

ITALO S. CAPPABIANCA, MEMBER

1216 WEST 26TH STREET
ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA 16508-1520
PHONE: (814) 453-7639
FAX: (814) 871-4713

ROOM 30, EAST WING
HOUSE BOX 202020
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2020
PHONE: (717) 787-4358
FAX: (717) 772-2284



House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS, CHAIRMAN

October 3, 1996

Honorable William J. Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20510

Dear President Clinton:

Several years ago the National Weather Service targeted weather stations across the nation to close in an effort to consolidate and streamline weather reporting services. At that time, there was serious concern that the weather station in Erie, Pennsylvania, while on that list, should not be closed. In fact, Senator Harris Wofford supported the station and was joined by the National Research Council which found that among the 140 targeted stations, Erie was one of five stations the Council urged remain open. However, our weather station was nonetheless closed, and weather reporting responsibilities for the Erie area were shifted to Cleveland, Ohio.

On September 17, 1996, our concerns and fears were realized when the City of Erie and outlying areas suffered severe flooding, the result of seven inches of rain falling in only a few hours. Hundreds of families experienced flooded homes, streets were closed due to flooding and businesses were wiped out...all without warning or the benefit of accurate weather forecasting.

These families had no warning that flooding may occur. These businesses had no time to move equipment and supplies and the City of Erie had no advance notice to prepare for severe weather. The system that caused the torrential rain was not reported from Cleveland. In fact that day's forecast called for "a mixture of clouds and sunshine, with a 30% chance of rain". Instead Erie was inundated with seven inches of rain, creeks flooded their banks, the storm drainage system clogged and millions of dollars in damage resulted.

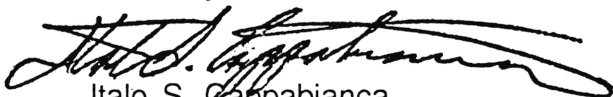
President William J. Clinton
October 3, 1996
Page 2

Erie is more than 100 miles from Cleveland, Pittsburgh or Buffalo. Consequently, even with sophisticated weather forecasting equipment, Cleveland is often unable to accurately determine our weather. This recent storm has seriously impacted many lives needlessly. If the weather station in Erie had been left open, damage would, no doubt, have been drastically reduced.

I ask your assistance in having this station reopened. Our residents have suffered enough. It is incumbent upon us, as elected officials to safeguard the interests of our constituents. The people are turning to us, seeking our assistance. I now turn to you and implore your intervention in this most serious of situations. Winter is bearing down on us and accurate dependable weather forecasting is essential in saving lives during these coming brutal months. We simply can not afford another mistake like that which occurred here on September 17.

I would be pleased to offer any further information or assistance your office may require relative to this situation. I thank you for your kind attention to this matter, the citizens of Erie would certainly be most grateful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Italo S. Gappabianca', with a stylized, flowing script.

Italo S. Gappabianca
Representative, 2nd District

ISC/cmr

City of Erie

Joyce A. Savocchio, Mayor

September 25, 1996

The Honorable Italo Cappabianca
State Representative
1216 West 26th Street
Erie, Pennsylvania 16508

Dear Representative Cappabianca:

I have enclosed for your information a series of letters I have forwarded asking both federal and state assistance in reviewing the need to reopen the National Weather Station in Erie that has been closed.

The recent flood disaster occurring in Erie and Erie County on September 17, 1996, gives dramatic and profound testimony to the need for such reopening to occur.

I am writing, as I have done in the past, to ask for your assistance in this vital matter.

I will be pleased to provide any information or testimony needed to assist you in seeking such a review and hopefully the reopening of the Erie Weather Station.

As always, I am appreciative of any assistance you can provide.

Sincerely,



Joyce A. Savocchio
Mayor

JAS/mnl

Enclosures