COMPLIANCE AUDIT

City of Coatesville Non-Uniformed Pension Plan

Chester County, Pennsylvania
For the Period
January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2020

December 2021



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General

Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



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TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR AUDITOR GENERAL

City Council
City of Coatesville
Chester County
Coatesville, PA 19320

We have conducted a compliance audit of the City of Coatesville Non-Uniformed Pension Plan for the period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2020. We also evaluated compliance with some requirements subsequent to that period when possible. The audit was conducted pursuant to authority derived from the Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act (Act 205 of 1984, as amended, 53 P.S. § 895.402(j)), which requires the Auditor General, as deemed necessary, to audit every municipality which receives general municipal pension system state aid and every municipal pension plan and fund in which general municipal pension system state aid is deposited. The audit was not conducted, nor was it required to be, in accordance with Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. We planned and performed the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The objectives of the audit were:

- 1. To determine if municipal officials took appropriate corrective action to address the findings contained in our prior report; and
- 2. To determine if the pension plan was administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies.

Our audit was limited to the areas related to the objectives identified above. To determine if municipal officials took appropriate corrective action to address the findings contained in our prior report, we inquired of plan officials and evaluated supporting documentation provided by officials evidencing that the suggested corrective action has been appropriately taken. To determine whether the pension plan was administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies, our methodology included the following:

- We determined whether state aid was properly determined and deposited in accordance with Act 205 requirements by verifying the annual deposit date of state aid and determining whether deposits were made within 30 days of receipt for all years within the period under audit.
- We determined whether annual employer contributions were calculated and deposited in accordance with the plan's governing document and applicable laws and regulations by examining the municipality's calculation of the plan's annual financial requirements and minimum municipal obligation (MMO) and comparing these calculated amounts to amounts actually budgeted and deposited into the pension plan as evidenced by supporting documentation.
- · We determined whether annual employee contributions were calculated, deducted, and deposited into the pension plan in accordance with the plan's governing document and applicable laws and regulations by testing total members' contributions on an annual basis using the rates obtained from the plan's governing document in effect for all years within the period under audit and examining documents evidencing the deposit of these employee contributions into the pension plan.
- We determined whether retirement benefits calculated for plan members who retired or elected to vest during the current audit period, and through the completion of our fieldwork procedures, represent payments to all (and only) those entitled to receive them and were properly determined and disbursed in accordance with the plan's governing document, applicable laws, and regulations by recalculating the amount of the monthly pension benefits due to the retired individuals and comparing these amounts to supporting documentation evidencing amounts determined and actually paid to the recipients.
- We determined whether the January 1, 2017 and January 1, 2019 actuarial valuation reports were prepared and submitted by March 31, 2018 and 2020, in accordance with Act 205 and whether selected information provided on these reports are accurate, complete, and in accordance with plan provisions to ensure compliance for participation in the state aid program by comparing selected information to supporting source documentation.

The City of Coatesville contracted with an independent certified public accounting firm for annual audits of its basic financial statements which are available at the city's offices. Those financial statements were not audited by us and, accordingly, we express no opinion or other form of assurance on them.

City officials are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the City of Coatesville Non-Uniformed Pension Plan is administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies. As previously described, we tested transactions, interviewed selected officials, and performed procedures to the extent necessary to provide reasonable assurance of detecting instances of noncompliance with legal and regulatory requirements or noncompliance with provisions of contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies that are significant within the context of the audit objectives.

The results of our procedures indicated that, in all significant respects, the City of Coatesville Non-Uniformed Pension Plan was administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies, except as noted in the following findings further discussed later in this report:

Finding No. 1 - Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation - Inconsistent And Unauthorized Pension Benefits

Finding No. 2 — Partial Compliance With Prior Audit Recommendation — Incorrect Data On Certification Form AG 385 Resulting In An Overpayment of State Aid

Findings Nos. 1 and 2 contained in this audit report repeat conditions that were cited in our previous audit report that have not been corrected by city officials. We are concerned by the city's failure to correct those previously reported audit findings and strongly encourage timely implementation of the recommendations noted in this audit report.

