



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

## Sens. Mayer and Harckham Announce Legislation to Establish State Office to Combat Climate Change Effects

SENATOR SHELLEY MAYER December 14, 2023

| ISSUE: **FLOOD MITIGATION, FLOOD RELIEF, CLIMATE CHANGE**

**Mamaroneck, NY** - New York State Senators Shelley B. Mayer and Pete Harckham announced today major legislation they have introduced to help combat severe storm flooding statewide and resulting financial burdens on residents and business owners. The announcement was made at the Community Resource Center, which has been under reconstruction and repair for over a year because of previous storm damage.

Mayer's legislation ([S.3335](#)) will create an Office of Flooding Prevention and Mitigation tasked with coordinating existing state work on flooding, supporting municipalities in their efforts to prevent and mitigate flooding, and researching flooding impacts and mitigation in New York State. Harckham's legislation ([S.7764](#)) establishes an annual \$500 million fund for state water-related resiliency projects, such as flood mitigation and stormwater mitigation, under the joint custody of the State Comptroller and the Commissioner of Taxation and Finance.

"Since I have been in the legislature, residents across my district have been the victims of increasingly severe and frequent storms. From Hurricanes Sandy to Ida and smaller storms before and after, New Yorkers have lost their homes and experienced devastating losses. While I am pleased my office has been able to help individuals after these terrible storms, New Yorkers need a strong, coordinated, and strategic approach to tackling the problem,

requiring all levels of government and agencies within government to work together to identify and execute mitigation and resiliency plans,” **said Senator Shelley Mayer.** “The Office of Flooding Prevention and Mitigation will help provide municipalities, counties, and individuals with the tools we need to tackle the scale of the work ahead. I thank my colleagues Senator Harckham for introducing complementary legislation and for his leadership as chair of the Senate Committee on Environmental Conservation and Assemblymember Catalina Cruz, who is championing this legislation in the Assembly. I look forward to its passage this coming legislative session.”

“Our residents and business owners want meaningful action on flood and stormwater mitigation—and my bill to create an annual \$500 million fund for these projects shows that the State legislature is serious about the devastating climate-driven storms impacting our cities, towns and villages across the state,” **said Senator Pete Harckham.** “We cannot keep talking about the same areas around the state, year after year and storm after storm, that are savaged by weather-related floods. This legislation, which complements Senator Mayer’s bill, stands as a major effort, centralized and overseen by the State, that will initiate proactive approaches to storm preparations and infrastructure resilience to mitigate the effects of each new crisis-level weather event.”

The two legislators were joined by State Assemblyman Steve Otis, County Legislator Catherine Parker, Mamaroneck Supervisor Jaine Elkind Eney, Mamaroneck Deputy Mayor Nora Lucas, Executive Director of Community Resource Center Jirandy Martinez, and Village of Mamaroneck resident Giamilteh Barrera.

New York State is facing intensifying climate change related hazards, including alarming and recording breaking rainfall and dangerous floods. New Yorkers across the state, particularly in the lower Hudson Valley and New York City, know the long-term devastation of extreme weather events all too well, from mudslides destroying homes and impacting railroads to

flooding in homes and businesses. These regular storms result in significant financial hardship for many communities, businesses, and families, reminiscent of the horrific damage caused by Hurricane Ida a few years ago.

Mayer's legislation will also assess the areas of the state and populations at greatest risk, identify the best current emerging practices in flood management and preparedness, and make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature to help develop a high-level strategy for addressing flooding in our state.

Harckham's legislation will draw on financial resources created by the state's Cap and Invest program to provide funding for critical mitigation projects that will protect homes, businesses, transportation services, infrastructure, and human lives from increased funding.

In May 2023, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issued a [State of the Science Fact Sheet](#) that notes, "Future projections include increased risk of coastal inundation during storms due to sea level rise, likely increased hurricane rain rates and wind intensities, and possible increased numbers of Category 4-5 hurricanes, along with decreased numbers of tropical storms and hurricanes (all categories combined)." The [report](#) also states that rainfall rates within tropical storms and hurricanes are projected to increase as well.

