difficult. You
18 can make announcements. You can -- as we do with the
19 doubles and the empties. Even at that point, it's
20 difficult to stop them from getting on the system.

21 It was not -- there was not a discussion point
22 early in the evening at all about trying to separate buses
23 out from this. In our AAR, as we have looked at, one of
24 the communication touchpoints that we need to make is with
25 the commercial bus industry, to make sure that they know

1 what we know in terms of decisionmaking.

2 I don't know that in the future we would decide
3 to shut traffic off to buses in particular, but it is
4 something we can take under consideration.

5 I don't think Route 30 would have been a good
6 road at the time that it would have had an impact. I don't
7 think we would have said, 30 is better than the Turnpike
8 for that type of travel. It's also a treacherous road.

9 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: Those are your calls.

10 MR. SHUEY: Yeah.

11 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: 30 is flat. Once you get
12 to Bedford, it gets very mountainous.

13 MR. SHUEY: Yeah.

14 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: So you can't do it after
15 Bedford.

16 MR. SHUEY: Yeah.

17 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: One last question.

18 When I go out West, in Wyoming and Colorado, even
19 Nebraska, they have gates that they shut to keep the
20 backlog from getting bigger. Do we do that in
21 Pennsylvania?

22 MR. SHUEY: We don't have gates on the Turnpike.
23 I don't believe there are on any of the State roadways.

24 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: And last question.

25 Is there any point where PEMA can get PennDOT or

1 can get the local county emergency management person to
2 contact their county trucks to be able to provide
3 additional resources?

4 MR. COMPTON: Do you mean as it relates to
5 PennDOT county trucks?

6 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: Yeah. If you have an
7 incident and PEMA knows there's an incident and you need
8 more people, can PEMA contact PennDOT and say, we need to
9 re-divert assets or the local county to re-divert assets?

10 MR. COMPTON: In a large way, we did that.
11 Secretary Richards was intimately a part, as was
12 Scott Christie. So as it relates to, when we made the
13 decision to get folks off the roadway, it was PennDOT who
14 kind of got off of their normal routes and plowed out the
15 gates for us to get those open. So there was a diversion.

16 And the counties of both Bedford and Somerset,
17 through their EMA, were intimately involved from the start
18 of it and really led the way on the background check.

19 REPRESENTATIVE PYLE: Mr. Chairman?
20 Can you pull your mic a little closer?

21 MR. COMPTON: Sure. That's by design,
22 Representative Pyle.

23 REPRESENTATIVE PYLE: I usually don't use one.

24 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I have been informed
25 by our Executive Director that our commitment to the

1 Secretary is just sometime before possibly 10:30, so we
2 have a little more time, if other Members had questions.

3 Representative Matzie.

4 REPRESENTATIVE MATZIE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 Thank you for calling the hearing, and thank you
6 all for your testimony here today.

7 I think a couple of things really that stand
8 out with this whole situation. Initially when it
9 transpired, my first reaction was, this is the worst
10 possible scenario from a storm perspective as well as where
11 it happened.

12 Representative Marshall and I have the distinct
13 pleasure and I think the only Members on this committee
14 that actually have to travel the whole way to the Cranberry
15 exit. So we're on that road 200-plus miles, so I probably
16 can drive it with my eyes closed. But the reality of the
17 situation, with the construction, the serpentine, the
18 mountain, et cetera, it could not have happened at a worse
19 place to have an event such as this.

20 And I think one of the problems from a -- and I'm
21 no meteorologist, nor do I play one on television. I think
22 one of the problems with a storm in that area is, you just
23 don't know. I mean, you know, I always joke that it snows
24 in July in that area driving home. But you just don't know
25 the magnitude of it, a storm.

1 But as I started thinking about it after the
2 storm transpired, I said, well -- and you answered a lot of
3 my questions without me having to ask them. The first
4 question was, well, just pick up some barriers and move
5 them out. That would be the easiest way. Divert the
6 traffic back the opposite way, eastbound; let them get off
7 an exit; they can shoot wherever. But really when you
8 think about the Turnpike in and of itself, and I think it
9 was Mr. Shuey or Mr. Compton, I can't remember who, that
10 talked about the area between exits. I mean, there are no
11 other alternative routes that make any sense to move people
12 westbound.

13 And it was interesting, because hearing on ESPN
14 that morning the Duquesne University Basketball Team that
15 was stuck there, they were talking about their issue and
16 their situation on their way home from a game, and they
17 said even when the road was finally open, thankfully they
18 had pizza boxes, because they were outside using the pizza
19 boxes that they had in their bus to help move snow.
20 Because you talked, and I think, Major, you talked about
21 all the snow and the ice buildup that was around the buses
22 and the trucks. So even once you were able to finally
23 start moving that traffic, it was very difficult to
24 actually get started. So it was the worst possible
25 situation at the worst possible place.