The accompanying supplementary information is presented for purposes of additional analysis. We did not audit the information or conclude on it and, accordingly, express no form of assurance on it.

The contents of this report were discussed with officials of the City of Coatesville and, where appropriate, their responses have been included in the report. We would like to thank city officials for the cooperation extended to us during the conduct of the audit.

Timothy L. DeFoor Auditor General

Timothy L. Detool

December 8, 2021

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BACKGROUND

On December 18, 1984, the Pennsylvania Legislature adopted the Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act (P.L. 1005, No. 205, as amended, 53 P.S. § 895.101 et seq.). The Act established mandatory actuarial reporting and funding requirements and a uniform basis for the distribution of state aid to Pennsylvania's public pension plans.

Annual state aid allocations are provided from a 2 percent foreign (out-of-state) casualty insurance premium tax, a portion of the foreign (out-of-state) fire insurance tax designated for paid firefighters and any investment income earned on the collection of these taxes. Generally, municipal pension plans established prior to December 18, 1984, are eligible for state aid. For municipal pension plans established after that date, the sponsoring municipality must fund the plan for three plan years before it becomes eligible for state aid. In accordance with Act 205, a municipality's annual state aid allocation cannot exceed its actual pension costs.

In addition to Act 205, the City of Coatesville Non-Uniformed Pension Plan is also governed by implementing regulations published at Title 16, Part IV of the Pennsylvania Code and applicable provisions of various other state statutes including, but not limited to, the following:

- Act 67 The Third Class City Code, Act of November 24, 2015 (P.L. 242, No. 67), as amended, 11 Pa.C.S. § 10101 et seq.
- Act 177 General Local Government Code, Act of December 19, 1996 (P.L. 1158, No. 177), as amended, 53 Pa.C.S. § 101 et seq.

The City of Coatesville Non-Uniformed Pension Plan is a single-employer defined benefit pension plan locally controlled by the provisions of Ordinance No. 1438-2014, adopted pursuant to Act 317 (prior Third Class City Code). The plan is also affected by the provisions of collective bargaining agreements between the city and its non-uniformed employees. The plan was established January 1, 1968. Active union members hired before January 1, 2001 and non-union members are not required to contribute to the plan. Active union members hired on or after January 1, 2001 are required to contribute 3.5 percent of compensation up to the Social Security taxable wage, and 5 percent of compensation in excess of the Social Security taxable wage to the plan. As of December 31, 2020, the plan had 35 active members, 26 terminated members eligible for vested benefits in the future, 32 retirees receiving pension benefits from the plan, and 5 retirees receiving benefits funded through annuities purchased with plan assets.

CITY OF COATESVILLE NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

Compliance With Prior Recommendation

The City of Coatesville has complied with the prior recommendation concerning the following:

· Failure To Determine Vested Pension Benefits

During the current audit period, city officials provided the missing vested benefit calculations.

Partial Compliance With Prior Recommendation

The City of Coatesville has partially complied with the prior recommendation concerning the following:

· Incorrect Data On Certification Form AG 385 Resulting In An Overpayment Of State Aid

During the current audit period, the city reimbursed \$51,489 to the Commonwealth for the overpayment of state aid in 2017 and 2018; however, plan officials failed to comply with the instructions that accompany Certification Form AG 385 to assist them in accurately reporting the required pension data in the years 2020 and 2021, as further discussed in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report.

