

## Ehrhart, Donna

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**From:** Fajt, Barb  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 05, 2002 2:10 PM  
**To:** Benka-Davies, Lynn; Ehrhart, Donna  
**Subject:** RE:

This is where PR and reality clash. While we know there is nothing the state can do, Tom should make it clear that he believes Schweiker and his administration should be doing everything they can to push the feds into action on behalf of such a huge industry in our state and, in effect, our economy. Tom's covering all bases to try and help. Are Pa.'s leaders? That's the distinction we want to carefully draw for Tom. I will defer to you, however, on the effectiveness of such a letter. My mind is forever on how this can make Tom look better to the public.

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Benka-Davies, Lynn  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 05, 2002 1:57 PM  
**To:** Ehrhart, Donna  
**Cc:** Fajt, Barb  
**Subject:** RE:

We can write to Secretary Hayes, but there is nothing he can do it is all up to federal government and their determination on the extent of damage.

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Ehrhart, Donna  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 05, 2002 1:52 PM  
**To:** Benka-Davies, Lynn  
**Subject:**

<< File: frost.doc >>  
*Donna Ehrhart*

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

□ 9 WEST MAIN STREET  
NORTH EAST, PENNSYLVANIA 16428  
PHONE: (814) 725-8664

□ 202 NORTH CENTER STREET  
CORRY, PENNSYLVANIA 16407  
PHONE: (814) 664-9126

□ 25B, EAST WING  
HOUSE BOX 202020  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2020  
PHONE: (717) 787-9475



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House of Representatives  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

June 7, 2002

The Honorable Ann M. Veneman, Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Veneman:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the myriad grape farmers in my legislative district in Erie County, Pennsylvania to ask for your prompt assistance in averting an agricultural disaster.

As you may know, a series of late and severe frosts hit Pennsylvania's grape growing region in the Northeastern area of the Commonwealth. This \$25 million a year industry is virtually defunct for this growing season. Preliminary estimates show that between 80 and 100 percent of the crop has been destroyed, making this the worst grape crop destruction since 1945. Currently, farmers who depend on their livelihood from this crop will be without income, and many others will be hard pressed to make ends meet. Moreover, many workers will likely be laid off as a result. The grim implications of this year's damage could extend into the next several growing seasons because of severely reduced crop yields.

It is with this in mind that I respectfully request your assistance in mitigating this crisis. Only the full resources of the United State Department of Agriculture can aid these farmers through this trepid time. Immediate assistance is needed, and I hope that you will extend the Federal Crop Disaster Program or another similar program to these farmers.

I thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas J. Scrimenti".

Thomas J. Scrimenti  
State Representative  
4<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary  
Washington, D.C. 20250

AUG 21 2002

AUG 14 2002

The Honorable Thomas J. Scrimenti  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
25B East Wing, House Box 202020  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120-2020

Dear Mr. Scrimenti:

Thank you for your letter of June 7, 2002, to Secretary Veneman regarding disaster assistance on 2002-crop grapes in Erie County, Pennsylvania. I have been asked to respond on her behalf.

Government payments supplied a large cash inflow to the farm economy in 2001, totaling \$21.1 billion. In addition, the federally subsidized crop insurance program provided more than \$5 billion in indemnity payments for 2001-crop losses. For 2002, Government assistance will again be important in supporting farm income. As you know, the President signed the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 into law on May 13, 2002. However, Congress dropped the disaster program provision from the bill to stay within budget constraints. The next opportunity to consider a disaster program is likely in the fiscal year 2003 appropriations process. While the Administration opposes additional new funding for agriculture, it would not necessarily oppose funding a 2001 or 2002 disaster program if budgetary offsets could be found.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J.B. Penn".

J.B. Penn  
Under Secretary  
Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services

## Ehrhart, Donna

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**From:** Fajt, Barb  
**Sent:** Monday, September 02, 2002 8:35 AM  
**To:** Fajt, Barb; Battaglia, Michelle; Zimmer, Mary Kay  
**Cc:** Ehrhart, Donna; Winters, Chris  
**Subject:** RE: Feds approve disaster assistance for grape growers

Upon reading additional stories in the Erie Times, the disaster declaration was on Aug. 10. It looks as though Schweiker was late in reporting. At any rate, I put out a release on Saturday, saying Scrimenti was looking into whether his office could help with the applications.

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Fajt, Barb  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 31, 2002 9:26 AM  
**To:** Battaglia, Michelle; Zimmer, Mary Kay  
**Cc:** Ehrhart, Donna; Winters, Chris  
**Subject:** Feds approve disaster assistance for grape growers

I just found this on capitolwire today. Damn that I didn't see it on Friday -- the administration always announces big news at the end of the day before a holiday so they can take full credit. Tom probably should look into whether he can help people with their applications. I'm going to scan the papers for any news of this and figure my angle for a news release -- but Tom should definitely take credit for getting them the help. I may put out a release for him today because I'm so pissed.

