

Memorandum :: Hovigan, Andrew Jr.
Chairman of Committee to Coordinate PA Legislation
for flood relief, 1972 September

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Andrew Hourigan, Jr., Chairman, Committee to Coordinate Pennsylvania Legislation for Flood Relief

TO: John Hourigan, Jr. — Committee Members
Roman Rubenstein
James Adonizio
Harold Rosenn, Esq.
Raymond Lowery, Jr.
Lawrence Hollander
George Sordoni
James Kenny
Ralph Johnston, Esq.
Hon. Bernard O'Brien
Hon. Martin Murray

DATE: September 5, 1972

1. Max Rosenn, Chairman of Task Force Recovery, Inc., has indicated that you have been appointed a member of the Committee to Coordinate Pennsylvania Legislation for Flood Relief.

2. For your information, I enclose herewith clippings of actions thus far taken by the legislature. In your role as a member of the committee, it would be appreciated if you would review any areas of potential legislation which are indicated in order to alleviate problems caused by the June flood in this area.

3. A meeting of the committee is called for Saturday, September 9th, at 10:00 a.m. in the Conference Room of Hourigan, Kluger & Spohrer, 700 United Penn Bank Building, Wilkes-Barre, to discuss matters which should be included in our legislative request program. It would be appreciated if you would notify either Andrew Hourigan, Jr., as chairman of this sub-committee, or his secretary, of your plans for attendance.

4. We look forward to seeing you on Saturday.

AHJr/rp

cc: Hon. Max Rosenn

Pre-flood Values to Be Paid By State on Land Condemned

(Special to the Times-Leader, The Evening News, Wilkes-Barre Record)

Harrisburg — This is the voting record of area lawmakers during the week of August 21-26 including final legislative passage of several flood relief bills.

The Legislature, which had been called back for two weeks of special session to consider flood relief measures, election reform bills and a controversial pay hike for its members, is in recess until September 11. The voting this past week is as follows by local legislators (Representatives Stanley A. Meholchick, Ashley, Raphael Musto, Pittston; Bernard F. O'Brien, Wilkes-Barre; Frank J. O'Connell, Kingston; Fred J. Shupnik, Luzerne; James J. Ustynoski, Hazleton; and Senators Martin L. Murray, Ashley and T. Newell Wood, Harveys Lake):

Senate (Special Session No. 1)

HB 4—(Passed)—A proposed emergency amendment to the State Constitution to permit direct state aid to individuals, businesses or other institutions damaged by flooding. This aid could take the form of tax rebates, credits, exemptions, grants-in-aid, state supplementations or other special provisions. This proposal will be placed before the voters in the November general election. (Murray—Yes; Wood—Yes)

HB 6—(Passed)—Would allow state reimbursement of flood losses to volunteer fire companies and ambulance associations. The federal government says publicly-owned fire companies and ambulance operations are eligible for federal reimbursement but not volunteer associations. (Murray—Yes; Wood—Yes)

HB 7—(Passed)—Permits local development authorities to sponsor disaster relief projects. The State Commerce Secretary would decide upon qualification. Property owned or used by any industrial, utility, manufacturing or research and development enterprise is eligible. The sum of \$50 million has been earmarked for this proposal. (Murray—Yes; Wood—Yes)

HB 8—(Passed)—Permits the state to pay pre-flood values on property condemned for highway projects. (Murray—Yes; Wood—Yes)

(Special Session No. 2)

SB 1—(Passed)—Extends the

deadline for accepting absentee ballots from 5 p. m. Friday before election to the time polls close on election day. (Murray—Yes; Wood—No)

SB 5—(Defeated)—Would permit voter registration by mail by individuals absent from his or her county of residence during the registration period. (Murray—Yes; Wood—No) (Regular Session)

HB 2285—(Passed)—Appropriates \$66.6 million to the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency, including \$60.4 million for scholarship grants to college students. (Murray—Yes; Wood—Yes)

House of Representatives (Special Session No. 1)

HB 8—Concurrence in minor Senate amendment (approved) to bill permitting the state to pay pre-flood values on property condemned for highway projects. (Meholchick—Yes; Musto—Yes; O'Brien—Yes; O'Connell—Yes; Shupnik—Yes; Ustynoski—Yes)