1 But still, as policymakers, we have to have a
2 hearing like this, and we have to determine from you what
3 we can do better to ensure that if resources are necessary,
4 that we can get those resources deployed. Because the
5 bottom line is, the buck stops here, and the public wants
6 us to determine that and determine what we can do to ensure
7 that if an incident like this happens again, that we can
8 keep the traffic moving.

9 I always say, whenever we leave here, regardless
10 of what the weather is, I always know the Turnpike is going
11 to have one lane open and I'm going to be able to get home.
12 Now, my problem is once I get off the Turnpike. The
13 Turnpike is always clear, so I appreciate the hard work of
14 your personnel and obviously the safety from the State
15 Police's perspective.

16 But I will say this: The storm that happened
17 prior, I was one of the lucky eight stuck at the Somerset
18 rest stop. Representative Marshall, who has a question
19 next, was not. He was about a quarter mile away in his
20 vehicle the whole time, as well as about five or six other
21 Members and several hundred vehicles. But it was an
22 accident, and I can tell you, talking to Charles Duncan,
23 who is in the back there, Chairman Logan, he was very
24 helpful in keeping us informed.

25 And initially the question was, why can't they

1 open the back gate and let us out? And the State Police
2 said no, that's not happening, because the side roads are
3 too bad; we can't move people, and it got to be very
4 difficult.

5 But I can tell you that the folks that were in
6 the rest stop and talking to some of the other people, they
7 were very pleased with the reaction from the State Police
8 as well as the emergency responders, because they were
9 going up and down checking on people, whether or not they
10 needed anything.

11 So I appreciate you being here today, and if we
12 can find resources to help make things easier for incidents
13 such as this, we would appreciate it. But again, a storm
14 of that magnitude in that area, worst possible situation at
15 the worst possible place. Thank you.

16 CAPTAIN CANE: Thank you, Representative, sir.

17 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Representative
18 Marshall.

19 REPRESENTATIVE MARSHALL: Thank you,
20 Mr. Chairman.

21 I have so many questions. I am going to try to
22 scale it back a little bit. But first, a comment.

23 While I have been in incidents, as Representative
24 Matzie spoke to, I had great communications with
25 Mr. Duncan, and I hope that that resource is available to

1 everyone to find out what the incidents are on the Turnpike
2 and what's the best route to get around. I appreciate
3 having that constant communication.

4 Another comment I have is that I spoke to a
5 charter bus company in my district who had three buses
6 scheduled for Washington, DC, and they chose to cancel
7 those because of, you know, the storm that was coming. I
8 think that was a good decision on their part. So I think
9 that there's some -- I guess you have to question what
10 travel was absolutely necessary at that time during a
11 weather state of emergency, and, you know, is there enough
12 communication to motorists to let them know that there is a
13 state of emergency and this weather is coming and to help
14 them make better decisions? So that's one comment.

15 Another is, I guess my question is, you can't
16 avoid weather and accidents, but when you get a backlog
17 like that, is it a better decision for the motorists to
18 stay in place or is it better to seek shelter? And if it
19 is to seek shelter, was there shelter available?

20 The next question is, what resources other than
21 PennDOT and Turnpike are available in that area? I know in
22 some areas where there is snow and mountains, you might
23 have snowmobile clubs. There might be -- I know you said
24 the National Guard was a resource. How long did it take
25 them to respond, and how far away is that?

1 Right in my district there's a National Guard
2 transportation unit. Certainly they could have got to the
3 incident. But is there one near that area?

4 So while I understand it's impossible to prevent
5 the incidents and accidents and it's hard to predict the
6 weather, how do you handle the situation once you do have
7 the backlog?

8 MAJOR HOKE: Sir, I'll respond to your concern
9 regarding the evacuation of a motorist or to stay in
10 place.

11 I can tell you, throughout the duration of the
12 incident, I believe there were over 220 people that were
13 actually evacuated from their vehicles and/or the buses to
14 a shelter at the Kegg Maintenance facility.

15 As the Troopers and the volunteers and the
16 firefighters and Turnpike personnel were checking on the
17 motorists in the queue, they were repeatedly asked, do you
18 want to remain with your vehicle? And many folks were fine
19 with that. They realized they had food, they had
20 provisions, they had enough fuel to remain with their
21 vehicle, and they were okay with staying there. Others
22 wanted to leave their vehicles and/or leave the bus to go
23 to a place of shelter. So we facilitated those types of
24 things for them when that was brought to our attention.

25 It's just that I want to give some recognition

1 here to one of our Troopers who was made aware of a medical
2 emergency. It came to our attention that there was an
3 individual who was in the queue who was a diabetic, and
4 obviously, if you're aware of that condition, if you don't
5 eat on a regular basis, it can bring on some issues for
6 them. The Trooper responded and actually gave him his
7 lunch in order to alleviate the onset of what he was
8 experiencing at that time. And then we made sure that that
9 was followed up by a visit by the EMS folks who were out
10 there to assist us.