### **Schweiker administration announces approval of federal assistance for Northwest PA grape growers hit by frost, freezes.**

Text of Aug. 30 press release.

#### *Farmers Now Eligible for Emergency Loans*

HARRISBURG - On behalf of Gov. Mark Schweiker, Agriculture Secretary Sam Hayes today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has issued a Disaster Declaration for Erie, Crawford and Warren counties in Northwest Pennsylvania in the wake of grape crop losses earlier this year due to frost and freezes.

On June 10, Gov. Schweiker requested USDA Secretary Ann Veneman to make Farm Service Agency (FSA) emergency loans available to eligible farmers for crop losses in that area occurring due to severe frost and freeze conditions in May. With Erie County being named a primary disaster area, the declaration also makes the contiguous counties of Crawford and Warren counties eligible for assistance.

The grape crop losses are expected to be in excess of 60 percent of the normal yield and more than \$10 million.

"Based on the USDA review of the Damage Assessment Report along with supplemental information and supporting documents provided by FSA, it is evident that those counties have sustained significant production losses in the grape industry to warrant such a declaration," Secretary Hayes said.

The designation makes family-sized farm operators in the three counties eligible to be considered for low-interest emergency loans from FSA, provided that eligibility requirements are met. Each loan application will be considered on its own merits by FSA based on extent of losses, repayment ability and available security. Farmers have eight months from the date of this declaration to apply for the loans to help cover part of their actual losses.

Farmers may contact their local FSA office for further information on eligibility requirements and

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

□ 9 WEST MAIN STREET  
NORTH EAST, PENNSYLVANIA 16428  
PHONE: (814) 725-8664

□ 202 NORTH CENTER STREET  
CORRY, PENNSYLVANIA 16407  
PHONE: (814) 664-9126

□ 25B, EAST WING  
HOUSE BOX 202020  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2020  
PHONE: (717) 787-9475



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DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN OF THE  
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PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE  
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

November 8, 1999

Mr. H. Daniel Hill, III.  
One East Main Street, P.O. Box 152  
North East, Pa 16428-0152

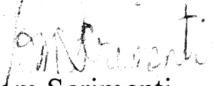
Dear Attorney Hill:

Thank you for your letter expressing support for the "Growing Greener PLUS" initiative. I appreciate the strong interest that you have in preserving our environment and providing additional recreational opportunities for our state's citizens.

I was opposed to the original House Bill 1200, which was known as Governor Ridge's Growing Greener Program. While this proposal had a few good environmental goals it would have paid for them by diverting money from the Recycling Fund, the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Fund, Act 339 sewer grants to local governments, and the Landfill Post-Closure Fund. In June 1999, however, the bill was amended to include \$675 million in general revenue bonds over 5 years and the dedication of 10% of the state's share of the realty transfer tax. In effect this will maintain the existing environmental programs while providing funding for new initiatives such as farmland preservation, sewer projects, wildlife protection, and rehabilitation of Fish and Boat Commission facilities. Since these changes have been made I now fully support the amended House Bill 1200 which my Democratic colleagues have named "Growing Greener Plus."

In addition, I would like to commend you for your leadership service with Trout Unlimited. It is only with the dedication of volunteer conservation organizations that we will be able to guarantee clean water and healthy ecosystems for all the citizens of Pennsylvania. If I may be of further assistance with this issue, or any other, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

  
Tom Scrimenti  
State Representative  
4<sup>th</sup> Legislative District

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

□ 9 WEST MAIN STREET  
NORTH EAST, PENNSYLVANIA 16428  
PHONE: (814) 725-8664

□ 9 WEST WASHINGTON STREET  
CORRY, PENNSYLVANIA 16407  
PHONE: (814) 664-9126

□ 25B, EAST WING  
HOUSE BOX 202020  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2020  
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AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

November 15, 1995

Mr. Harry McQueeney

████████████████████  
Erie, PA 16510

Dear Mr. McQueeney: — *Harry*

I want to thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with me. As you can imagine, I have received many letters and calls during the past weeks and months regarding the general issue of which you wrote. The Special Session of the General Assembly on crime was the forum in which the new efforts addressing guns were presented and debated, specifically in the NRA affirmed and overwhelmingly approved House Bill 110, now Act 17.