Noncompliance With Prior Recommendations

The City of Coatesville has not complied with the prior recommendation concerning the following as further discussed in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report:

· Inconsistent And Unauthorized Pension Benefits

<u>Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Recommendation – Inconsistent And Unauthorized Pension Benefits</u>

<u>Condition</u>: As disclosed in the three prior audit reports, the city partially complied with a previous audit recommendation to comply with the Third Class City Code for members of the bargaining unit hired on or after January 1, 2001. However, the amended pension plan document continues to contain a benefit provision for available benefit payment options that is not authorized by the Third Class City Code and conflicts with the collective bargaining agreement for union employees hired on or after January 1, 2001, as noted below:

		Collective	
Benefit Provision	Governing Document	Bargaining Agreement	Third Class City Code
Pension	The monthly pension may be paid	The City shall	Payment
benefit	under one of the following options:	provide a Third	options are
payment options	1. Lifetime pension – payments	Class City Pension Benefit to all	not provided.
options	payable to retiree until death;	employees of the	
	2. Joint and survivor pension –	bargaining unit	
	payments until the later of the	hired after	
	death of retiree or survivor, with	January 1, 2001.	
	survivor's benefit of 100%, 75%,		
	66 2/3% or 50% of the retiree's		
	benefit; or		
	3. Lifetime pension with certain period payments payable to		
	retiree or beneficiary until the		
	later of retiree's death or a		
	payment of a specified number		
	of payments (120 or 180).		

Finding No. 1 – (Continued)

In addition, as disclosed in the prior audit reports, the city adopted a home rule charter pursuant to the Home Rule Charter and Optional Plans Law, 53 Pa. C.S. § 2901 et seq. (previously 53 P.S. § 1-101 et seq.). The pension plan's governing document continues to contain benefit provisions that are not authorized by the Third Class City Code for non-union employees hired on or after January 1, 2001, who are not members of the bargaining unit, as illustrated below:

Benefit Provision	Governing Document	Third Class City Code
Normal retirement eligibility	Age 65 with no service requirement.	Age 60 with 20 years of service.
Normal retirement benefit	Monthly pension benefit equal to years of service times:	50% of the highest average annual salary during any 5 years of service.
	Effective 1/1/04, \$50, Effective 1/1/14, \$55, Effective 1/1/15, \$60, Effective 1/1/16, \$65, and Effective 1/1/17, \$70	
Social Security offset	Not specified	For employees covered by Social Security, a reduction in the pension by 40% of the participant's primary Social Security insurance amount attributable to city service to be made at the time that the participant becomes eligible to receive the Social Security primary insurance benefit.
Member contribution rate	Member contributions not required.	Two percent (2%), if the employees are not covered by Social Security, or 3.5% of compensation on which Social Security is payable, and 5% of any compensation in excess of that amount.

Finding No. 1 – (Continued)

Benefit Provision	Governing Document	Third Class City Code
Refund of members' contributions	Not specified	For employees ineligible to receive a pension benefit for any reason, their contributions must be returned, without interest, to the member or his estate, if payment is due to death.
Early Retirement eligibility	Age 55 with 10 years of service.	20 years of service with no age requirement.
Early Retirement benefit	The monthly pension accrued to the early retirement date, actuarially reduced and paid immediately.	A normal pension payable at age 60 if the participant continues paying monthly member's contributions equal to the last amount due while in active employment until the member reaches age 60.
Disability benefits	Not specified	For total and permanent disabilities occurring after 10 years of service and before age 60, benefit equals normal retirement benefit without offset for Social Security benefits.
Vesting eligibility	5 years of service.	12 years of service.
Vested benefit	Employee's accrued pension at termination, payable on normal retirement date.	Base pension times the percentage member's years of service bears to years of service member would have rendered by his earliest retirement date, payable at normal retirement date.

Finding No. 1 – (Continued)

Benefit Provision	Governing Document	Third Class City Code
Pension benefit Payment options	The monthly pension may be paid under one of the following options: 1. Lifetime pension – payments payable to retiree until death; 2. Joint and survivor pension – payments until the later of the death of retiree or survivor, with survivor's benefit of 100%, 75%, 66 2/3% or 50% of the retiree's benefit; or 3. Lifetime pension with certain period payments payable to retiree or beneficiary until the later of retiree's death or a payment of a specified number of payments (120 or 180).	Payment options are not provided.
Credit for prior city service	Not specified	Rehired employees who previously withdrew their members' contributions shall not receive credit for prior city service unless they return the amount withdrawn.

