



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

## Flood Relief Priority During Special Session

JAMES L. SEWARD December 9, 2011

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



ALBANY, 12/08/11 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) today announced additional details in regard to flood assistance legislation approved during this week’s special legislative session.

“As communities throughout my senate district and across upstate continue to rebuild from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, I am pleased the recently completed special legislative session produced some significant help,” said Senator Seward.

Storm recovery assistance includes:

The Hurricane Irene-Tropical Storm Lee Flood Recovery Grant Program. A total of \$50 million in assistance will be made available: \$21 million in grants of up to \$20,000 for small businesses, farms and multiple dwellings for storm damage that was not covered by any other federal or state program; \$9 million in flood mitigation grants to individual counties for creek, stream and brook repairs; \$20 million in local assistance.

“An infusion of \$50 million in grants will help reopen our small businesses, assist our family farms and rebuild our communities without impacting local taxes,” said Seward.

The Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee Assessment Relief Act. Property owners who suffered major damage can ask for reassessments of their homes to determine new post-storm taxable values. This law is a local option.

“At my urging, municipalities will now have the option to evaluate badly damaged property and offer a reduced property tax assessment. Homeowners who suffered major damage or, in some cases, lost everything, should have that loss reflected on their tax bills,” said Seward.

The School District Tax Warrant Installment Payment Option. Allows school districts to create a flexible school tax payment plan and to refund, at the school’s option, a portion of taxes paid in excess of the minimum amount (which the taxpayer would then be required to pay in subsequent payments).

“School districts will now have the option to institute installment plans for payment of school taxes. Many property owners are struggling to rebuild their homes and are faced with significant, unplanned costs. Allowing some extra time for property owners to fulfill their tax obligations is the right thing to do,” said Seward.

Senator Seward had called for a special session of the legislature to assist flood ravaged communities and legislation he sponsored was used to develop the final package approved this week.

“These latest steps show the state’s continued commitment to assist our storm ravaged communities. It is a commitment that I have made will continue to fulfill,” Seward concluded.