



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

New Flood Recovery Resources Now Available

JAMES L. SEWARD November 16, 2011

| ISSUE: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**



ONEONTA, 11/16/11 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) today alerted residents and business owners who suffered damage from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee of additional flood recovery resources now available.

“I have joined Governor Cuomo and members of the Upstate Storm Recovery Task Force in meeting with those devastated by Irene and Lee and appreciate the continuing effort from state agencies to assist those in need,” said Senator Seward.

“The initial storms were devastating but the ongoing recovery is just as daunting. As families and business owners make life-altering decisions they need to know what specific government support is available to help them rebuild.

“While these programs are a positive step, additional action is needed. I renew my call for a special legislative session to consider flood-related initiatives that will provide long-term relief for homeowners and local governments,” Seward concluded.

Senator Seward is cosponsoring several bills that would provide tax relief to property owners and local governments. The legislation would require the state to pick up the local share of public infrastructure repair costs, permit a reassessment of storm damaged properties, and allow school districts to institute a flexible school tax payment plan.

Senator Seward is also preparing legislation that would offer flood victims an income tax credit against the property taxes they paid this fall (and will pay in January) on property no longer valued at its pre-flood level.

New assistance initiatives announced today by the governor’s office include:

\$3 Million for Rebuilding Main Street Businesses

Funding will be made available to Main Street businesses in some of the hardest hit areas with money from the New York State Agricultural and Community Recovery Fund, a \$15 million fund set up in September to help rebuild from the storms.

This new round of funding will be requested by counties on behalf of businesses to help revitalize their local economies. Eligible businesses will be able to apply for assistance to, among other things; rehabilitate buildings for commercial and main street residential use, repair and replace permanent fixtures and equipment, as well as for inventory and working capital. The funding will be administered by NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) in collaboration with county economic development offices.

For more information on the Main Street portion of the Agricultural and Community Recovery Fund, please contact the office at Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) at 518-474-2057.

\$5 Million for Repairing and Replacing Furnaces

Funding is being made available to help repair and replace furnaces damaged as a result of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

Funding will provide help to homeowners for their primary and/or permanent residence in the 34 counties that have been declared eligible for disaster assistance and any that are subsequently added by the federal government.

The funding is made available through a collaboration between New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) and the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). Up to \$6,000 per applicant is available to households that qualify. Work will include repair or replacement of the furnace, boiler or hot-water heater as well as repair or replacement of duct work, fuel tanks, venting systems, or other items essential to the safe operation of the heating system. Assistance is limited to single-family homes and duplexes.

Furnace repair and replacement in affected counties will be operated through the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) overseen by HCR. Through this program, HCR contracts with experienced local providers to do work. Assistance will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis to those whose homeowner's insurance does not cover the damage, or have applied for assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency and have been either rejected or received an inadequate payment.

Households cannot have liquid resources exceeding \$5,000 and must meet certain income eligibility guidelines, which can be found at

<http://nysdhcr.gov/Programs/WeatherizationAssistance/>.

To apply, homeowners should directly contact the Weatherization Assistance provider that serves their area. A list of providers can be found at:

http://nysdhcr.gov/Apps/profiles/profile_WAPcnty.asp

For more information about furnace repairs or replacement call 1-866-ASK-DHCR.

HELP Offers No Interest Loans to Repair Infrastructure

The governor has announced that funds are still available for municipalities that suffered damage to their water systems during Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. The funds are available through the Environmental Facility Corporation's Hurricane Emergency Loan Program (HELP). So far, 14 municipalities will receive a total of \$12,922,000 in five-year, no-interest loans. The fund contains \$25 million.

Expenses for repairs to pump stations, electrical equipment, treatment facilities and other critical equipment, temporary emergency services such as vacuum truck hauling, bypass pumping and disinfection and related engineering and other professional services are examples that may be eligible for EFC financial assistance.

HELP loans can be repaid with FEMA funds or converted by EFC into a long-term loan. Applications may be submitted through December 31, 2011.

For more information on the HELP loans, contact the Environmental Facilities Corporation at

1-800- 882-9721.

Requesting Expedited Deployment of FEMA Temporary Housing Units

The governor announced that 229 storm victims and their families have been approved for HUD-compliant temporary housing units (THU) from FEMA. By next week, FEMA expects to have 130 more units on site, in addition to the 55 already located in the affected communities. Currently, over 1,000 New York families have been placed in other forms of temporary housing.

FEMA requires that 200 AMP utility service be available for these THUs. State OEM has been working with State Public Service commission to ensure that utility companies are responsive to FEMA's needs to get service upgraded where it is needed.

State OEM, State DEC and The Department of State's Codes Division have been working with FEMA to ensure that any codes related issues, such as placement of THUs in floodplains, can be addressed promptly and safely.

State OEM and State DOT has worked to expedite the permits for companies hauling the THUs on State roads and to grant blanket waivers to enable companies to work without having to request permits repeatedly. State DOT also waived permit fees. State OEM also alerted county emergency managers to the fact that THUs would be going over local roads and asked them to notify local law enforcement.

Senator Seward also reminded residents and business owners who suffered damage from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Irene that the deadline to register for federal assistance has been extended until December 15, 2011.

To register, call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362. Phone lines are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET, seven days a week until further notice. People with hearing disabilities can use the TTY number, 800-462-7585. Applicants can also register online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or with any web-enabled mobile device or smartphone at m.fema.gov. Follow the link to “apply online for federal assistance.”

