



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Seward, Crouch Call on Governor to Help Sidney Homeowners Awaiting Buy-Out Program

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ONEONTA, 09/12/17 -- State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I/Ref – Oneonta) and Assemblyman Clifford W. Crouch (R-Bainbridge) today called on Governor Cuomo to take action to support long-suffering Village of Sidney residents waiting for completion of a flood buy-out program related to Hurricane Irene in 2011.

Homeowners in Sidney have contacted both Senator Seward and Assemblyman Crouch to express concern over duplicative paperwork requirements and the long wait period they have endured in regard to a federally funded home buyout program that is being administered by New York State agencies.

Senator James L. Seward said, "Following a disaster, people are often left searching for help and when a government program is announced they expect results not endless red tape. It is reprehensible that homeowners who suffered flood and hurricane damage six years ago are still waiting for promised assistance, and it is well past time to provide them with real relief."

Assemblyman Clifford W. Crouch said, "'It's pathetic that residents in Sidney continue to wait for assistance that was promised to them over six years ago. This was one of the biggest disasters on record to hit the Southern Tier. I join with Senator Seward in calling for the governor to take action, these families deserved our assistance years ago and it's unacceptable that they are still waiting."

In a letter to Governor Cuomo, Senator Seward and Assemblyman Crouch write:

"Concisely stated, the buy-out is 100 percent funded by HUD but a FEMA project. The federal agencies have differing standards, and that has resulted in duplication and gridlock. In addition, New York's agencies, the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) and the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery, are administering the funds – in accordance with their protocols. The result is this: the buy-out for Sidney residents has been stalled and delayed due to bureaucratic duplication and inconsistent rules. People are living in damaged homes six years later. Delaware County officials helping the village have advised me that, simply stated, the state and federal agencies are not working together to bring this issue to a resolution.

"As a result, Sidney residents involved in the buy-out have been asked to submit the same documentation and information multiple times. They are discouraged, angry and disappointed by the inability of government to solve a problem and achieve a solution.

"We request that you appoint a task force or leader to coordinate the state's efforts on this project, cut unnecessary red tape, and bring it to an expeditious conclusion for our mutual constituents. The issue is

critical.”