



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

## Senator Helming Announces Bipartisan Legislation to Provide Emergency Financial Assistance for Water Infrastructure to Municipalities

PAMELA HELMING May 11, 2017

| ISSUE: **CLEAN WATER, FLOODING**

May 11, 2017 (Webster, NY) –Senator Pamela A. Helming and Assembly Majority Leader Joseph D. Morelle today announced legislation (S. 5902/A.7712) that accelerates the availability of new emergency funding for water infrastructure in an effort to help many communities currently facing significant flooding damage. This legislation, sponsored by Senator Helming and Majority Leader Morelle, amends the 120-day waiting period in the newly-adopted Clean Water Infrastructure Act of 2017 and makes funding available to municipalities immediately.

In some towns and villages, flooding has already breached the sewer systems. There is a major concern among local and state officials that potential backflow of sewage into lake and residents' homes could create serious environmental and public health hazards. Flooding has continued to get worse over the past several weeks, and local municipalities are beginning to exhaust all available local resources need to deal with this emergency.

“Residents and volunteers in communities impacted by flooding have banded together and are working around the clock to protect homes, small businesses and vital infrastructure. In many instances, the state has stepped in to provide non-financial support. However, many

towns and villages are beginning to exhaust their limited financial resources needed to deal with their emergency situations. If made available to communities, this funding could immediately provide the much needed relief and protection in the short term. The State Senate unanimously passed this legislation earlier this week, sending a clear message that this is not a Democrat and Republican issue. I would like to thank Majority Leader Morelle for championing this critically important legislation in the State Assembly,” said **Senator Helming**.

“As communities across Western New York face the effects of devastating flood waters, this legislation is critical to ensuring our neighbors on the lake receive the relief and assistance they need as soon as possible. The safety of our residents is paramount and we will continue to do everything in our power to work with local officials and look for ways to provide aid in their time of need. I am grateful to Senator Helming for her leadership in the Senate as well as my colleagues in the legislature for their partnership on this important issue,” said **Assembly Majority Leader Joseph D. Morelle**.

**Senator Joe Robach** said, “All across the lakeshore of the 56th Senate District and the Southern lakeshore, residents, businesses, and municipalities are struggling with the flooding caused by the high waters of Lake Ontario. As municipalities exhaust their resources dealing with the ramifications of the high water, assisting residents and taking necessary precautions to protect vital infrastructure, we must look at every available way in which New York State can assist in these efforts. I am proud to join with my Senate and Assembly colleagues to co-sponsor and support this legislation, which provides access to immediate fiscal assistance for municipalities along the south shore of Lake Ontario during this ongoing crisis.”

**Senator Rich Funke** added, “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, Majority Leader Morelle, and all of my state and local partners who are working to protect lake and bay side communities across our region."

The 2017-2018 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, and 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 funding specifically designated to address ongoing emergencies like these. The bills 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.

**Monroe County Executive Cheryl Dinolfo** said, "Record high water levels and flooding are eroding our shoreline, threatening our infrastructure, impacting our residents and potentially damaging our tourism and recreation economy. This is a long-term event that will continue to impact our residents and our infrastructure through much of the summer and will require time, energy and resources. I am thankful that our State leaders have answered the call to provide much-needed assistance to help protect our lakefront infrastructure."

"Our county departments, town departments, residents and volunteers have worked tirelessly to save their homes, businesses and infrastructure over the past few weeks. Dealing with this nightmare has been dangerous, physically exhausting and expensive.

However, with the water still rising and with sewer systems, septic systems and fresh water substructure in immediate danger of failure... what began as property damage has now become a serious health risk. I want to thank Senator Helming and Leader Morelle for this legislation that would ensure immediate emergency financial assistance be made available to our communities,” said **Town of Sodus Supervisor and Wayne County Board of Supervisors Chairman Steve Leroy.**

**Supervisor Ron Nesbitt**, Town of Webster, “I would like to thank Senator Helming and Majority Leader Morelle for this financial assistance, which will help Webster with our wastewater pump stations here along the Lake and Irondequoit Bay in case flooding does reach them and prohibits them from functioning correctly. Waiving the 120 day period allows Webster to bring in equipment ahead of time in case action needs to be taken sooner rather than later if the pump station floods.”

**Irondequoit Supervisor Dave Seeley**, “I applaud our state legislators for their attention to the growing challenges that local governments are facing in the wake of the rising water along Lake Ontario and its many bays and harbors. Our infrastructure remains at high risk, and we support any effort to ensure quick access to state funding should it be compromised.”

**Assemblyman Bob Oaks**, “Flood relief assistance is needed now. Amending the Clean Water Infrastructure Act of 2017 to provide immediate emergency assistance can deliver critical relief. The flooding along the Lake Ontario shoreline threatens property, sewer systems and infrastructure. We must provide all of the resources we can as the lake continues to rise and the flooding spreads.”

**Assemblymember Harry Bronson**, “Families across our region are suffering because of the rise in lake levels. I am pleased to join my colleagues in throwing a life-line to our friends impacted by this devastating flooding.”

**Assemblyman Steve Hawley**, “In light of the recent devastation along the Lake Ontario shoreline, it is imperative that we make available the newly enacted \$2.5 billion in water infrastructure funding as soon as possible. All along the shoreline, wastewater and sewer systems have been pushed to capacity and faulty lead pipes continue to pose a threat in our schools and communities. This funding will go a long way in helping us recover from the recent flooding and ensure that our families have clean and reliable drinking water going forward. I am proud to sponsor this legislation in the Assembly, and am hopeful that it will become law before the end of session.”

**Assemblyman Mark Johns**, “Working together with my colleagues, we have been successful in getting the governor to appropriate more resources to help property owners along Lake Ontario. We are now working to release even more emergency financial assistance for the communities impacted by lakefront flooding. While we work to provide this emergency remediation funding, we will continue working together to protect the homeowners and businesses along Lake Ontario.”

**Assemblyman Peter Lawrence**, “I can’t imagine a more appropriate use for the water infrastructure funds allocated in this year’s budget than averting a potential public health crisis and economic disaster caused by this unprecedented flooding. Removing the waiting period for the release of these funds is essential for struggling municipalities and suffering families. This is an emergency. We need to act now before sewage backflows into our neighborhoods and erosion and property damage intensifies. I want to thank Leader Morelle and Sen. Helming for their leadership, vision and decisiveness.”

The bill was passed in the Senate on Tuesday, and will be sent to the Assembly.

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## 2017-S5902

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Removes restrictions in the clean water infrastructure act of 2017 that emergency financial assistance will not be available under section 1285-t of the public authorities law

May 05, 2017

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Pamela Helming**

Do you support this bill?

NAY