



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Latimer

## Press Conference in East Yonkers Announcing Introduction of Flood Mitigation Legislation with Assemblymember Shelley Mayer and Yonkers Councilman Mike Breen

GEORGE LATIMER April 22, 2013

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**State Senator George Latimer and Assemblymember Shelley Mayer Propose Package of Flood Mitigation Bills in Albany to Address Persistent Flooding Problems in Yonkers**

Yonkers, NY (April 21, 2013) –

State Senator George Latimer and New York State Assemblymember Shelley Mayer announced today that they have introduced three bills in Albany to address persistent

flooding issues that have continued to plague neighborhoods in East Yonkers. The bills will begin to bring a comprehensive approach to a problem that has remained unaddressed and has suffered from a disjointed approach to a multi-government problem. Because flooding crosses municipal lines and governmental entities, NYS needs a comprehensive approach to planning, mitigation and remediation. These bills begin to address the need for comprehensive planning.

The three bills are:

**A6503/S4607, “New York State Comprehensive Flood Mitigation Grant Act”**

- Provides a \$10 million comprehensive state-wide flood grant program to aid municipalities in implementing flood mitigation plans.
- Empowers the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to provide the eligibility criteria and application process to award grants to municipalities for flood control and watershed management projects and for the capital costs related to design, purchase and installation of flood mitigation, relief, warning, and other related projects.
- Encourages inter-municipal planning for mitigation efforts.

**A6537/S4503, “Flood Mitigation Council Act”**

- Establishes a flood mitigation council within the Department of Environmental Conservation to encourage inter-municipal and interagency efforts.
- The Council would include representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation and Transportation, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation; the New York office of Emergency Management; the New York State Division of Homeland Security and

Emergency Services; and representatives of flood prone counties and municipalities

- The council shall identify regions most affected by flooding, prioritize mitigation efforts, identify sources of funding, and support additional research on mitigation efforts.

#### **A6730- “DoT Oversight Act”**

- Requires that the Department of Transportation inspect all “barrier walls,” which are defined as walls constructed by the State of New York along state parkways, including evaluating the impact of the barrier walls on flooding in residential and commercial properties adjacent to the barrier wall.
- Ensures that the Department responds to impacts of “barrier walls” along the Sprain Brook Parkway on flooding of residential and commercial properties.

This bi-partisan legislative package is just one portion of the Latimer and Mayer’s efforts to ensure residents of East Yonkers find a solution to this persistent problem.

Senator Latimer said, “We have introduced legislation that will give residents of neighborhoods like East Yonkers the necessary tools to protect themselves from flood related issues. Over the last few years, the people of East Yonkers have had several large storms that have caused significant property damage due in large part to environmental factors beyond their control. Our legislation will require state agencies to pay closer attention to these issues, give local governments financial resources to carry out flood mitigation plans and create a state mechanism for coordinated identification of regional problems and solutions. The steady flow of information from the residents of East Yonkers was immensely helpful in drafting legislation that will begin to address these issues.”

Assemblymember Mayer said, "I am pleased to stand with Senator Latimer to announce bipartisan legislation that moves us towards a comprehensive, coordinated approach to flooding in East Yonkers. I applaud the residents for bringing the gravity of the problem to our attention through meetings and tours. I also salute the efforts of Mayor Mike Spano and his administration, together with Councilman Mike Breen, for working together to bring tangible improvements to this community. We are committed to working together on this critical issue."

City Councilman Mike Breen said, "I am very appreciative that Assemblymember Mayer and Senator Latimer have stepped up to the plate for our East Yonkers neighborhoods. Solutions to our persistent devastating and costly floods need to be addressed by all levels of government. Getting the State of New York involved is a step in the right direction in finally beginning to address the major issues that cause our flooding and push whatever government entity needs pushing to act before the next storm severely floods our neighborhoods again. On a local level Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano and I have recognized what we can do here in Yonkers to help abate this problem. The mayor has directed city departments to replace flood gates at the base of the Sprain Lake. Once operable, this would allow the Sprain Lake to be lowered in advance of a serious storm to more effectively retain storm runoff. In addition the Mayor Spano has instructed our engineering department to reach out to their counterparts in Greenburgh and work with them to reopen an existing flood channel that would divert storm runoff into the Sprain Lake. Currently this water flows uncontrolled into the Sprain Brook. All levels of government working together can begin to solve our flooding problem."