



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Applauds Decision to Declare Federal Disaster For Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River Communities

PATTY RITCHIE November 14, 2017



State Senator Patty Ritchie is applauding the announcement that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has declared a federal disaster in wake of the historic flooding of Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River communities earlier this year.

The declaration—which includes Jefferson, St. Lawrence and Oswego Counties—allows federal funding to be made available to the state, local municipalities and certain not-for-profit agencies for the cost of emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities

damaged by flooding.

“As heartbreaking as this spring and summer has been for our shoreline communities, it is just as painful to know that they are still struggling, doing everything they can to try and pick up the pieces of this devastation,” State Senator Patty Ritchie said.

“As I continue to fight for the recovery of everyone in our shoreline communities, I want to thank FEMA and our federal representatives—especially Congresswoman Stefanik who I know advocated strongly for this declaration—for recognizing the importance of making sure we continue to get each of the affected municipalities the help they so desperately need.”

Earlier this year, Senator Ritchie sponsored the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence Seaway Flood Relief and Recovery Grant Program that provided \$45 million in funding to impacted year-round and seasonal homeowners, small businesses, farms, not-for-profits and municipalities. It was recently announced that everyone who was eligible for funding and applied for it, would receive help.

The declaration also comes after Senator Ritchie co-hosted a special Joint Hearing in Oswego County on the flooding with Senator Tom O’Mara, Assemblyman Will Barclay and Assemblyman Bob Oaks. The near five-hour hearing included testimony from various stakeholders, including homeowners and business owners, state agencies and local officials about the historic flooding event, the damages they suffered, the work they did to help neighbors in need and their concerns for the future.

Representatives from the government bodies that regulate water flows, including the International Joint Commission and the International Lake Ontario – St. Lawrence River Board, also provided testimony.

It was also a chance for the Senators and Assemblymen to ask questions of the witnesses that will be included in the official record.