Individuals on both sides of this issue want to control crime and random acts of deadly violence. We all have the same destination of a safer society, although different paths may be chosen. Ever since I entered public service, I have been calling for drastically tougher laws and tougher penalties. Given the present persistent fear that invades daily and family life, I still believe that as an elected official I have an opportunity to send a real and meaningful message to those who choose a life of crime. It is the criminal's behavior and motivation that I want our legislature to address in a swift and stern way.

House Bill 110 won the support of the NRA, the General Assembly, and the Governor because, among other provisions, it proposed a better system of controlling who could own a firearm. Although it was not a perfect piece of legislation, and few laws ever are, I voted in favor of House Bill 110 in its final version, confident that it did not threaten the rights of legitimate gun owners. It is worth stressing that this legislation had the strong support of the National Rifle Association or America, the Pennsylvania Federation of Black Powder Shooters, the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, the Pennsylvania Gun Collectors Association, the Pennsylvania Rifle and Pistol Association, the Pennsylvania State Fish and Game Protective Association, and the Unified Sportsmen of Pennsylvania.

Mr. McQueeney

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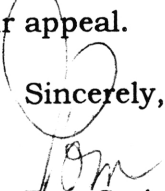
I want to take this opportunity to express to you in the strongest possible terms my fervent commitment to the protection of all the Constitutionally guaranteed rights we both enjoy. In fact one of the strongest provisions in Act 17 is the declaration of a citizen's right to bear arms as such a fundamental constitutional right. I will stand guard against any unwise or illegal onslaught through the legislative process that threatens those freedoms. By your participation in that important work, we can protect the very best attribute that make America great.

I have attached a copy of an informative publication distributed by the NRA about Act 17. In this material you will find that special provisions were included in the measure addressing weapon transfers between family members (page 14-15). Also I would like to note that just this week legislation in the Senate, Senate Bill 282, which is designed to clarify the misconceptions regarding the registration of rifles and shotgun is expected to easily pass. The Senate bill will then come to the House of Representatives for approval. The State Police and the Governor are presently mailing instructions to gun dealers that will detail these improvements in the language of Act 17.

As for the allocation of funds to implement this new law, I can only tell you that all of the groups previously listed, a vast majority of the General Assembly, the Governor, and I believe most Pennsylvanians believe that these dollars represent an investment. Every dollar spent for Act 17 is an investment for a safer Pennsylvania, without infringing upon the unquestionable constitutional guarantees that we both cherish.

Again, I appreciate this opportunity to exchange views with you on these important matters. Your comments and views are always welcomed. Please know that if any corrective measures are offered addressing the points you raise, I will remember and respect your appeal.

Sincerely,

  
Tom Scrimenti  
State Representative

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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NORTH EAST, PENNSYLVANIA 16428  
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# House of Representatives

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

February 22, 2002

Daren Allen

████████████████████  
Union City, PA 16438-8127

Dear Mr. Allen:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your recent emails expressing your views on various matters affecting the Commonwealth. As a state representative, I always appreciate hearing about those matters most important to my constituents.

Having served the citizens of the 4<sup>th</sup> Legislative District for over 12 years, I have continually striven to create a dialogue with my constituents. With that in mind, I thank you for your multiple emails and phone calls informing me of your questions and concerns. Such contact allows me to represent the views of the 4<sup>th</sup> Legislative District more effectively.

The magnetic strip and bar code were placed on Pennsylvania's new driver's licenses as a mechanism to fight underage drinking and license tampering. Private vendors sell machines that read these strips to the state liquor stores, beer distributors, and bars. These machines merely take digitally encoded information and display it on the machine to assure that a customer did not tamper with his license in order, for instance, to buy alcohol underage. The information that is displayed is only that information which is on the card as originally input but the Department of Transportation and that is publicly available by law. The information on this card is not part of a Federal database but is held by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. If you would like to obtain a copy of your license record, which contains this information as well as a history of your driving record, you can contact PennDOT or fill out form DL503. Please note that there is a \$5.00 processing fee for this service.

Additionally, I thank you for alerting me of your opposition of House Bill 2261. As you may know, this legislation was introduced to the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency



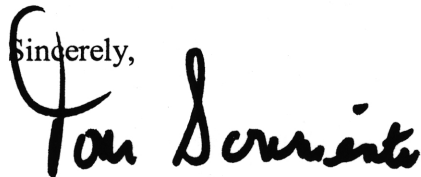
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Preparedness Committee on January 2, 2002. Should this legislation come before the House for consideration, I will be mindful of your concerns.

I also appreciate the information you provided me on Vermont's new handgun law. Please be assured that I remain an advocate of our second amendment rights. I will thoroughly investigate this issue as it pertains to Pennsylvania and take appropriate action.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me. As always, I enjoyed this opportunity to share viewpoints. If you have any further questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Scrimenti". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "T".

Thomas J. Scrimenti  
State Representative