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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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# HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 143 Session of  
2007

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INTRODUCED BY FAIRCHILD, MARSICO, GEIST, ADOLPH, BAKER,  
CALTAGIRONE, CAPPELLI, COX, CREIGHTON, EACHUS, J. EVANS,  
EVERETT, GILLESPIE, GINGRICH, HARRIS, HERSHEY, HICKERNELL,  
JAMES, M. KELLER, KILLION, KIRKLAND, MAJOR, METCALFE,  
R. MILLER, NAILOR, O'NEILL, PAYNE, PEIFER, PHILLIPS, PICKETT,  
REED, REICHLEY, ROHRER, RUBLEY, SAYLOR, SCAVELLO,  
S. H. SMITH, SONNEY, STERN, R. STEVENSON, VEREB, WALKO AND  
YOUNGBLOOD, MARCH 19, 2007

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS, MARCH 19, 2007

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## A RESOLUTION

1 Directing certain standing committees of the House of  
2 Representatives to investigate the roles and responsibilities  
3 of the Department of Transportation, the Pennsylvania  
4 Emergency Management Agency, the Pennsylvania State Police  
5 and any other agency involved in disaster emergency response.

6 WHEREAS, Providing for public safety is a fundamental role of  
7 government; and

8 WHEREAS, The Valentine's Day disaster emergency of 2007  
9 exposed significant but, as yet, not completely documented or  
10 understood deficiencies in the Commonwealth's emergency planning  
11 and implementation; and

12 WHEREAS, It appears that this storm may also have exposed the  
13 ultimate result of manpower and equipment shortages at the  
14 Department of Transportation, at least; and

15 WHEREAS, These shortages may have been the predictable result  
16 of conscious downsizing steps taken by the department and its

1 engineering districts; and

2 WHEREAS, There appears to be some question as to whether  
3 there was one person physically present who would have been able  
4 to take control of the storm response; and

5 WHEREAS, These questions involve not just departmental  
6 priorities but fundamental public policy challenges which should  
7 be addressed comprehensively by the administrative and  
8 legislative branches; and

9 WHEREAS, These challenges involve basic lawmaking functions  
10 of crafting and revising crucial statutes and funding programs  
11 at appropriate levels; and

12 WHEREAS, The General Assembly and the Governor have  
13 historically worked together to investigate and develop remedies  
14 for prior widespread and significant emergencies; and

15 WHEREAS, In 1977 the House of Representatives established  
16 bipartisan task forces and the Senate directed standing  
17 committees to document the causes and effects of a weather and  
18 energy emergency; and

19 WHEREAS, These investigations led to significant changes in  
20 the Public School Code and the then-Civil Defense Law and  
21 recommendations on energy alternatives; and

22 WHEREAS, During the 1985-1986 legislative session, the  
23 General Assembly and the Governor developed a significant  
24 legislative package to respond to tornadoes and flooding in  
25 northwestern Pennsylvania; and

26 WHEREAS, During the 1995-1996 legislative session, a special  
27 session called by the Governor and enthusiastically embraced by  
28 the members of the General Assembly led to the passage of ten  
29 statutes to address emergency management law, providing  
30 financial assistance to individuals, the provision of general

1 disaster relief funding and flood control, education and  
2 mitigation; and

3 WHEREAS, Careful analysis and response are as important today  
4 as they were in each of those last significant emergencies;  
5 therefore be it

6 RESOLVED, That the Committee on Transportation is hereby  
7 directed to hold hearings and other formal and informal  
8 inquiries into the role and response of the Department of  
9 Transportation to the Valentine's Day storm emergency; and be it  
10 further

11 RESOLVED, That the Committee on Veterans Affairs and  
12 Emergency Preparedness is hereby directed to hold hearings and  
13 other formal and informal inquiries into the roles and responses  
14 of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, the Department  
15 of Military Affairs and the Pennsylvania National Guard to the  
16 Valentine's Day storm emergency; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That the Committee on the Judiciary is hereby  
18 directed to hold hearings and other formal and informal  
19 inquiries into the roles and responses of the Pennsylvania State  
20 Police and local police forces to the Valentine's Day storm  
21 emergency; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That each of these committees shall conduct  
23 bipartisan inquiries into the areas assigned to each and that  
24 the executive agencies involved in each committee's inquiry  
25 shall cooperate with that inquiry completely; and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That each standing committee chairman or any of its  
27 members shall have subpoena power to compel attendance and  
28 testimony and that each shall further have the power to  
29 administer oaths and affirmations to witnesses appearing before  
30 each committee; and be it further

1       RESOLVED, That the committees shall have 90 days from the  
2 date of the adoption of this resolution to complete all hearings  
3 and any other formal and informal inquiries and shall make  
4 written reports of their findings and recommendations to the  
5 House of Representatives at the first voting session day  
6 following the expiration of the authority to hold hearings under  
7 this resolution; and be it further

8       RESOLVED, That the Speaker of the House of Representatives  
9 shall set aside a date thereafter for the committees to make  
10 formal presentations of their findings and recommendations to  
11 the members of the House of Representatives assembled in formal  
12 voting session; and be it further

13       RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution shall be transmitted  
14 to the Governor, the heads of the executive agencies named  
15 herein and the chairs of the standing committees assigned tasks  
16 under this resolution.