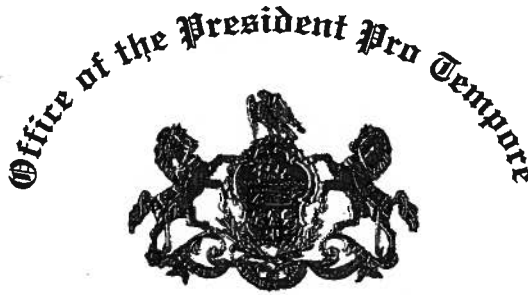


**25TH DISTRICT
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December 16, 2008

John Blake, Acting Secretary
DCED
4th Floor, Keystone Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Acting Secretary Blake:

I am writing to express my extreme disappointment in the Tourism Promotion Assistance (TPA) guidelines that were recently released by the Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED). Once again, the Administration has unilaterally taken action to provide Philadelphia and Pittsburgh with exorbitant funding at the expense of rural areas in much greater need.

Unfortunately, DCED has traveled down this path before. Last October, I met with Secretary Yablonsky following the release of TPA guidelines which drastically cut funding to many of the small TPA's located in the 25th senatorial district, while at the same time increasing funding for TPAs in the state's two largest cities. I was assured, at that time, by the Secretary that a new funding formula was being developed which would distribute funds equitably throughout the Commonwealth. A year later, much to my dismay, I learned from my local TPA's that the new formula DCED was planning to implement was merely more of the same.

Many rural communities throughout the 25th senatorial district rely on tourism to sustain their economic viability and for DCED to dramatically slash funding to them during these difficult economic times is incomprehensible. Under the new funding guidelines, the Potter County Visitors Association will see a 61% drop in tourism funding. Many other rural TPAs are also scheduled to have their allocations cut nearly in half. At the same time, some TPAs are set to receive funding increases of almost 800 percent!

John Blake, Acting Secretary
December 16, 2008
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I am hopeful that the outcry DCED is currently hearing from concerned citizens throughout the Commonwealth will persuade the department to reevaluate their ill-conceived TPA guidelines. However, if that is not the case, I will be more than willing to correct these inequities through the legislative and budgetary processes. I look forward to meeting with you in the near future to discuss this issue in greater detail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Scarnati', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Joe Scarnati
State Senator – 25th District

JBS/cl

cc: Potter County Visitors Association
Northwest Pennsylvania's Great Outdoors
Warren County Visitors Bureau
Tioga County Visitors Bureau