

PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE
Testimony Before the
Senate Committee on Transportation and the Senate
Committee on Veterans Affairs and Emergency
Preparedness
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Presented by
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Good morning, Chairman Madigan and Chairwoman Baker, and distinguished members of the committees. I am Colonel Jeffrey B. Miller, Commissioner of the Pennsylvania State Police. I want to thank you for this opportunity to talk about the actions taken since we received an independent report, prepared by James Lee Witt Associates, on last February's storm.

In response to the report, Governor Rendell directed the State Police to accomplish three things: (1) develop or update written protocols to ensure that information is transmitted both horizontally and vertically throughout the organization; (2) ensure that our Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers have access to all information available on State Police systems and a protocol for sharing that information by a broadband connection or use of the Commonwealth's 800 MHz platform; and (3) develop a comprehensive emergency operations plan that compliments the State Emergency Operations Plan and clearly articulates the roles and responsibilities of the Pennsylvania State Police.

To accomplish these goals, the State Police established a workgroup last March led by our Area I Commander, Major Steven McDaniel. Based on their recommendations, we developed the Watch Officer concept. Five Departmental Watch Officers will be assigned either to the Emergency Operations Center or the Pennsylvania Criminal Intelligence Center, known as PaCIC, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Departmental Watch Officers will be in constant, direct communication with Watch Officers located at State Police Stations, the

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. The five Department Watch Officers have been selected. Right now, those officers are working at PaCIC to develop protocols for Watch Officer operations and communication that will ensure horizontal and vertical communication of Situational Awareness information.

Next, we have distributed Blackberry devices to all 16 Troop Commanders, and each State Police Station will receive two cellular telephones with text message capability and battery backup. These cell phones will be assigned to the Station Watch Officers and their designees. In addition, a State Police Mobile Office device has been installed at the Emergency Operations Center to compliment the broadband 800 MHz radio access currently available. Consequently, the Watch Center will be able to send Situational Awareness information to Station Watch Officers, as well as Area and Troop Commanders, via text messages, email, Mobile Office, 800 MHz radio, and telephone. In combination, these changes will enhance redundant emergency communication, facilitate transfer of Situational Awareness information from the Watch Office to Troops and Stations, and make sure our Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers have access to all of the information available on State Police systems.

Further, we are conducting a comprehensive review of Operations Manual 7-1, Emergencies and Unusual Occurrences, or OM 7-1. This is a massive undertaking because OM 7-1 touches on virtually all field operations. In the short

term, it is simply not feasible to completely revise OM 7-1 to comply with the National Emergency Management System. Instead, we are now drafting Special Orders and specific chapter changes that can be in place before the first snow fall. The revisions will include alert levels, designating the state of readiness, as well as horizontal and vertical communication of situational awareness and the common operating picture. In other words, what is going on, who needs to know, and how they will find out. We are also writing protocols to address the new Watch Officer functions, setting out protocols for contact, mechanisms for contact, and the content of information to be shared.

Next, we will be issuing a directive mandating use of Incident Management Teams and Incident Action Plans in planned, large-scale operations, all multi-agency hazardous responses, severe weather conditions, and incidents that extend into multiple operational periods. The Incident Management Teams will be deployed because they have specialized skill in applying the National Incident Management System and the Incident Command System. Additionally, the revised orders and regulations will provide guidance as to when an After Action Report is required, improve the process for identifying issues in the After Action Report, and establish an accounting system for the process.

In the meantime, various working groups are making concrete plans for the upcoming winter. For example, members of Troop L and the local PennDOT district office are nearly finished with plans for road closures on I-78. We are also

collaborating with PennDOT on its Protocol for Interstate Restrictions and Closures.

Finally, all enlisted members of the State Police have completed web-based training on the National Incident Management System, or NIMS. Members of the State Police who hold the rank of Sergeant and above are currently undergoing higher-level NIMS training. Anyone who is likely to assume a supervisory or command position within the Advanced Incident Command System will receive additional training. NIMS protocols have been incorporated into the Department's planning for the National Governor's Association Convention which will be held in Philadelphia during 2008, and Troopers with NIMS expertise are part of the convention's Command Team. This month, three Commanders attended Integrated Emergency Management Training at the National Emergency Management Training Center. Meanwhile, Troopers across the Commonwealth continue to participate in various incident management exercises.

In closing, I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.