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## **National Weather Service Recognizes Pennsylvania After All 67 Counties Achieve StormReady® Status**

**Harrisburg, PA** – Today at an event at the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) officials from the National Weather Service recognized Pennsylvania as one of only six states in the nation to have all counties achieve [StormReady®](#) status.

“PEMA is really pleased to receive StormReady status, something that only six states have,” PEMA Director Randy Padfield said. “It took the commitment and hard work of each of our counties, but because of this achievement, the commonwealth and our communities are now prepared for extreme weather.”

"The commitment demonstrated by communities across Pennsylvania to meet StormReady requirements is a recognition that advanced preparation and planning are essential components of protecting the state's 13 million citizens and 200 million annual visitors from extreme weather events," said Louis W. Uccellini, Ph.D., director of the National Weather Service. "People flock to this beautiful state for outdoor recreation, drawn by the vast network of state parks, hiking trails, waterways, amusement parks, music festivals, and countless college and professional sporting events. StormReady programs are designed to help ensure readiness and action across the population as we work together to build a Weather-Ready Nation."

StormReady uses a grassroots approach to help communities develop plans to handle all types of extreme weather, from tornadoes to winter storms. The program encourages communities to take a new, proactive approach to improving local hazardous weather operations by providing emergency managers with clear-cut guidelines on how to improve their hazardous weather operations. To be officially StormReady, a county must:

- Establish a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center;
- Have more than one way to receive severe weather warnings and forecasts and to alert the public;
- Create a system that monitors weather conditions locally;
- Promote the importance of public readiness through community seminars; and
- Develop a formal hazardous weather plan which includes training severe weather spotters and holding emergency exercises.

"We are pleased to recognize the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as StormReady, which means that each of the state's 67 counties across 46,000 miles is prepared for hazardous weather with robust operations and communications plans," said Barbara Watson, meteorologist-in-charge of the National Weather Service's Central Pennsylvania Forecast Office. "With a diverse topography ranging from numerous mighty river systems to the rugged Appalachian Mountains, Pennsylvania's primary weather challenges are flooding and winter

storms. Congratulations to all state and local organizations for meeting the rigorous StormReady standards to make Pennsylvania a safer place to live, work and play."

The first counties to achieve StormReady status were Bradford, Cambria, Lehigh and Lycoming in November 2000. The final county was Forest on Oct. 15, 2019. The program requirements are based on population, which gives each county the flexibility to adapt the program to meet the unique needs of their citizens, from rural to urban.

"The better prepared we are at all levels of government, the better we're able to work together to respond to the needs of the citizens we serve," said Padfield. "But our work doesn't stop here. We encourage municipal and private sector leaders to explore how they can become [StormReady® supporters](#) and help our communities become more weather resilient."

Padfield said the foundation of resilient communities is families and businesses that are prepared for emergencies. More information about how to prepare for an emergency, including specific information for people with specialized needs such as pets or access and functional needs, is available on the [ReadyPA](#) webpage.

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