<u>Criteria</u>: As stated previously in prior audit reports, on January 24, 2001, the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania issued its opinion in *Municipality of Monroeville v. Monroeville Police Department Wage Policy Committee*. Therein, the court held that Section 2962(c)(5) of the Home Rule Charter and Optional Plans Law, 53 Pa. C.S. § 2962(c)(5), "clearly precludes home rule municipalities from providing pension benefits different from those prescribed in general law including Act 600." The court's holding was in accord with the position taken by this department since at least January 1995.

Finding No. 1 – (Continued)

The department acknowledges that its position has changed over the years and that, until *Monroeville*, there was no definitive decision as to whether home rule municipalities were obliged to comply with applicable pension law. The department seeks, therefore, to implement the decision in as equitable a fashion as possible, while paying necessary deference to the court's ruling. Accordingly, the department will not penalize a home rule municipality for granting benefits not authorized by the Third Class City Code to existing retirees or to individuals who began full-time employment before January 24, 2001 (the date *Monroeville* was issued). However, the department expects the city to restrict pension benefits to those authorized by the Third Class City Code for all employees who began full-time employment on or after that date.

In addition, a governing document which contains clearly defined and updated benefit provisions is a prerequisite for the consistent, sound administration of retirement benefits. Furthermore, the pension plan's benefit structure should be in compliance with the provisions of the Third Class City Code.

<u>Cause</u>: City officials cited the anticipated financial impact of the necessary changes to the pension plan as a reason for the continued noncompliance with this finding.

<u>Effect</u>: Inconsistent benefit provisions could result in inconsistent or improper benefit calculations and incorrect benefit payments from the pension plan.

Providing unauthorized pension benefits increases the plan's pension costs and reduces the amount of funds available for investment purposes or for the payment of authorized benefits or administrative expenses. Since the city received state aid based on unit value during the current audit period, it did not receive allocations attributable to the unauthorized pension benefits provided. However, the increased costs to the pension plan as a result of the excess pension benefits could result in the receipt of excess state aid in the future and increase the municipal contributions necessary to fund the plan in accordance with Act 205 funding standards.

<u>Recommendation</u>: We again recommend that plan officials amend the plan's governing document, as necessary, to ensure the plan's benefit provisions are in compliance with the Third Class City Code for non-union plan members who began full-time employment on or after January 24, 2001, and to eliminate the remaining inconsistency with the collective bargaining agreement for union employees.

Finding No. 1 – (Continued)

To the extent that the city is not in compliance with the Third Class City Code and/or is contractually obligated to pay benefits to existing plan members in excess of those authorized by the Third Class City Code, the excess benefits must be reflected in the Act 205 actuarial valuation reports for the plan and funded in accordance with Act 205 funding standards. Furthermore, such benefits will be deemed ineligible for funding with state pension aid. In such case the plan's actuary may be required to determine the impact, if any, of the excess benefits on the city's future state aid allocations and submit this information to the department. If it is determined that the excess benefits had an impact on the city's future state aid allocations after the submission of this information, the plan's actuary would then be required to contact the department to verify the overpayment of state aid received. Plan officials would then be required to reimburse the overpayment to the Commonwealth.

<u>Management's Response</u>: The city provided the following response:

The City acknowledges the differences leading to the original finding from an audit in the early 2000's and the continued differences leading to the repeat findings for the subsequent audits.

In 2019 the City took efforts to research and identify corrective actions involving three legal firms (pension experts, labor counsel, and the City Solicitor), the pension actuary firm, and the City's CPA firm. The general consensus was that necessary changes to the pension plan to resolve the cited differences would entail significant financial resources, and require new negotiated agreements from two bargaining units. The City was not in a position to incur these costs nor expectant that the collective bargaining process would have support these changes.

The Pension Commission has been asked to review the Non-Uniform Plan construct starting in 2022. Inclusion of the cited differences will be evaluated again as part of this effort.

