ATTESTATION ENGAGEMENT

Borough of Luzerne

Luzerne County, Pennsylvania 40-418

Liquid Fuels Tax Fund
For the Period
January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013

April 2015



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
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EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE AUDITOR GENERAL

Independent Auditor's Report

The Honorable Leslie Richards Acting Secretary Department of Transportation Harrisburg, PA 17120

We examined the accompanying Form MS-965 With Adjustments for the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund of the Borough of Luzerne, Luzerne County, for the period January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013. The municipality's management is responsible for the Form MS-965. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the Form MS-965 With Adjustments based on our examination.

Our examination was conducted in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the standards applicable to attestation engagements contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. An examination includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the Borough of Luzerne, Luzerne County's Form MS-965 for the period January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013 and performing such other procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances. We believe that our examination provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

We are mandated by Section 403 of *The Fiscal Code*, 72 P.S. § 403, to audit each municipality's Liquid Fuels Tax Fund to ensure that funds received are expended in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States include attestation engagements as a separate type of audit. An attestation engagement performed pursuant to *Government Auditing Standards* involves additional standards that exceed the standards provided by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Accordingly, this attestation engagement complies with both *Government Auditing Standards* and Section 403 of *The Fiscal Code*.

<u>Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)</u>

As discussed in the Findings and Recommendations and Summary of Prior Examinations' Recommendations sections of this report:

- The borough expended \$13,807.00 during 2013 from its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for street lighting. However, we could not determine the permissible amount of street lighting expenditures that could be paid from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund (Finding No. 1).
- On December 11, 2013, the municipality transferred \$2,049.00 from its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund to the Light and Water Fund for the reimbursement of street lighting expenditures paid during 2012, which are retroactive expenditures (Finding No. 2).
- In our 2012 examination period the municipality expended \$11,880.00 for retroactive expenditures and \$3,930.42 for nonpermissible expenditures from its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. The municipality had not reimbursed \$15,810.42 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund as of November 20, 2014, the exit conference date of this report (Summary of 2012 Examination Recommendations).

In our opinion, except for the bulleted matters discussed above, the Form MS-965 With Adjustments presents, in all material respects, the information required by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation for the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund of the Borough of Luzerne, Luzerne County, for the period January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013, in conformity with the criteria set forth in Note 1.

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we are required to report all deficiencies that are considered to be significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal control; fraud and noncompliance with provisions of laws or regulations that have a material effect on the Form MS-965; and any other instances that warrant the attention of those charged with governance; noncompliance with provisions of contracts or grant agreements, and abuse that has a material effect on the Form MS-965. We are also required to obtain and report the views of responsible officials concerning the findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as well as any planned corrective actions. We performed our examination to express an opinion on whether the Form MS-965 is presented in accordance with the criteria described above and not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on internal control over reporting on the Form MS-965 or on compliance and other matters; accordingly, we express no such opinions.

A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements on a timely basis. A material weakness is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the Form MS-965 will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. A significant deficiency is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

<u>Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)</u>

Our consideration of internal control over reporting on the Form MS-965 was for the limited purpose of expressing an opinion on whether the Form MS-965 is presented in accordance with the criteria described above and would not necessarily identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. Given these limitations, during our engagement we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses. However, material weaknesses may exist that have not been identified.

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Form MS-965 is free from material misstatement, we performed tests of the Borough of Luzerne, Luzerne County's compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the determination of amounts on the Form MS-965. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our engagement, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed the following instances of noncompliance that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*:

- Amount Eligible To Be Paid For Street Lighting Could Not Be Determined.
- Retroactive Expenditures Recurring.

We are concerned that the municipality failed to comply with our previously reported finding regarding retroactive expenditures. In our current examination the amount eligible to be paid for street lighting could not be determined and the municipality made retroactive expenditures. Because we could not determine the amount of taxes collected specifically for street lighting and because the municipality made retroactive expenditures, the municipality may be required to reimburse \$15,856.00 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. The municipality should strive to comply with the recommendations and corrective actions noted in this report.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the management of the Borough of Luzerne, Luzerne County, and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

We appreciate the courtesy extended by the Borough of Luzerne, Luzerne County, to us during the course of our examination. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michael B. Kashishian, CPA, CGAP, CFE, Director, Bureau of County Audits, at 717-787-1363.

