

Township of Frelinghuysen  
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March 25, 2021

Hon. Philip Murphy, Governor  
Office of the Governor  
225 W. State Street  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Re: School Funding

Dear Governor Murphy:

I write to you today as the Mayor of Frelinghuysen Township. Frelinghuysen Township is a rural bedroom community in Warren County approximately sixty miles west of New York City with a population of approximately 2,100 residents spread over approximately 24 square miles. It is a part of New Jersey that has great natural beauty and an abundance of wildlife. Over the last several decades the Township has engaged proactively in preserving farmland and other land from development through partnerships with private and public entities and through Green Acres and other grants. In 2015 Frelinghuysen was rated fourth on the list of New Jersey's Best Towns for Families. In short, Frelinghuysen, like the towns that surround it, are environmental oases. With that incredible and incalculable environmental benefit, comes few ratables and a significant tax burden due to preserved farmland and undevelopable land.

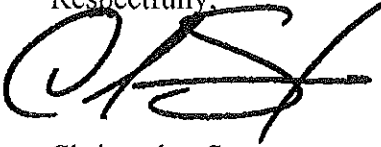
Since becoming a Committeeman in Frelinghuysen Township several years ago I have communicated by e-mail and correspondence with you several times regarding cuts in State Aid to our local schools. Now that I am Mayor, I am once again compelled to bring this unfortunate state of affairs to your attention. The Frelinghuysen School, our local K-6 elementary school, has lost \$221,769 in State Aid since 2019, and the school anticipates an additional approximately \$100,000 in aid cuts over the next several years. This is a significant loss for a Township of our population and modest tax base. Similarly, our 7-12 school, North Warren Regional, has lost approximately \$2.5M in State Aid with an additional \$1.5M anticipated additional losses in the coming years.

Frankly, no one has explained to me a valid reason why the State's rural residents have borne a disproportionate amount of State School Aid cuts. On behalf of the Township's residents I request that the State reconsider the path it has set, which is to effectively defund the rural public schools, making them less competitive with the schools in suburban districts which have wealthy

residents and a rich source of ratables. While Frelinghuysen Township welcomes our fellow New Jerseyans to visit and enjoy its natural beauty, farmland and produce, we only ask in return for our fair share of State School Aid.

I thank you for your consideration, and I likewise thank you tremendously for your leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic emergency.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CS', written over a horizontal line.

Christopher Stracco  
Mayor, Frelinghuysen Township

cc: Hon. Stephen V. Oroho (Via E-Mail)  
Stephanie Bonaparte, Administrator, Frelinghuysen School (Via E-Mail)  
Sarah Bilotti, Superintendent, North Warren Regional School District (Via E-Mail)