



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo and Buttenschon introduce legislation to help flood victims

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO December 10, 2019

New York State Senate Deputy Minority Leader Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, and state Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenschon, D-Marcy, announced today that they have introduced legislation that creates a home buyout program that would be administered by the New York State Urban Development Corporation.

Throughout New York State, especially the Mohawk Valley, Southern Tier and along the shores of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, there has been a persistent, pervasive and destructive pattern of flooding. The floods that these regions are experiencing are exacting a devastating toll on residents who are unfortunate enough to find themselves in the path of these dangerous waters.

Many residents find themselves unable to sell their homes due to persistent flooding and a local housing market – solely impacted by the flooding – that forces residents to sell their homes at low prices. This renders a sale ineffective due to the sale price being so low that it leaves the seller with nothing to purchase a new home.

This legislation (S6893) would provide local governments with a mechanism to designate these hard-hit residential areas as floodplains and offer a buyout to residents at fair market, pre-flooding levels through bonding made by the Urban Development Corporation. The sale price secured by the homeowner from the government should provide them with greater

means to purchase another property outside of their locality's area of persistent flooding.

Further, this legislation stipulates that the local government, once it has designated a residential area as a floodplain, is to develop that area into open space. This area could be used as a park or be returned to nature entirely. This will help local governments by cutting down on costs associated with emergency services and the redevelopment of property and infrastructure.

“Unfortunately, there are homeowners who, as a result of devastating flooding, are unable to sell their damaged properties at a fair value,” Deputy Minority Leader Griffo said. “While residents would be under no obligation to sell their home, this legislation provides them with an opportunity to sell their property for more than they would on the open market. I thank Assemblywoman Buttenschon for supporting this important bill, and I will continue to advocate and support those affected by flooding and other severe weather events.”

“Mohawk Valley residents know the dangers and costs of widespread and increasingly frequent floods all too well. Families who own homes on a flood plain often struggle to sell their houses, even at a reduced price, or bear the burden of repeated renovation and repair projects,” Assemblywoman Buttenschon said. “This legislation would enable homeowners to voluntarily sell their flood-prone properties to local governments, which would transition those properties into open, public space. I want to thank Deputy Minority Leader Griffo for partnering with me on this bipartisan and commonsense bill, and I’ll keep fighting to ensure our communities receive the funding we need to recover from extreme weather events.”