



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

Harckham: Major Federal Disaster Funding Needed for Dutchess, Putnam Counties

PETE HARCKHAM September 8, 2021

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Pawling, NY – New York State Senator Pete Harckham called today on the federal government to approve an expedited Major Disaster Declaration for both Dutchess and Putnam Counties in the wake of the widespread flood damage incurred from Tropical Storm Ida last week. This would provide federal funding for local governments and residents impacted by the storm while also supplying multilevel assistance to individuals.

“Residents and local municipalities in Dutchess and Putnam felt the fury of Ida, with pervasive flooding and damage,” said Harckham. “Timely assistance on the level of a Major Disaster Declaration is needed throughout these two counties, as it is needed elsewhere in the state, for residents and businesses to fully

recover from the storm.”

Yesterday, it was announced that several downstate counties, including Westchester, would be eligible now for the Major Disaster funding and assistance while recovering from Ida. Dutchess and Putnam, however, were not included, although they were initially part of the Emergency Disaster Declaration made last week by the federal government and announced by Governor Kathy Hochul.

Harckham toured municipalities in Dutchess and Putnam that are part of the 40th Senate District last week and met with local officials and residents to discuss the damage from Ida. In Pawling, Harckham accompanied Dutchess County Executive Marcus Molinaro and Town Supervisor James Schmitt to inspect several washed-out bridges and roads.

“Some communities that had never seen any flooding before were completely underwater,” said Harckham.

“We really need the Major Disaster Declaration,” said Schmitt. “We took a direct hit from Ida and now have a number of roadways that are impassable. The bridge on Lakeview Drive was entirely washed away. This makes it tough on first responders, school bus drivers and residents, who have to find alternative routes of travel. As a community, we cannot afford to do this repair work right away, and we cannot simply keep the roads closed. We need extraordinary assistance.”

With the Major Disaster Declaration, residents who have been displaced from their homes, including those without flood insurance, will be eligible for housing assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Other residents may be eligible for crisis counseling, unemployment assistance and home repairs. Municipalities may also be qualified for funding for emergency protection measures, debris removal and repairs to public infrastructure.

Right now, the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services has specialists in the field assessing damage in order to apply for federal aid, and it’s vital that they include Putnam and Dutchess in their assessments, said Harckham.