January 1, 2015

Eugene A. DePasquale Auditor General

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BOROUGH OF LUZERNE LUZERNE COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND BACKGROUND FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2013 TO DECEMBER 31, 2013

Background

The Liquid Fuels Tax Municipal Allocation Law, Title 72 P.S. § 2615.5, provides municipalities other than counties (townships, boroughs, cities, towns, home rule, and optional plan governments) with an annual allocation of liquid fuels taxes from the state's Motor License Fund to be used for the maintenance and repair of streets, roads, and bridges for which the municipality is responsible. The allocation of these funds to municipalities is based: (1) 50 percent on the municipality's proportion of local road mileage to the total local road mileage in the state, and (2) 50 percent on the proportion of a municipality's population to the total population in the state.

The Vehicle Code, Title 75 P.S. § 9511, provides municipalities with annual maintenance payments to be received from the Motor License Fund for functionally local highways that were transferred to a municipality from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Each municipality must deposit the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund money and annual maintenance payments that it receives into a special fund called the Municipal Liquid Fuels Tax Fund or State Fund. A municipality may not deposit any other monies into this fund except when the municipality does not have enough money in the special fund to meet the payments called for by its current annual budget for road and bridge purposes. In this case, the municipality may borrow money or transfer money from its General Fund to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

The Department of Transportation has been given the regulatory authority for the administration of these funds. To qualify for its annual allocation, each municipality shall submit the following documents and information to the Department of Transportation:

- 1. Evidence that the treasurer is bonded in accordance with the law, or that its treasurer is a bank requiring no bond by January 31 of each year.
- 2. A report indicating the manner in which its liquid fuels tax allocation was expended in the previous year (Form MS-965) by January 31 of each year.
- 3. A report of elected and appointed officials by January 31 of each year.
- 4. A Survey of Financial Condition by March 15 of each year.

Department of Transportation *Publication 9* contains the policies and procedures that govern the use of Liquid Fuels Tax Fund money. However, if there is a difference between *Publication 9* and any legislation, the legislation shall govern.

BOROUGH OF LUZERNE LUZERNE COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2013 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 1 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Expenditure Summary		Reported		Adjustments		Adjusted Amount	
Expenditure Summary	Reported		Adjustificitis		Amount		
Major equipment purchases	\$	11,503.18	\$	-	\$	11,503.18	
Minor equipment purchases		927.72		-		927.72	
Computer/Computer related training		-		-		-	
Agility projects		-		-		-	
Cleaning streets and gutters		-		-		-	
Winter maintenance services		13,288.93		-		13,288.93	
Traffic control devices		-		-		-	
Street lighting		15,856.00		-		15,856.00	
Storm sewers and drains		-		-		-	
Repairs of tools and machinery		4,769.11		-		4,769.11	
Maintenance and repair of							
roads and bridges		14,746.04		-		14,746.04	
Highway construction and							
rebuilding projects		-		-		-	
Miscellaneous (Bank service charges)		7.00				7.00	
Total (To Section 2, Line 5)	\$	61,097.98	\$		\$	61,097.98	

BOROUGH OF LUZERNE LUZERNE COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2013 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 2 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Fund Balance	Reported		Reported Ac		Adjı	Adjustments		Adjusted Amount	
1. Balance, January 1, 2013	\$	41,711.45	\$	-	\$	41,711.45			
Receipts:									
2. State allocation		54,521.68		-		54,521.68			
2a. Turnback allocation		-		-		-			
2b. Interest on investments (Note 3)		90.03		-		90.03			
2c. Miscellaneous (Note 4)		10,446.48				10,446.48			
3. Total receipts		65,058.19		-		65,058.19			
4. Total funds available		106,769.64				106,769.64			
5. Expenditures (Section 1)		61,097.98		-		61,097.98			
6. Balance, December 31, 2013	\$	45,671.66	\$	-	\$	45,671.66			

BOROUGH OF LUZERNE LUZERNE COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2013 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 3 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Equipment Balance	Reported		Adjustments		Adjusted Amount	
1. Prior year equipment balance	\$	41,711.45	\$	-	\$	41,711.45
2. Add: Current year equipment allocation (20% of Lines 2 + 2a, Section 2)	n	10,904.34		-		10,904.34
3. PENNDOT approved adjustments						
4. Total funds available for equipment acquisition		52,615.79		-		52,615.79
5. Less: Major equipment expenditures		11,503.18				11,503.18
6. Remainder		41,112.61		_		41,112.61
7. Equipment balance available for subsequent year (Lesser of Line 6 or Section 2 balance, but not less than zero)	\$	41,112.61	\$	<u>-</u>	\$	41,112.61

Notes to Form MS-965 With Adjustments are an integral part of this report.