HB 10—(Passed)—Authorizes the state to float \$100 million in bonds to help restore flood-damaged communities. The funds would go to redevelopment authorities in counties and municipalities for urban redevelopment. Each state dollar is expected to attract \$3.50 in matching federal money with grand total expected to be in the neighborhood of \$450 million. (Meholchick—Yes; Musto—Yes; O'Brien—Yes; O'Connell—Yes; Shupnik—Yes; Ustynoski—Yes)

HB 10—Amendment (approved) requiring that distribution of the \$100 million to be obtained by state-floated bonds for flood re-

lief be handled by the State Department of Community Affairs rather than by the Governor's Office. (Meholchick—Yes; Musto—Yes; O'Brien—Yes; O'Connell—Yes; Shupnik—Yes; Ustynoski—Yes)

HB 11—(Passed) Permits a one-day, statewide sweepstakes with the proceeds going into a disaster relief fund to aid flood-damaged areas. (Meholchick—Yes; O'Brien—Yes; O'Connell—Yes; Shupnik—Yes; Ustynoski—Yes)

HB 12—(Passed) Allows local government units which levy property taxes to reduce or eliminate those property taxes for this year on any property that has been destroyed or damaged by the flood in the amount of 10 per cent or more of the assessed value. (Meholchick—Yes; Musto—Yes; O'Brien—Yes; O'Connell—Yes; Shupnik—Yes; Ustynoski—Yes) (Special Session No. 2)

SB 4—(Passed) Authorizes residents whose voting registration records were destroyed in the flood to register up until October 31. (It is estimated that records of 170,000 Luzerne County voters were destroyed in that flood.) (Meholchick—Yes; Musto—Yes; O'Brien—Yes; O'Connell—Yes; Shupnik—Yes; Ustynoski—Yes) (Regular Session)

HB 2285—(Passed) Appropriates \$66.6 million to the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency, including \$60.4 million for scholarship grants to college students. (Meholchick—Yes; Musto—Yes; O'Brien—Yes; O'Connell—Yes; Shupnik—Yes; Ustynoski—Yes)

Area Flood Victims to Get Free Legal Services

Free legal services will be provided to flood victims who have incomes up to \$12,000 annually, according to a new program announced Wednesday.

The \$690,000 program will make many more Luzerne County residents eligible for legal services on flood-related problems such as landlord-tenant relationships and consumer protection difficulties.

Announcement of the program was made by Frank Carlucci, federal flood relief coordinator, and Atty. J. Earl Langan, president of Wilkes-Barre Law and Library Association (the county bar association) at the Wednesday "Report to the People" press conference.

Carlucci said the program will be jointly coordinated by the bar association, the Legal Services Association, Inc., which is Federally-funded, and the State Department of Public Welfare.

A "Lawyer Referral Service" and eight service centers will be established, Carlucci said, to accept telephone calls from flood victims. Cases will be placed in categories by a special team of lawyers and the cases then will be handled by the attorneys.

Carlucci said the attorneys will be provided by the Legal Services Association or through the services of private attorneys at the rate of \$20-per-hour.

Atty. Langan said the expansion of the legal services came at the request of Carlucci, who noted the increasing number of middle-income persons in addition to the poor in need of legal services as a result of the flood.

Carlucci said the new program will begin Monday and telephones are being installed to provide for the greatly expanded service.

The joint program guidelines will include the free legal service for incomes up to \$12,000 based on the projected 1972 tax statement.

Coordinating the program for the three agencies will be Atty. Thomas J. Glenn, director, Lawyer Referral Service; Atty. F. Charles Petrillo, executive director, Legal Services Association; Atty. Gifford Cappellini and Atty. Perry Shertz.

Atty. Glenn said the members of the Luzerne County Bar Association recognized the increasing need for legal services because of the thousands of people who were affected by the

flood, but were not previously eligible for a government assistance.

Atty. Langan noted that 50 percent of the county's lawyers were directly affected by the flood. He said it was not possible until now to offer legal assistance in connection with the disaster. The bar association head also urged persons to attempt first to contact their own attorney, if they

have one. He said the new program can help people contact their lawyers.

Funding of the new program will include: Office of Economic Opportunity, \$295,000; Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, cash contribution, \$25,000; Office of Emergency Preparedness, \$95,000; Law and Library Association, \$50,000, and State Department of Public Welfare, \$225,000.

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