



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

State Bipartisan Task Force For Hurricane Sandy Recovery Meets on Long Island

JACK M. MARTINS January 3, 2013

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The New York State Senate's Bipartisan Task Force on Hurricane Sandy Recovery today visited communities on Long Island to tour storm damage and speak with local officials, business leaders, and individuals about the progress and challenges of the ongoing recovery efforts.

Today's meeting focused on Hurricane Sandy's impacts in Nassau and Suffolk counties and included tours of Freeport, Island Park, and Oceanside to view the extensive storm damage and recovery efforts. This was the second meeting of the Bipartisan Senate Task Force for Hurricane Sandy Recovery, which first met on December 10, 2012, in the Rockaways in Queens.

Senate Republican Conference Leader Dean G. Skelos (R-Rockville Centre) was joined by task force Co-Chair Senator Malcolm A. Smith (D-Queens) and members Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick), Senator Jack Martins (R-Mineola), Senator Lee Zeldin (R-Shirley), Senator Diane Savino (D-Staten Island/Brooklyn), Senator Joseph Addabbo, Jr. (D-Queens), Senator Martin J. Golden (R-Brooklyn), Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland), and a representative from the office of Senator James Sanders, Jr. (D-Queens). Senators Kemp Hannon (R,C,I- Garden City) and Carl L. Marcellino (R- Syosset) also attended.

Following the tour, the task force held a roundtable discussion at the Freeport Recreation Center that was attended by county, town, and village officials including Nassau County Executive Edward Mangano, Nassau County Legislator Denise Ford, Town of North Hempstead Supervisor Jon Kaiman, Long Beach City Manager Jack Schnirman, Glen Cove Mayor Ralph Suozzi, Incorporated Village of Freeport Mayor Andrew Hardwick, Mastic Beach Village Mayor Bill Biondi, and representatives from the offices of the Suffolk County Executive and Towns of Hempstead and Oyster Bay.

The participants provided critical input about the challenges they are facing and what steps can be taken to help improve preparedness and response for future storms.

The task force is identifying areas most in need of recovery assistance and reviewing the rebuilding and storm planning policies to remove roadblocks and ensure better storm preparedness. The task force will develop legislative solutions to implement the

recommendations made by the NYS 2100 Commission, the NYS Respond Commission and the NYS Ready Commission. Members will also be traveling to other areas damaged by Hurricane Sandy.

Senator Skelos said, “The members of our task force saw first-hand today how much more work has to be done to bring our communities back after the devastating damage from Hurricane Sandy. In my district and across the entire region, people are trying to rebuild homes and businesses, and critical parts of our infrastructure are still badly damaged. Our goal is to ensure people receive the help they need now and that we are better prepared to withstand and respond to natural disasters in the future.”

Task force members play pivotal roles in developing the short- and long-term plans that will help communities get back on their feet following Hurricane Sandy. Each task force member represents one of New York State’s hardest hit areas and is thus uniquely qualified to pinpoint those neighborhoods and businesses that are most in need.

Task force Co-Chair Senator Andrew Lanza said, “It’s important that we continue to gather information from every hard hit community across New York so that we can better marshal the state’s resources for recovery and rebuilding.”

Task Force Co-Chair Senator Malcolm A. Smith said, “One of the main objectives of today’s tour is to hear directly from residents who were impacted throughout Nassau County. Similar to the Rockaway Peninsula and the other hard hit areas, we are faced with neighborhoods still trying to rebuild and homeowners still trying to repair. We will continue to work diligently for all New Yorkers and we encourage Congress to rapidly pass the Sandy Relief Bill which would send \$60.4 billion of much needed aid to struggling families and businesses. Now is not the time for partisanship or politics. There are still many New Yorkers and Americans desperately in need.”

Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. said, "Hurricane Sandy was one of the worst natural disasters in New York State's history. Thousands of my constituents sustained severe damage to their homes and businesses; some lost everything they had. We need the recovery and rebuilding process to happen as quickly as possible. Through this meeting, members of the Task Force from other areas of the state got to see and hear first-hand the challenges we are facing here on Long Island, and I appreciate them coming here."

Senator Diane Savino said, "We are still feeling the devastation of Sandy throughout the region, and I think it is important that we approach the recovery in a regional way. In contrast to Washington D.C. this Task Force realizes that the rebuilding effort is a team endeavor and needs not only the support of all New Yorkers but the entire nation."

Senator Lee Zeldin said, "Parts of my district were heavily impacted by this devastating storm and we must now do everything in our power to help rebuild our communities throughout the NYC metropolitan area. I am glad that Mayor Bill Biondi from The Village of Mastic Beach was able to attend today's roundtable to discuss the effects of Hurricane Sandy in his Village and what help they need to rebuild the community. There is an urgent need for state government, working with all other levels of government, to deliver short and long term solutions to challenges we face now and in the years and decades ahead."

Senator Joe Addabbo, Jr. said, "Given the magnitude of the devastation caused by Sandy, it's easy to realize that we will be assessing the damage sustained by individuals for many months. What we must work together on is to find the means necessary to address that damage and the needs of the people affected by the storm."

Senator Jack Martins said, "It's important and appropriate that the task force meet here on Long Island where so many of our friends and neighbors were hit hard by Superstorm Sandy and are still recovering from its effects. We Long Islanders are a resilient bunch. We will

work to make sure that Long Island communities are not forgotten as we move forward in our efforts to rebuild.”

Senator David Carlucci said, “While many regions throughout the state were affected by Hurricane Sandy, now is the time to come together and deliver a unified response that meets the needs of all New Yorkers. The people of the Hudson Valley, Long Island, and New York City can rest assured that Albany hears their concerns and is working to deliver the resources needed to bounce back stronger than ever. Scores of homeowners and neighborhoods are not out of the woods just yet, particularly those who suffered flooding and structural damage to their homes and properties. By working together in a bipartisan fashion, the Senate Bipartisan Task Force will continue to find ways we can be most helpful to those affected by this storm.”

Senator Marty Golden said, “Our important work continues as a task force in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. My colleagues and I are committed to analyzing and improving New York's response so we are better prepared for future storms.”

Senator James Sanders, Jr. said, “The devastation caused by Super Storm Sandy is still being felt by many New Yorkers including the residents of the Rockaways. I am anxious to begin my work on the Bipartisan Task Force, to bring relief to these people who have suffered so much.”

Senator Carl L. Marcellino said, “Working together with my colleagues on the State Senate Taskforce on Hurricane Sandy, we will begin to develop short- and long-term solutions to rebuilding all affected communities and assess the needs for the future. One thing Sandy taught us is to ‘expect the unexpected,’ and be as prepared as we can to meet those challenges.”