



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

## Suffern Mayor Lacorte, Senator Carlucci Announce Critical Fema Buyout for Homeowners Affected by Hurricane Irene

DAVID CARLUCCI February 7, 2013

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*Squire's Gate Community Residents Sought Assistance from Village of Suffern*

*FEMA to Buyout Each Residential Home Affected at 75% of Fair Market Value Prior to Hurricane Irene's Landfall*

**SUFFERN, NY** – Suffern Mayor Dagan LaCorte (D-Suffern) and Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester) today announced that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has agreed to buyout four homes in Rockland County that suffered severe damage

in the aftermath of Hurricane Irene.

Both officials were also joined by homeowners Henny Guirguis and Salama Souzi, Sheila Cohen, Angela Sullivan Smith, and Jo Hallett.

**Mayor LaCorte, the chief architect of the buyout plan, said:** “What a difference a year makes.

Last year we stood here with these four homeowners who faced the very real possibility of financial ruin due to the unwillingness of their private insurance companies to step up to the plate. Today, thanks to the federal and state governments, along with our team here in Suffern, these four fine families will be able to rebuild their lives. This could not have been done without the hard work of Deputy Mayor Jo Corrigan, Superintendent of Public Works Charles Sawicki and Elaine Acocella.”

Also on hand were elected officials and personnel from the Village of Suffern that worked to complete and finalize all paperwork requirements for FEMA, including putting together the estimates for the abatement, demolition, site restoration, and coordinating the scheduling of the project with agency representatives.

**Senator Carlucci said:** “After nearly one year of working to obtain the financial relief that these homeowners deserve, the patience and persistence has finally paid off. This was a collaborative effort that could not have been done without the leadership of Mayor LaCorte and his team in Suffern. I applaud the Village for their due diligence and hard work in making sure that each lifelong homeowner can now rebuild their lives.”

According to FEMA guidelines, if a property has sustained more than 50% of structural damage as a result of a natural disaster, the homeowner has the option of requesting to be bought out.

Under the agreement, the Village of Suffern and homeowners were granted a FEMA buyout at 75% of the fair market value of the homes the day before the storm struck. After completing the abatement and removing all hazardous materials from the site, the Village will demolish and then maintain the properties as open space with monies granted to it by FEMA.

The total combined amount received from the FEMA grant comes to \$1,084,500.

The grant – Hazard Mitigation Grant Program – is money disbursed from FEMA to the State of New York. On June 22, 2012, the Village of Suffern applied to the New York State Office of Emergency Management in Albany on behalf of the homeowners. The Village was awarded the grant on December 21, 2012.

The decision by each of the homeowners to opt for a buyout came after a long struggle with their insurance companies, which in turn declined to pay for the full amount of damage sustained.

While many homeowners in the Squire's Gate Community were affected by the storm, these four homes – comprised of two separate buildings – were knocked off their foundation and threatened the safety of the entire structure.

**Suffern Deputy Mayor Jo Meegan-Corrigan said:** "During this very complex application, the support our team has had in county and state level emergency management has been exceptional. The strength of our homeowners has made us strive to obtain this grant."

**Jo Hallett, Squire's Gate resident, said:** "It's been really hard recovering from Irene but because of the support from the village and the county and state we now have the resources to begin returning to our normal lives. Without the help from our community, this grant would not have been possible."

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