1. Criteria

Section 1

This section of Form MS-965 With Adjustments provides a summary of Liquid Fuels Tax Fund expenditures by category. Categories requiring explanation include:

 Major equipment purchases are purchases of road machinery and road equipment with varying yearly costs in excess of the amounts indicated below:

Prior To			
2012	2012	2013	2014
\$4,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,200.00	\$10,300.00

• Minor equipment purchases are purchases of road machinery and road equipment with varying yearly costs, or less, than the amounts indicated below:

Prior To			
2012	2012	2013	2014
\$4,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,200.00	\$10,300.00

Agility projects are exchanges of services with the Department of Transportation.

Section 2

This section of Form MS-965 With Adjustments provides information on the fund balance. Categories requiring explanation include:

- The state allocation is generally received from the Department of Transportation during the first week in April of each year. The amount the municipality receives is based half on its population and half on its road mileage.
- The turnback allocation is generally received from the Department of Transportation during the first week in April of each year. A municipality receives a yearly turnback allocation based on road mileage for all roads that were transferred to the municipality from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through the Highway Transfer Program.

1. <u>Criteria (Continued)</u>

Section 2 (Continued)

• Expenditures include the total transferred from Section 1.

Section 3

This section of Form MS-965 With Adjustments determines if the municipality expended Liquid Fuels Tax Fund money in excess of the permissible amount for equipment and the balance that the municipality may carry forward for the purchase of equipment to the subsequent year.

Department of Transportation *Publication 9* requires that the amount expended for equipment purchases in a given year not exceed the sum of the equipment balance carried forward from the previous year and 20 percent of the current year's Liquid Fuels Tax Fund allocation and, if applicable, 20 percent of the turnback allocation plus other Department of Transportation approved adjustments.

If the municipality spent in excess of the amount listed on Line 4, the excess must be reimbursed to the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

The equipment balance to be carried forward for the subsequent year is the lesser of the amount on Line 6 or the ending fund balance on Line 6 of Section 2, but not less than zero.

Basis Of Presentation

The financial activities of the municipality are accounted for in separate funds. The Liquid Fuels Tax Fund is used to account for state aid revenues from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation used primarily for building and improving local roads and bridges. The Forms MS-965 have been prepared in accordance with reporting requirements prescribed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation as a result of the Fuels Tax Act 655, dated 1956 and as amended, which does not constitute a complete presentation of the entity's assets, liabilities, expenses, and fund balance. Accordingly, the presentation of Forms MS-965 With Adjustments is restricted to the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund, which represents a segment of the entity.

1. <u>Criteria (Continued)</u>

Basis Of Accounting

The accompanying Forms MS-965 With Adjustments are prepared in accordance with reporting requirements prescribed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. Under this method, revenues are recognized when received and expenditures are recorded when paid.

General Fixed Assets

General fixed assets are recognized as expenditures at the time of purchase. No depreciation has been provided on the heavy equipment used to maintain and repair roads and bridges.

2. Deposits

The Borough Code, Title 53 P.S § 46316, authorizes the borough to deposit its funds in the following:

- Deposits in savings accounts or time deposits, other than certificates of deposit
 or share accounts of institutions having their principal place of business in the
 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance
 Corporation (FDIC) or other like insurance. For any amount above the insured
 maximum, the depository shall pledge approved collateral.
- Certificates of deposit purchased from institutions insured by the FDIC or other like insurance to the extent that such accounts are so insured. For any amounts in excess of the insured maximum, such deposits shall be collateralized by a pledge or assignment of assets. Certificates of deposit may not exceed 20 percent of a bank's total capital surplus or 20 percent of a savings and loan or savings bank's assets minus liabilities.