<u>Auditor's Conclusion</u>: Based on the management response, it appears that municipal officials are striving to comply with the finding recommendation. Compliance will be evaluated during our next audit of the plan.

<u>Finding No. 2 – Partial Compliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Incorrect Data</u> On Certification Form AG 385 Resulting In An Overpayment Of State Aid

Condition: As disclosed in the Status of Prior Findings section of this report, the city partially complied with the prior recommendation by returning \$51,489 to the Commonwealth for the overpayment of state aid received in 2017 and 2018. However, plan officials again failed to comply with the instructions that accompany Certification Form AG 385 to assist them in accurately reporting the required pension data. The city certified an ineligible non-uniformed employee (1 unit) and overstated payroll by \$19,627 on the Certification Form AG 385 filed in 2020. In addition, the city certified an ineligible police officer (2 units) and overstated payroll by \$38,140 on the Certification Form AG 385 filed in 2021. The data contained on these certification forms is based on prior calendar year information.

<u>Criteria</u>: Pursuant to Act 205, at Section 402(e)(2), in order to be eligible for certification, an employee must have been employed on a full-time basis for at least six consecutive months and must have been participating in a pension plan during the certification year.

<u>Cause</u>: The non-uniformed employee worked part time prior to becoming a full time employee on August 12, 2019 and therefore did not meet the eligibility criteria in 2019 to be certified on the Certification Form AG 385 filed in 2020. The police officer worked part time prior to becoming a full time employee on August 27, 2020 and therefore did not meet the eligibility criteria in 2020 to be certified on the Certification Form AG 385 filed in 2021. Additionally, the city lacked adequate internal control procedures, such as having another individual review the data certified to ensure compliance with the instructions that accompanied Certification Form AG 385 prior to submission.

<u>Effect</u>: The data submitted on these certification forms is used, in part, to calculate the state aid due to the municipality for distribution to its pension plans. Because the city's state aid allocations were based on unit values, the incorrect certification of pension data affected the city's state aid allocations, as identified below:

Year	Type Of Plan	Units Overstated	Unit Value	State Aid Overpayment	
2020	Non-Uniformed	1	\$ 4,923	\$	4,924
2021	Police	2	\$ 4,797	\$	9,594
			Total	\$	14,518

Finding No. 2 – (Continued)

In addition, the city used the overpayment of state aid received in 2020 to pay the minimum municipal obligations (MMOs) due to the city's pension plans; therefore, if the reimbursement to the Commonwealth is made from the pension plans, the plans' MMOs will not be fully paid.

Furthermore, the city's future state aid allocations may be withheld until the finding recommendation is complied with.

<u>Recommendation</u>: We recommend that the total excess state aid, in the amount of \$14,518, plus interest, be returned to the Commonwealth. A check in this amount, with interest compounded annually from date of receipt to date of repayment, at a rate earned by the pension plan, should be made payable to: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and mailed to: Department of the Auditor General, Municipal Pension & Fire Relief Programs Unit, 321 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120. A copy of the interest calculation must be submitted along with the check.

We also again recommend that plan officials establish adequate internal control procedures, such as having at least two people review the data certified, to ensure compliance with the instructions that accompany Certification Form AG 385 to assist them in accurately reporting the required pension data.

In addition, if the reimbursement to the Commonwealth is made from pension plan funds, we recommend that any resulting MMO deficiencies be paid to the pension plans with interest, at a rate earned by the pension plans.

Management's Response: Municipal officials agreed with the finding without exception.

<u>Auditor's Conclusion</u>: Due to the potential withhold of state aid, the city's compliance with the finding recommendation will be monitored subsequent to the release of the audit report and through our next audit of the plan.

