



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## Senate Swiftly Passes Bill to Speed up Availability Emergency Infrastructure Funding

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The New York State Senate today swiftly passed a new bill that accelerates the availability of emergency funding for water infrastructure in an effort to help many communities currently facing significant flood damage. The bill ([S5902](#)), sponsored by Senator Pam Helming (R, Canandaigua), amends the 120-day waiting period in the newly adopted Clean Water Infrastructure Act of 2017 and makes funding available to municipalities immediately.

**Senator Helming said,** “Communities impacted from flooding are working hard to protect homes, small businesses, and infrastructure. In many instances the state has stepped in and is providing non-financial assistance. However, many of our towns and villages are beginning to exhaust their limited financial resources to deal with these emergency situations. By making this emergency funding available to our communities immediately, we can provide them with financial assistance and the relief they desperately need.”

The 2017-18 State Budget created the Clean Water Infrastructure Act of 2017 and a new financial assistance program to address water infrastructure emergencies that are imminent hazards to public health, public welfare, the environment.

However, the emergency infrastructure funding does not become available until August 18, 2017 - 120 days after the budget’s passage. Communities currently affected by significant flooding and property damage along Lake Ontario and in other municipalities cannot access the funding specifically designated to address ongoing emergencies like these. The bill addresses this urgent need by removing the 120-day waiting period to provide an option for municipalities to seek immediate financial relief from the state.

**Senator Robert Ortt (R-C-I, North Tonawanda) said,** “Along with businesses and homeowners, our municipalities have been devastated by Lake Ontario flooding. This legislation addresses both the urgency and severity of the situation. By freeing up essential state financial assistance, we will complement the tireless work of our local officials and help them rebuild our community’s critical infrastructure.”

**Senator Patty Ritchie (R-C, Heuvelton) said,** “I have seen firsthand the devastating effects that

recent flooding has had on the communities I represent along Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. It is critical that we move as quickly as possible to provide the increased resources communities need to respond to damage caused by rising waters, as well as protect public health and safety.”

**Senator Rich Funke (R-C-I, Fairport) said,** “When it comes to protecting our water infrastructure in an emergency, response time can make the difference between effective management of the situation or a potential public health crisis. I’m proud we recently secured \$2.5 billion in state water infrastructure investment and I fully support this proposal to give municipalities like Irondequoit and Monroe County access to those dollars when it matters most. I thank Senator Helming and all of my state and local partners who are working to protect lake and bay side communities across our region.”

**Senator Joseph Robach (R-C-I, Rochester) said,** “All across the lakeshore of the 56th Senate District, residents, businesses, and municipalities are struggling with the flooding caused by the high waters of Lake Ontario. Until around the 4th of July, it is expected that the high water levels will continue and all those that call the shoreline of Lake Ontario home must deal with the impact of this ongoing disaster. I am proud to join with the Senate to pass this legislation which would provide swift financial relief to residents and businesses along the lakeshore.”

The bill will be sent to the Assembly.