



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Todd Kaminsky

Rep. Rice and Sen. Kaminsky Urge Trump Administration to Grant Major Disaster Declaration for Tropical Storm Isaias Affected Areas

TODD KAMINSKY September 18, 2020

(Rockville Centre, NY) -- Today, in response to the cost of devastation by Tropical Storm Isaias, **U.S. Representative Kathleen Rice and Senator Todd Kaminsky (NY-9th District)** wrote to President Donald Trump strongly urging him to grant New York State's request for a Major Disaster Declaration for affected areas on Long Island. The storm's cleanup costs, especially for PSEG-LI, will be tens of millions of dollars and this necessary declaration will ensure that rate-payers alone will not bear the brunt of it. The federal funding will be necessary to ensure a full recovery for the region after Tropical Storm Isaias.

Faced with recovery costs of up to \$48 million on Long Island, this critical declaration will allow the federal government to provide crucial financial assistance to LIPA and communities in the region as they manage the recovery process. The declaration of a major disaster would make available necessary funds through the FEMA Public Assistance program that could be leveraged to provide reimbursements to LIPA and state and local governments, of which otherwise may be passed on to Long Island rate-payers.

The full letter to President Donald Trump can be read below:

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing to request you grant the State of New York's request for a Major Disaster Declaration for areas devastated by Tropical Storm Isaias. This declaration will allow the federal government to financially assist local communities and public authorities in the significant recovery efforts that followed this extreme weather event. In the absence of federal assistance, Long Island rate-payers will be forced to shoulder this financial burden.

On Tuesday, August 4th, Tropical Storm Isaias made landfall in New York State. The storm's heavy rain and powerful winds produced gusts that reached nearly 80 miles per hour, the strongest levels recorded in New York since Superstorm Sandy. The storm caused road closures, lengthy power outages, and significant damage to public and private property. It left more than 920,000 New Yorkers without power, many for a significant amount of time. In response, the State of New York, local governments, and public authorities deployed emergency personnel to clear fallen trees and cut through tangled power lines. Even now, recovery efforts are still ongoing.

Preliminary damage assessments in Nassau and Suffolk Counties put the estimated cleanup costs at approximately \$48 million. Both counties have met the federally required damage threshold to be declared a major disaster, and Governor Cuomo has officially requested this designation from the federal government. By declaring this event a major disaster, funds would become available through the FEMA Public Assistance Program to provide reimbursements to the State, local governments, and the Long Island Power Authority. With state and local governments facing severe revenue shortfalls because of the ongoing pandemic, they are in dire need of federal assistance. Without it, New Yorkers will be forced to pay even more -- a burden that they cannot and should not bear.

In these difficult and unprecedented times, we must all work together to ensure that we emerge from this disaster stronger. This assistance by the federal government is critically important and vital to the full recovery of Long Island. Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

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