CITY OF COATESVILLE NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN POTENTIAL WITHHOLD OF STATE AID

Finding No. 2 contained in this audit report cites an overpayment of state aid to the city in the amount of \$14,518, plus interest. A condition of a repeat finding of this nature may lead to a total withholding of state aid in the future unless that finding is corrected. A check in this amount with interest, at a rate earned by the pension plan, should be made payable to: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and mailed to: Department of the Auditor General, Municipal Pension & Fire Relief Programs Unit, 321 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120.

CITY OF COATESVILLE NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION (UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF FUNDING PROGRESS

Historical trend information about the plan is presented herewith as supplementary information. It is intended to help users assess the plan's funding status on a going-concern basis, assess progress made in accumulating assets to pay benefits when due, and make comparisons with other state and local government retirement systems.

The actuarial information is required by Act 205 biennially. The historical information, beginning as of January 1, 2015, is as follows:

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
			Unfunded	
		Actuarial	(Assets in	
		Accrued	Excess of)	
	Actuarial	Liability	Actuarial	
Actuarial	Value of	(AAL) -	Accrued	Funded
Valuation	Assets	Entry Age	Liability	Ratio
Date	(a)	(b)	(b) - (a)	(a)/(b)
01-01-15	\$ 1,960,534	\$ 2,370,290	\$ 409,756	82.7%
01-01-17	2,059,043	2,707,340	648,297	76.1%
01-01-19	2,443,460	2,980,480	537,020	82.0%

Note: The market value of the plan's assets at 01-01-19 has been adjusted to reflect the smoothing of gains and/or losses over a 5-year averaging period subject to a maximum of 120 percent and a minimum of 80 percent of the market value of assets. This method will lower contributions in years of less than expected returns and increase contributions in years of greater than expected returns. The net effect over long periods of time is to have less variance in contribution levels from year to year.

CITY OF COATESVILLE NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION (UNAUDITED)

The comparability of trend information is affected by changes in actuarial assumptions, benefit provisions, actuarial funding methods, accounting policies, and other changes. Those changes usually affect trends in contribution requirements and in ratios that use the actuarial accrued liability as a factor.

Analysis of the dollar amount of the actuarial value of assets, actuarial accrued liability, and unfunded (assets in excess of) actuarial accrued liability in isolation can be misleading. Expressing the actuarial value of assets as a percentage of the actuarial accrued liability (Column 4) provides one indication of the plan's funding status on a going-concern basis. Analysis of this percentage, over time, indicates whether the system is becoming financially stronger or weaker. Generally, the greater this percentage, the stronger the plan.

CITY OF COATESVILLE NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION (UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF CONTRIBUTIONS

								Contributions as
								a Percentage of
	A	ctuarially			Con	tribution	Covered-	Covered-
Year Ended	De	etermined		Actual	Det	ficiency	Employee	Employee
December 31	Co	ntribution	Coı	ntributions	(E	xcess)	Payroll	Payroll
						<u> </u>		
2014	\$	102,184	\$	102,503	\$	(319)	\$1,301,110	7.88%
2015		108,929		108,929		-	1,197,791	9.09%
2016		84,277		84,277		-	1,257,681	6.70%
2017		154,520		154,520		-	971,023	15.91%
2018		145,324		145,324		-	746,443	19.47%
2019		201,564		203,722		(2,158)	790,307	25.78%
2020		206,573		206,573		-	836,144	24.71%

CITY OF COATESVILLE NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION NOTES TO SUPPLEMENTARY SCHEDULES (UNAUDITED)

The information presented in the supplementary schedules was determined as part of the actuarial valuation at the date indicated. Additional information as of the latest actuarial valuation date follows:

Actuarial valuation date January 1, 2019

Actuarial cost method Entry age normal

Amortization method Level dollar

Remaining amortization period 7 years

Asset valuation method 5-year smoothing – the actuarial

value of the assets will be limited to a maximum of 120% and a minimum of 80% of the market value of assets.

Actuarial assumptions:

Investment rate of return 7.5%

Projected salary increases * 4.5%

Cost-of-living adjustments None assumed

^{*} Includes inflation at 3.0%

CITY OF COATESVILLE NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom W. Wolf

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