

GOOD MORNING MADAME CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE.

MY NAME IS JOE YUDICHAK, I AM A MEMBER OF THE PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF OVERSEEING THE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF 27 MILES OF PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP INFRASTRUCTURE, AND THE MAINTENANCE OF TWO PUMPING STATIONS AND THE SEWER SYSTEM.

IN 2004, THE STATE DECLARED PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP FINANCIALLY DISTRESSED AND ACT 47 WAS ENACTED WITH THE HELP OF THE NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA ALLIANCE. WITH THE STRONG LEADERSHIP OF BOARD CHAIR GAIL CONRAD, TWO PAST BOARD MEMBERS, AND THE CURRENT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP WAS ON ITS WAY TO COMPLETE A FINANCIAL RECOVERY AND ON PACE TO EXIT ACT 47 IN JANUARY 2012.

CURRENTLY PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP HAS FOUR PAID EMPLOYEES, THREE IN THE ROAD DEPARTMENT AND A TOWNSHIP MANAGER. NO ELECTED OFFICIALS OF PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP HAVE SERVED IN ANY PAID POSITIONS OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS. THE TOWNSHIP HAS RECEIVED COUNTLESS COMMENDATIONS FROM INDEPENDENT AUDITORS, STATE AND FEDERAL OFFICIALS FOR RETIRING DEBT AND FINANCIAL STABILITY.

ON JULY 3, 2011 A SEVERE THUNDERSTORM CENTERED OVER PLMOUTH BOROUGH AND PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP PRODUCED VERY HEAVY RAIN IN A

VERY SHORT PERIOD OF TIME CAUSING SEVERE DAMAGE IN THE TOWNSHIP AND BOROUGH.

IN PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP, TWO HOUSES AND UPPER COAL STREET WERE DESTROYED LEAVING TWO OTHER HOUSES ISOLATED AND INACCESSABLE. THE LEE STREET BRIDGE WAS DAMAGED AND THE COAL STREET BRIDGE DESTROYED. A SECTION OF AVONDALE ROAD WAS SEVERELY DAMAGED. THERE WAS ALSO SERIOUS DAMAGE TO THE PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP STORM DRAINAGE SYSTEM LEAVING DITCHES FOUR TO FIVE FEET DEEP ON MOUNTAIN ROAD, JESSE ROAD AND MOUNTAIN VILLAGE.

PEMA AND FEMA SURVEYED THE DAMAGE IN THE TOWNSHIP AND ESTIMATED THE COST OF REPAIRS AT ONE POINT THREE MILLION DOLLARS. SINCE LUZERNE COUNTY DID NOT MEET THE FEMA THRESHOLD OF FIFTEEN MILLION DOLLARS IN DAMAGE PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP TAXPAYERS NOW MUST BEAR THE BURDEN TO FUND THESE REPAIRS.

THE CURRY HILL SECTION OF PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP BEFORE THIS EVENT HAD A RESPONSE TIME OF THREE TO FOUR MINUTES FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES, TODAY FOLLOWING THE DAMAGE FROM THIS FLASH FLOODING EVENT RESPONSE TIME IS NOW TWENTY FIVE TO THIRTY FIVE MINUTES. EMERGENCY VEHICLES MUST TRAVEL SEVEN POINT FIVE MILES UP A VERY STEEP MOUNTAIN ROAD AND THEN DOWN JESSE ROAD A STEEP GRAVEL ROAD TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY SERVICES.

TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS FEAR THE LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY DUE THIS INCREASED RESPONSE TIME.

TO DATE PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP HAS SPENT MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS FROM ITS GENERAL FUND FOR INFRASTRUCTURE REPAIRS. PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP HAS REPAIRED THE LEE STREET BRIDGE ALLOWING PASSENGER CARS AND PICK UP TRUCKS EASIER ACCESS TO NEARBY ROUTE ELEVEN. THE LEE STREET BRIDGE CANNOT ACCOMMODATE LARGER VEHICLES OR ANY EMERGENCY VEHICLES OR FIRE TRUCKS.

PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP DIVERTED ITS THREE YEAR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT TO COVER EMERGENCY REPAIRS PUTTING SCHEDULED ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS ON HOLD. AS OF THIS DATE, PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP HAS AWARDED CONTRACTS FOR THE REPAIR OF AVONDALE ROAD, THE REPAIR OF COAL STREET AND THE DEMOLITION OF THE COAL STREET BRIDGE.

CURRENTLY PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP IS WAITING FOR APPROVAL FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ON AN APPLICATION FOR A PERMIT FOR INSTALLATION OF PIPE IN COAL CREEK WHICH WOULD ALSO ALLOW A TEMPORARY BRIDGE TO BE BUILT.

IF THIS PERMIT IS APPROVED PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP BELIEVES THE WORK CAN BE COMPLETED BY THE MIDDLE OF NOVEMBER ALLOWING EMERGENCY VEHICLES AND TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS NORMAL ACCES TO THIS AREA.

PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP WOULD THEN TRY TO SECURE FUNDING FOR A PERMANENT BRIDGE.

ON BEHALF OF PLMOUTH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE FOR BEING PROACTIVE IN SEEKING A SOLUTION TO DISASTERS THAT DO NOT REACH FEMA DISASTER THRESHOLDS.

I WOULD ALSO ASK THAT YOU BE VIGILANT ON HAZARD MITIGATION PROJECTS TO MAKE SURE LOW LYING AREAS ARE CLEARED.

IN CLOSING, SPECIAL THANKS TO SENATOR LISA BAKER FOR HER ASSISTANCE IN PROVIDING PUMPS AND OTHER HELP DURING THE RECENT FLOODING AND THANKS TO STATE SENATOR JOHN YUDICHAK AND STATE REPRESENTATIVE GERALD MULLERY FOR ALL OF THEIR HELP.

I ALSO WANT TO THANK THE COMMITTEE FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT THIS TESTIMONY.