11 But with regard to your question, I think that
12 some folks were comfortable with remaining with their
13 vehicle throughout the duration of the event. Others
14 requested to be removed. When that was brought to our
15 attention, we made that happen for them.

16 MR. COMPTON: And it became an early-action
17 item.

18 We talked about the Governor's Office and PEMA
19 coordinating those calls on an hourly basis. One of the
20 early-action items was to make sure that we had the
21 shelters up and ready, and that happened very quickly with
22 the Methodist church, with the local high school, to make
23 sure we had the warming shelters in places and then have
24 the buses to get to those customers that wanted to get
25 off.

1 So that did happen pretty early in the process to
2 make sure that the sheltering was done. And then we
3 coordinated on the back end an opportunity, a way for them
4 to get back to their vehicles, which we had at a staging
5 area coordinate.

6 REPRESENTATIVE MARSHALL: And then when the
7 incident occurred, not the Everett but the one on the
8 climbing hill, is it possible to bring your plow equipment
9 eastbound in the westbound lanes to get to the backlog, and
10 did that happen?

11 MR. SHUEY: Once it was clear that there was no
12 traffic coming -- you wouldn't do that unless you're
13 absolutely sure that they can't move. That was done
14 throughout the evening, because that was helping the towing
15 companies get their heavy wreckers down to the scene,
16 particularly at 126.

17 REPRESENTATIVE MARSHALL: Thank you.
18 Thank you very much, and again, thank you for
19 this hearing and providing us with this valuable
20 information.

21 MR. SHUEY: Sure. Thank you.

22 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you.

23 Are there any other questions from Members that I
24 haven't seen or recognized?

25 Gentlemen, thank you very much. To show you that

1 -- and as Senator Logan would know the difficult part of
2 our job -- my first email about this, certainly I got a
3 call from Representative Reese about looking into it,
4 making sure we had information. But the first email I got
5 was, how dare I have hearings and waste time, because
6 after all, it was just a snowstorm. And that had to be
7 somebody from the eastern part of the State, even though we
8 are---

9 TURNPIKE CHAIRMAN LOGAN: It's not like that out
10 in the west.

11 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Yeah.

12 But it is interesting that, you know, the
13 percentage of the vehicles that were stuck seemed to be
14 overwhelmingly either commercial vehicles or buses, and it
15 seems like the motorists knew enough to try to stay off
16 that road.

17 Certainly we were forewarned on the east, and it
18 just seemed that compared -- what we were hearing in the
19 eastern part of the State, it didn't seem like that storm
20 was going to go that far west that quickly, and obviously
21 it did.

22 But we appreciate your testimony. We will follow
23 up if any of our Members have additional questions or
24 concerns.

25 MR. COMPTON: Certainly.

1 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: To our Members, before
2 I turn it over to Chairman Keller for a few remarks, please
3 don't leave. We're actually going to do some business for
4 a few minutes. But thank you very much.

5 Chairman Keller.

6 MINORITY CHAIRMAN W. KELLER: Thank you,
7 Mr. Chairman.

8 I would also like to commend and thank everyone.
9 I think this hearing was necessary. It cleared up a lot of
10 questions, and in the end, you guys did a great job and you
11 should be commended for what you've done. Thank you.

12 MAJOR HOKE: Thank you.

13 TURNPIKE CHAIRMAN LOGAN: Thank you, Chairman.

14 MR. COMPTON: And if you need us at any point in
15 one of your offices for you or any of your Members, we'll
16 be there. Whether it's in the district or here in
17 Harrisburg, we'll be there when needed to answer any
18 further questions.

19 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Okay. Thank you.

20 And you're welcome to stay for our next business,
21 but you don't have to.

22 We are joined by Chairman Saylor as well.

23 And with that, we are going to have a voting
24 meeting.

25 (A voting meeting was held.)

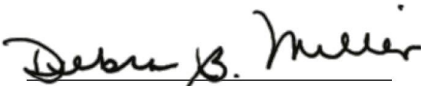
1 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Are there any other
2 questions or concerns? Any other business?

3 Again, to all the Members, thanks. I know it was
4 an early start. We wanted to accommodate the Secretary in
5 her demonstration of the license scanning. And if you can
6 make it, we'll be -- out at the East Wing? Outside the
7 East Wing by the fountain.

8 Thank you. This meeting is adjourned.

9
10 (At 10:00 a.m., the hearing concluded.)

1 I hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings
2 are a true and accurate transcription produced from audio
3 on the said proceedings and that this is a correct
4 transcript of the same.

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8 *Debra B. Miller*

9 *Transcriptionist*

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