Deposits consist of receipts and deposits in a financial institution. Pennsylvania statutes require all deposits to be insured and, for any amount above the insured maximum, to be secured with approved collateral as defined.

BOROUGH OF LUZERNE LUZERNE COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND

NOTES TO FORM MS-965 WITH ADJUSTMENTS FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2013 TO DECEMBER 31, 2013

2. <u>Deposits (Continued)</u>

There were no deposits exposed to custodial credit risk as of December 31, 2013. Custodial credit risk, as defined by GASB No. 40, includes deposits that are not covered by depository insurance and the deposits are uncollateralized, collateralized with securities held by the pledging financial institution, or collateralized with securities held by the pledging financial institution's trust department or agent but not in the municipality's name.

Fund Balance

The fund balance consists of the following:

Cash \$45,671.66

3. <u>Interest On Investments</u>

Our examination disclosed that the municipality deposited idle liquid fuels tax money in an interest-bearing account which earned \$90.03 during 2013, thus providing additional funds for road maintenance and repairs.

4. <u>Miscellaneous Receipts</u>

The following miscellaneous receipts were deposited into the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund during the examination period:

Source	Description	Amount
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania	Gas tax refund	\$ 1,726.58
Financial institution	Bank loan proceeds (Note 5)	459.98
General Fund	Reimbursement (Summary of 2010-2011	
	examination recommendation)	8,209.92
Financial institution	Refund for bank service charges	50.00
Total		\$10,446.48

5. Bank Loan

On May 15, 2013, the municipality borrowed \$53,425.00 from Luzerne Bank to purchase a 2013 Chevrolet Silverado truck for \$52,965.02. The remaining loan balance of \$459.98 was deposited into the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. The term of the loan was for three years at an interest rate of 3.95 percent. Principal and interest payments of \$1,577.60 are due monthly.

During the current examination period the municipality paid principal of \$10,358.61 and interest of \$1,144.57 from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. These amounts are reflected in major equipment purchases on the 2013 Form MS-965 - Section 1. The outstanding balance of the loan as of December 31, 2013 was \$43,066.39, plus interest.

Finding No. 1 - Amount Eligible To Be Paid For Street Lighting Could Not Be Determined

Our examination disclosed that the borough expended \$13,807.00 during 2013 from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for street lighting. We noted that the borough had levied a real estate tax assessment of 1.4524 mills, of which .2905 mills were imposed for street lighting and water costs for the year 2013. Without a specific millage established for street lighting purposes, we were not able to determine the amount the borough could expend from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for street lighting.

The Borough Code, 53 P.S. § 46302(a)(4), or § 1302 and § 1302(4) of The Borough Code as published by the Local Government Commission provide that:

The council of the borough shall have power, by ordinance, to levy and collect annually, a tax, not exceeding thirty mills for general borough purposes, unless the council by majority action shall, upon due cause shown by resolution, petition the court of common pleas, in which case the court may order a rate of not more than five mills additional to be levied and in addition thereto any of the following taxes:...

(4) For lighting and illuminating the streets, highways and other public places with electric light, gas light or other illuminant, not exceeding eight mills;. . .

The Department of Transportation's Regulations permit only those street lighting expenditures in excess of the tax actually collected for street lighting to be expended from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. We were unable to determine how much tax was collected for street lighting.

Because we could not determine the amount of taxes collected specifically for street lighting the municipality may be required to reimburse \$13,807.00 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

Recommendations

We recommend that the borough reimburse \$13,807.00 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund upon official notification by the Department of Transportation.

We further recommend that, in the future, the borough follow the Department of Transportation's Regulations by limiting their street lighting expenditures from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund to only lighting costs which exceed the tax amount collected for street lighting.

<u>Finding No. 1 - Amount Eligible To Be Paid For Street Lighting Could Not Be Determined</u> (Continued)

Management's Response

The borough officials offered no formal response at this time.

Auditor's Conclusion

During our next examination we will determine if the municipality complied with our recommendations.

Finding No. 2 - Retroactive Expenditures - Recurring

We cited the municipality for making retroactive expenditures from its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund in our prior report for the period January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012. Our current examination disclosed that on December 11, 2013, the municipality transferred \$2,049.00 from its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund to the Light and Water Fund for the reimbursement of street light expenditures that were paid during 2012, which are retroactive expenditures.