"The importance of meeting the ambitious goals set in the Scoping Plan of the state's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act cannot be overlooked," **said Senator Pete Harckham**, "but we must be ready to deal with these storms. Residents, commuters, business owners—they've had enough. It's time for us to face the effects of our climate crisis and be better prepared. I thank my colleague Senator Mayer for her strong leadership in this effort, and hope our colleagues in the Legislature support these initiatives.

“Community Resource Center strongly supports Senators Shelley Mayer's flood mitigation legislation and Senator Peter Harckham's legislation for \$500 million in annual funding for state water-related resiliency projects such as flood and stormwater mitigation. The devastating impact of Hurricane Ida in 2021 underscores the critical need for proactive measures. We commend Senators Mayer and Harckham for their leadership in protecting our community and stand ready to collaborate to implement these vital flood mitigation measures successfully,” **said Jirandy Martinez, Executive Director of Community Resource Center.**

**Assemblyman Steve Otis said,** "These legislative proposals provide for increased strategy, policy coordination, and dedicated funding to support flood prevention and mitigation efforts. New York State agencies have been working with local governments in assessing, addressing, and funding local flood projects. One example, important here in Mamaroneck, is the \$17.5 million included in our 2023-24 state budget to support the Mamaroneck-Sheldrake Army Corps of Engineers project. These two new bills will enhance statewide efforts with a unified approach to planning and state funding support."

**Assemblymember Catalina Cruz said,** “By establishing the Office of Flooding Prevention and Mitigation, Senator Mayer and I aim to enhance state-wide flood resilience through coordinated and comprehensive efforts. This initiative is not just a response to recent devastating flood events but a proactive measure to bolster long-term resilience against the growing challenges posed by climate change. The bill's focus on coordination, transparency, and municipal support exemplifies a forward-thinking and integrated approach to flood mitigation, demonstrating a commitment to safeguarding our communities against future flooding risks. I thank Senator Mayer and Senator Harckham for taking critical legislative steps to address the escalating threats of flooding in New York State.”

**County Legislator Catherine Parker said,** “New York is vulnerable to Climate Change’s violent bi-product, flooding. I commend Sens. Mayer and Harckham for recognizing that flooding must be prioritized, and thank them for the introduction of bills to address the need. Sen. Mayer’s bill, if passed, will create a cabinet level office and position to share best practices, expertise, and opportunities for collaboration on funding. Sen. Harckham’s bill to create a dedication of \$500,000,000 annually to help municipalities meet the stormwater infrastructure needs to the right size for proper drainage is critical to our collective success. This is the one-two punch needed to help communities win the fight against flooding caused by Climate Change.”

“Flooding, and its devastating effects, is a pressing issue here in Mamaroneck. State Senator Shelley Mayer has been a tireless champion for our community. Her proposed legislation to create a State Office of Flooding Prevention and Mitigation, together with Senator Pete Harckham’s proposed legislation to establish \$500 million in annual funding for state water-related resiliency projects will provide critical tools in improving the lives of our residents, as well as many residents throughout New York State,” **said Mamaroneck Town Supervisor Jaine Elkind Eney.**

“On behalf of Mayor Torres, the Board of Trustees and the Village of Mamaroneck, I Senator Shelley Mayer thank Senators Mayer and Harckham for their unwavering efforts to mitigate flooding in New York State. While the Village is working hard to mitigate flooding at the local level, Senators Mayer and Harckham understand that the problem is beyond local municipalities ability to fix. Their combined proposed legislation will provide state office and significant funding to combat climate change and promote resiliency which is so necessary in our Village which suffers and has been traumatized by flooding,” **said Mamaroneck Deputy Mayor Nora Lucas.**

Photos and Video of Press Conference [here](#).