

Chairman Issa, Ranking Member Cummings, and distinguished members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before this committee today. I thought this would be a good opportunity to discuss the impact of federal mandates on our municipality. Specifically, how federal mandates that provide a one size fits all approach have created inefficiency in the use of tax dollars and drive up property taxes.

Onondaga County has strived to provide its residents with a clean, healthy, and safe place to live. As with many historic urban areas, our county and city have had to deal with the challenges of environmental cleanup, dated infrastructure and a decreased population base to support these needs. Despite these challenges, we have made monumental strides towards cleaning up our lakes and modernizing our infrastructure for proper waste water treatment.

However, despite all of these efforts, Onondaga County continues to fight an uphill battle. This is because federal mandates that do not take into account a cost-benefit analysis of the mandated standards creates a situation where tax dollars can be spent towards a standard that fiscally unattainable.

Currently the federal government does not consider cost-effectiveness analysis as a component in application review for removal of designated use or granting wet weather related variances, where professional judgment supports findings that additional controls are not likely to or cannot achieve the mandated outcome. Because mandates that do not consider cost-effectiveness analysis, municipalities are forced to pay for unattainable mandates and also being penalized for nonconformity. Federal mandates need to have a greater understanding of the conditions that local municipalities deal with and adjust standards to ensure that tax payers are not penalized for circumstances that are impossible.

Furthermore, Onondaga County and the City of Syracuse support an aging infrastructure. The “Combined Sewer System” that allows for sewer overflow has been in place for over a century and as a result would be excessively costly to completely replace. To cope with this dated infrastructure limitation Onondaga County has engaged in storm water management practices to not only monitor the contents of storm water runoff, but the volume so as to avoid sewer overflow.

However, in spite of all that has been done to mitigate this problem, because of the lack of a sanitary sewer overflow (SSO) policy in the Clean Water Act that would evaluate the cost-effectiveness of a complete solution to this issue, the residents are still penalized during significant wet weather events. While these policies are designed to protect the environment, the costs of dealing with these issues and paying penalties are born by the residents.

In Onondaga County, waste water and storm water treatment are supported by usages fees. The costs penalties and infrastructure improvements drive up these use fees. These fees, combined with the excessive property tax burden in our region have created an unfriendly business environment.

From the perspective of a local municipality, there is no local control over the mandates that drive these expenses. While in Onondaga County there has been a monumental effort to mitigate the issues around

SSO and ensuring a clean water source, the residents are still penalized for situations that are the result of circumstances out of their control.

In closing, there are significant benefits to federal regulation. However, instituting more practical assessment of the cost-effectiveness of regulatory measures would relieve some of the unnecessary penalties that are the result of outcomes which are far beyond the scope of fiscal possibility. Proper recognition of the fiscal limitations that exist in the goals set forth in these mandates coupled with greater flexibility in the implementation of solutions by local stakeholders will promote a more competitive business environment.

Matthew J. Millea – Deputy County Executive of Physical Services, Onondaga County

Matthew J. Millea was appointed Deputy County Executive for Physical Services by Onondaga County Executive Joanne Mahoney on June 28, 2010. As Deputy County Executive Mr. Millea oversees the operations of nine county departments and assists the County Executive with the development and implementation of the annual county budget. Matt has been charged by the County Executive to manage the County's "Save the Rain" effort, which is a multi-million dollar public works program using both grey and green infrastructure approaches to mitigate sewer overflows into Onondaga Lake.

Prior to joining the Mahoney administration, Mr. Millea served as Executive Vice President and Acting President of the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation. Mr. Millea worked with Governor George E. Pataki as a Program Manager in the Governor's Public Authorities Office and as Director of Environmental Programs. Mr. Millea also worked for two years as a legislative assistant with the State Department of Environmental Conservation and as a Senior Legislative Analyst with the New York State Association of Counties.

Mr. Millea is a graduate of Siena College, where he currently serves as an Associate Trustee, and has a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Columbia University. Mr. Millea and his wife Lori reside in Syracuse with their two sons, Ethan and Aaron.

Travis R. Glazier – Director of Intergovernmental Relations, Onondaga County

Travis Glazier serves as Director of Intergovernmental Relations to Onondaga County Executive Joanie Mahoney. In this role, Glazier is responsible for communications between Onondaga County and local municipalities, and acts as the liaison between the county, state and federal governments on behalf of the County Executive. Government consolidation and efficiency is a major focus of his position.

Prior to serving on the County Executive's senior staff, Glazier founded a small internet company, CampaignBase.com, where he was CEO from 2005-2010. The company specialized in website software for political organizations, non-profits and advocacy groups.

In 2005, he ran the mayoral campaign for Joanie Mahoney, the closest race for Mayor of Syracuse in 70 years.

From 2002-2005, Glazier serves on the District Staff of Congressman Sherwood Boehlert (NY24) where he worked on veterans, Department of Defense and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issues.

Glazier is a lifelong resident of upstate New York and holds a BA in politics from SUNY Potsdam. He is a member of the Clay republican committee and is Vice Chair of the 40 Below Steering Committee. He and his wife, Christa, a former District Staff member for Congressman Jim Walsh (NY25), reside in Liverpool, New York with their English Bulldog, Meatball.