



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

## In Wake of 2013 Flood, Senator Valesky Co-Sponsors Bill to Create Disaster Fund

DAVID J. VALESKY December 2, 2013

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SYRACUSE—State Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida) has joined other state legislators who represent areas affected by severe flooding in July 2013 in introducing legislation that would create a state disaster recovery fund aimed at expediting assistance to victims and municipalities.

“We have seen too many instances of flood victims lacking basic necessities months after a disaster hits because they are waiting for government to act,” Senator Valesky said. “That is unacceptable, and I am pleased to co-sponsor this legislation that will ensure expeditious distribution of aid and resources through a disaster recovery fund.”

The bill (S.5987) would create a supplemental fund to provide individual assistance, public assistance and hazard mitigation after a natural or man-made disaster. Aid would be available for a variety of disaster-related expenses, including home repairs and medical expenses for individuals. Municipalities would be eligible to receive funds for such items as public services expenses and debris removal. Infrastructure grants would be available to public schools.

Upon a disaster being declared, the bill would also require the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services to establish a field office at the disaster site and provide relief workers. The agency would also create a disaster recovery center and a toll-free phone number to help those affected apply for assistance.

In all instances, grant applicants would receive funds within one month. Loan applicants would receive aid within two months. To ensure the maximum number of people are helped, aid and loans would not be offered to anyone provided money by their insurance company or the federal government.

This bill is the centerpiece of a six-point legislative plan championed by state senators in response to massive flooding last June. The region sustained an estimated \$87 million in flood damage between June 26 and July 3, the height of the storm and its devastating aftermath. Senator Joseph A. Griffo is the bill's lead sponsor.