

JAMES HARRISON
SB 644

I would like to respectfully submit my support of SB 644. I applaud Senator Shapiro and the committee for recognizing the critical needs of schools suffering financial hardships due to natural disasters.

Particularly, I support the bill's intent to equitably assist both Chapter 41 districts and Chapter 42 districts. Clearly, districts in both categories impacted by natural disasters have serious needs.

I would ask the committee to consider offering clear, strong direction to TEA for administering the provisions of this bill. Particularly, because of the size of TEA and our state, I would ask the committee to provide clear direction to the agency to avoid an onerous, overly bureaucratic process for accessing and distributing these funds.

Additionally, I would ask the committee to offer direction regarding project qualifications for the funds. Senator Gallegos has pointed to the need to avoid simply repairing facilities that will remain extremely vulnerable to future disasters, reasonably using these funds for new construction at higher standards to avoid future damage.

to TBA for administering the provisions of this bill.

Thank you,

James J. Mori
3/3/09