The Department of Transportation's *Publication 9* contains the policies and procedures for the administration of the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. *Publication 9*, Chapter Two, Section 2.7.2, states, in relevant part:

Examples of what Liquid Fuels Tax Fund monies may not be expended for are:

- 8. Repayments of prior year's expenditures.
- 17. Retroactive expenditures or repayment of other funds for prior period expenditures.

Because these expenditures were paid from the General Fund during 2012, and were not reimbursed with Liquid Fuels Tax Fund money until December 11, 2013, the expenditures incurred were not reimbursed in a reasonable period of time. Therefore, the municipality did not comply with the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9*.

This condition occurred because the municipality failed to comply with our prior examination recommendation to comply with the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9* regarding retroactive expenditures.

The failure to follow the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9* as noted above could result in the municipality having to reimburse \$2,049.00 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

Recommendations

We recommend that the municipality reimburse \$2,049.00 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund upon official notification by the Department of Transportation.

We again recommend that, in the future, the municipality comply with the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9* as noted above.

Finding No. 2 - Retroactive Expenditures - Recurring (Continued)

Management's Response

The municipal officials offered no formal response at this time.

Auditor's Conclusion

This is a recurring finding. We strongly recommend that the borough take corrective action to comply with our recommendations. During our next examination we will determine if the municipality complied with our recommendations.

BOROUGH OF LUZERNE LUZERNE COUNTY

LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND

SUMMARY OF PRIOR EXAMINATIONS' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2013 TO DECEMBER 31, 2013

Summary Of 2010-2011 Examination Recommendation

In our 2010-2011 report we recommended that the Department of Transportation review our examination finding to determine if the municipality should reimburse \$8,209.92 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for a failure to maintain documentation for price quotations.

During our current examination we reviewed a letter dated July 7, 2013, from the Department of Transportation informing the municipality to reimburse \$8,209.92 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. We noted that the municipality reimbursed this amount to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund on August 15, 2013.

Summary Of 2012 Examination Recommendations

In our 2012 report we recommended that the Department of Transportation review our examination finding to determine if the municipality should reimburse \$15,810.42 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. This amount consists of \$11,880.00 for retroactive expenditures and \$3,930.42 for nonpermissible expenditures. A similar finding for retroactive expenditures was also written in our current report (see Finding No. 2).

During our current examination we reviewed a letter dated July 10, 2014, from the Department of Transportation informing the municipality to reimburse \$15,810.42 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. The municipality had not reimbursed this amount to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund as of November 20, 2014, the exit conference date of this report.

In our 2012 report we also recommended:

- The municipality comply with the Liquid Fuels Tax Municipal Allocation Law and the Department of Transportation's Regulations regarding permissible expenditures.
- The municipality comply with the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9* to ensure that the allocations are received during the first week in April.
- That the municipality comply with the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9* regarding retroactive expenditures.

During our current examination we noted that the municipality complied with our first two bulleted recommendations but did not comply with our third bulleted recommendation (see Finding No. 2).

BOROUGH OF LUZERNE LUZERNE COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND SUMMARY OF EXIT CONFERENCE FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2013 TO DECEMBER 31, 2013

An exit conference was held November 20, 2014. Those participating were:

BOROUGH OF LUZERNE

Ms. Linda Booth, Secretary/Treasurer

The Honorable William J. Turcan, Councilman

Mr. Philip C. Keaney, CPA, Auditor

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Robert A. Bauder, Auditor

The results of the examination were presented and discussed in their entirety.

BOROUGH OF LUZERNE LUZERNE COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND REPORT DISTRIBUTION FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2013 TO DECEMBER 31, 2013

This report was initially distributed to:

The Honorable Leslie Richards
Acting Secretary
Department of Transportation

Borough of Luzerne Luzerne County 144 Acadamy Street Luzerne, PA 18709

The Honorable Michael Jancuska President of Council

The Honorable William J. Turcan Councilman

Ms. Linda Booth Secretary/Treasurer

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at http://www.PaAuditor.gov. Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 231 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: news@PaAuditor.gov.