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STATE SENATOR
LISA BAKER
20TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT



Senate of Pennsylvania

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PREPAREDNESS

October 10, 2014

Senator Chuck McIlhinney, Chairman
Senate Law and Justice Committee
Main Capitol Building, Room 187
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Senator Robert Mensch, Chairman
Senate Veterans Affairs and Emergency
Preparedness Committee
Main Capitol Building, Room 459
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Senators McIlhinney and Mensch:

The intensive, ongoing manhunt for accused homicide suspect Eric Matthew Frein has demonstrated the patience and skill of the Pennsylvania State Police, our other first responders, municipal and county governments, and so many other individuals and groups who have participated in the search these past three weeks. These men and women deserve our heartfelt commendation and gratitude in the face of such clear and present danger.

This massive pursuit has displayed the resilience and fortitude of the many innocent residents who have been affected by periodic lockdowns of roads, schools, activities and travel. It has also highlighted the strength of our community. From providing meals for law enforcement, to offering a warm bed for a family prevented from returning to their home, businesses and nonprofit organizations have banded together to do their part to help.

Naturally, because of the money, manpower, and time involved, questions are surfacing about how technology or laws could assist in future searches. Moreover, it has raised larger questions about Pennsylvania's response to any emergency. Just this week, the General Assembly took steps to expand the powers granted to the governor during an emergency under Title 35, allowing him to give arrest powers to law enforcement personnel from other states when assisting Pennsylvania under an Emergency Mutual Aid Compact. Other issues and protocols that may require re-examination include the effectiveness of our communications network, the need for seamless interstate and interagency cooperation, the ability to transmit shelter-in-place and other time-sensitive emergency instructions to citizens, the safety of our first responders, and the cost to conduct a prolonged manhunt in wooded terrain.

An after-action report on these matters, in search of improvements to our state and local emergency response network, appears to hold great promise. Therefore, I respectfully request that a joint hearing of the Senate Law and Justice and Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness committees be held in Pike County when the manhunt has ended. To be clear, the intent is not to find fault, but instead to offer a realistic assessment of what we know, and what we might take into account in the future. Such a forum provides a path to positive action in response to lessons learned.

This hearing can include a review of the following:

- Officer safety needs and barracks assessments.
- Pennsylvania State Police incident response.
- Effectiveness of deployed technology, including the statewide radio network.
- Cooperation among county and local officials, and among neighboring states.
- Communication policies, including reverse 911 and shelter-in-place directives.
- Costs to state and local governments, and organizations such as the American Red Cross.
- Adequacy of notice given to businesses and institutions making decisions on whether to open or close.
- Experiences of innocent citizens whose lives were affected, including school officials and residents.

Thank you for your consideration of my request. My staff looks forward to the opportunity to work with yours. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Diane McNaughton with any questions or concerns, or if I may be of assistance to you in the future.

Sincerely,



Lisa Baker
Senator

pc: Representative Rosemary Brown
Representative Mike Peifer