

CLIMATE CHANGE



DePasquale Calls for Pennsylvania to Act on Climate Change

By Gary Miller

HARRISBURG – Auditor General Eugene DePasquale today urged Pennsylvania to do more to prepare for the impacts of climate change due to a lack of meaningful action at the federal level.

"The climate crisis will impact public health and safety, disrupt our economy and create new burdens on taxpayers," DePasquale said at his third public hearing on the topic. "In light of how little serious work is being done about the crisis at the national level, states must make certain they're prepared for these potentially devastating impacts."

DePasquale is developing a special report on state government's response to climate change and steps that can better prepare the state for the future, noting that the problem will impact health, transportation and other infrastructure, agriculture, forestry, and tourism – among other issues.

Today's hearing was held at Widener University's Commonwealth Law School. Witnesses scheduled to testify included:

- John Dernbach, Widener University Professor of Environmental Law and Sustainability
- Randy Padfield, Acting Director, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)
- David Buono, Jr., Consumer Liaison, PA Insurance Department
- John Brosious, Deputy Director, Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association
- Dr. Rachel Levine, Secretary, PA Department of Health
- Allison Acevedo, Office of Environmental Justice Director, Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP)
- Patricia Zapata, Organizing Program Assistant, CASA

"I want our state to be ready for what the federal government's own experts say is already happening and what is yet to come," DePasquale added, referencing a federal report issued last fall.

That report said that in the Northeast region, climate change poses threats to public health and safety from extreme heat and flooding; raises concerns about damage to aging power, water, sewer and transportation systems; and will impact rural communities, farming, forestry and tourism by altering ecosystems.

DePasquale's special report is expected to be complete this summer. Learn more about the Department of the Auditor General online at www.paauditor.gov.

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Ken Field
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Get Your Ducts in a Row

Air conditioning systems have a lot in common with heating systems but they also differ on some very important aspects. Most newer homes have a furnace or heat pump and the ducts are used year round. Many older homes were built without air conditioning and they may have baseboard hot water heat or radiators but they also may have a furnace that used ducts for heat and just didn't have air conditioning installed.

A system that was installed for heat only typically does not have return ducts anywhere but floor level and many homes from the 1950's had no return ducts at all from the second floor because it was thought to be unnecessary at that time. As a side note, when central heat was becoming popular a few degrees of temperature difference between rooms was not considered to be a problem. People wore more clothes and were just glad they didn't have to huddle around the coal stove to keep from freezing anymore.

In order for any air conditioning system to function and provide comfort, the warmest air in the room needs to be taken back to the fan unit and cooled then returned to the rooms. When the warmest air in the rooms is near the top because heat rises, and the return registers are on the floor, cooling will be poor. Especially in a home with NO return ducts at all from the second floor. This problem needs to be addressed before a system is installed or you will be very disappointed. We see these homes pretty often and the cost to correct the duct problems is usually as much as the cost to install the air conditioner. There is no quick and easy fix but if you don't get it right, you will still be using window units in some rooms.

It's not rocket science and it is my belief that many contractors know the system won't work right but they do it anyway because the system install is much easier than the duct repairs. If your home currently does not have air conditioning and you are getting quotes to install it, just ask about air distribution and see what kind of answers you get. Cold air is heavy and dense and doesn't want to go to the second floor anyway but when there is no way for the air already on the second floor to get back to the fan unit it's like blowing in a bottle. It will never work. Every outlet needs an inlet.

Ken Field is the owner of Field's Service, Inc. and State Belt Energy Services. He has over 40 years of experience in heating, air conditioning and is certified by RESNET and BPI in various areas of energy conservation. He can be reached at 610-599-8832 or at www.StateBeltEnergy.com

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Northampton County Legislators Announce Local Grants Awarded from Gaming Revenue

By Scott Little

HARRISBURG – Sen. Mario Scavello (R-Northampton/Monroe) and state Reps. Joe Emrick (R-Nazareth), Marcia Hahn (R-Bushkill Township) and Zach Mako (R-Northampton) are pleased to announce a series of grants being awarded to 15 Northampton County entities by the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA).

Established in 2004 as an independent agency of the Department of Community and Economic Development, the CFA is charged with administering Pennsylvania's economic stimulus packages. The nearly \$1.5 million in grants are generated solely by the Sands Casino in Bethlehem and may be distributed to Northampton County.

The General Assembly members issued the following statement in response to the CFA's announcement:

"We would like to congratulate these grant recipients, whose requests were chosen as part of a highly competitive process. Their applications are evaluated on a number of criteria, including economic impact, local financial support and project readiness.

"The Local Share Account grants support a variety of important needs in our communities including economic development, public safety and infrastructure upgrades. These grants provide a direct savings to the municipalities that otherwise would have to rely on local taxpayers for critical needs and emergency equipment. We are pleased to support these projects.

The grant recipients that are part of the legislators' districts, and the purpose for which the grants are being used, are as follows:

Bath Borough - multi-municipal paving equipment procurement.

Bethlehem Township - police vehicles and purchase of fire utility truck.

Bushkill Township - police license plate reader program.

Lehigh Valley Economic Investment Corporation - Northampton Community College culinary upgrade grant request.

Lower Nazareth Township - fire company air packs.

Nazareth Borough - life saving fire equipment.

Northampton Borough - TOMCAR fire/transport rescue vehicle.

Northampton County - Lehigh Valley Regional Intelligence and Investigation Center.

Palmer Township - suburban EMS ambulance.

Pen Argyl Borough - police vehicle request.

Roseto Borough - new public works garage.

Stockertown Borough - police equipment upgrades.

Tatamy Borough - security and safety upgrades.

Wind Gap Borough - municipal complex garage apron upgrade and sewer line study.

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