



June 14, 2017

The Honorable Tom Wolf
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf:

Local officials and residents in northeastern Pennsylvania appreciate the strong case the administration made for a federal disaster declaration for winter storm Stella. The negative decision recently received is unfortunate, but was not unexpected given the high threshold for federal assistance.

As you realize, the costs documented in the state application are very real and consequential for the affected communities. With federal assistance denied, we have no choice but to explore other options.

There does seem to be a remedy at hand. Several years ago, we put in place the Public Disaster Assistance Program designed for situations where the costs are extraordinary for small communities but do not aggregate sufficiently to meet federal standards.

Two things are needed to make this program accessible as a remedy. The first is to reach agreement on replenishing the relief funding as part of the upcoming state budget. The second is to reconsider the question of eligibility. Earlier this year, the reaction from state officials to the possibility of reimbursing winter storm costs was not encouraging. Now, with the hard reality that federal funds are not forthcoming, this position can and should be reexamined. We do not believe there is any compelling partisan or philosophical barrier to doing so.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Lisa Baker in cursive.

Senator Lisa Baker
20th Senatorial District

Handwritten signature of John Yudichak in cursive.

Senator John Yudichak
14th Senatorial District