

**Statement for the**  
**Senate Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee**  
**February 18, 2015**

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency

Richard D. Flinn, Jr. Director

Chairman Vulakovich, Chairman Costa, and Members of the Committee, I am Rick Flinn, Director of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA). Thank you for the opportunity to appear before this Committee and provide an overview of the re-write of the Public Safety Emergency Telephone Act relating to 9-1-1 emergency calls.

First and foremost --on behalf of Governor Tom Wolf -- I want assure you that this is one of his top legislative priorities this year. I know that over the past 18 months there has been considerable work on the re-write and that PEMA has held numerous stakeholder meetings on the matter. We all agree that the re-write needs to be a collaborative effort to ensure that help in an emergency remains only a phone call away for every Pennsylvanian. PEMA is working with the Governor's Office to review the work that has been done to date on the re-write and to review existing and new options to develop a comprehensive 911 policy. I want to stress that at this point no policy decisions have been made regarding re-write including matters related to the 911 fee.

Before I begin my presentation, I'd like to give you a quick overview of my background and emergency management experience.

On January 20, Governor Wolf appointed me as his Director of PEMA six days earlier I had been working for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in Washington D.C. as the Deputy Director for Operations. My role was to assist the Director in overseeing the FEMA's

national response capabilities including the National Response Coordination Center, the National Watch Center, the FEMA Operations Center in Mount Weather, the National Incident Management Teams and the National Urban Search and Rescue Program. Prior to going to FEMA, I served the Commonwealth as the Deputy Director of Operations for PEMA. One of my duties included overseeing the 911 Office. Prior to that, for 24 years I worked for the Pennsylvania Emergency Health Services Council, which is the legislatively mandated statewide organization that advises the Secretary of Health on all aspects of Pennsylvania's Emergency Health Care System, and became their Executive Director. I recently retired after 35 years in the military and served as the Commander of Pennsylvania's Army National Guard Medical Detachment. I retired as a Colonel. I have been involved with emergency services since I was sixteen when I joined a small volunteer fire company in western Pennsylvania. I have been a firefighter, Emergency Medical Technician, Paramedic, Emergency Medical Technician and Fire Instructor, Fire Chief, and local emergency management coordinator. I only relate that experience to you because I have been in the unique position of both being able to assist in developing our Commonwealth's emergency response system at the statewide level and serve the citizens as a first responder.

We have provided the Committee with an informational PowerPoint that I will go through at this time. I simply want to review for you a brief history of how we got here, provide you the facts associated with the funding that has been received and distributed, discuss both national programmatic goals, and identify key points that should be addressed in the new legislation.

As you saw in the PowerPoint, there are a number of key issues to be addressed in the re-write. When Governor Wolf offered me the job as PEMA Director, he made it clear that his

Administration would make a very strong commitment to public safety for all the citizens of the Commonwealth. Each year, Pennsylvanians call 911 about nine million times. Every one of those calls is important and they are the lifeline for the callers since it starts the emergency response for assistance. That is the reason the 911 re-write is so crucial to public safety across the Commonwealth.

On behalf of Governor Wolf and the 12.7 million Pennsylvanians we serve, I thank you Chairman Vulakovich, Chairman Costa, and Members of the Committee, for your continued support of PEMA and our partners in public safety across the state.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear here today and I will try to answer any questions you might have.