

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



SENATOR
PAMELA A. HELMING
54TH DISTRICT

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER
COMMERCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND SMALL BUSINESS
LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION
ON RURAL RESOURCES

COMMITTEES
AGRICULTURE
HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
RACING, GAMING AND WAGERING

February 21, 2019

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer, Minority Leader
U.S. Senator, New York
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Schumer:

In 2017, the Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence shoreline was devastated by flooding. The State of New York provided more than \$85 million in direct recovery assistance to homeowners, businesses, and communities. Area businesses and local municipalities sustained tens of millions of dollars in damages, much of which they will never be able to recover. As communities continue to rebuild and prepare for the long term, we owe it to our residents and local governments to prepare for the future and do all we can to prevent this from happening again.

It has come to our attention that forecasting data provided by the Army Corps of Engineers shows that all of the Great Lakes water levels are significantly above long-term averages and are forecast to remain so until at least July. Furthermore, most are forecast to reach levels close to the 2017 record levels, except for Lake Ontario. However, at this point, 2019 Lake Ontario levels are well above where they were last year. This raises a number of serious concerns. If these levels rise even slightly, they would create untold devastation for low-lying communities such as the Village of Fair Haven and the Village of Sodus Point.

On behalf of our constituents, we are requesting immediate federal intercession to ensure that Lake Ontario water levels are stabilized to prevent future flooding. In the event that these levels cannot be stabilized, we are requesting that resources and information be made available so that the State of New York and local communities can plan for possible flooding. Federal support for resiliency planning assistance and funding for our local governments are crucial as we continue to prepare for possible flooding. It is important that every level of government coordinate to prevent a situation like our region experienced in 2017.

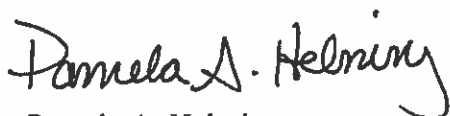
It is our hope that you can work with the International Joint Commission (IJC) and the appropriate federal agencies to help regulate these levels and ensure that communities are prepared for any potential flooding events. As we approach spring and flows into the lake continue to rise, this is especially important.



Although ensuring that communities are not disproportionately impacted by any decision is a guiding principal of the IJC, there is no plan to compensate shoreline property owners or municipalities who are harmed by drastic changes in water levels. Plan 2014 has already caused tens of millions of dollars in damage to our shores, and it is imperative that action be taken to protect local communities from future events.

Thank you for your attention to this critically important matter. If we can be of further assistance or offer additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us at 315-568-9816.

Sincerely,



Pamela A. Helming
Senator, 54th District



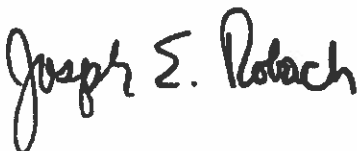
Brian Manktelow
Assemblyman, 130th District



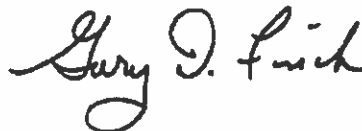
Thomas F. O'Mara
Senator, 58th District



Mark Johns
Assemblyman, 135 District



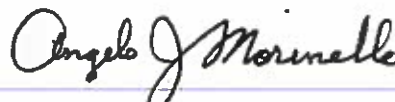
Joseph Robach
Senator, 56th District



Gary D. Finch
Assemblyman, 126th District



Robert G. Ortt
Senator, 62nd District



Angelo J. Morinello
Assemblyman, 145th District



Rich Funke
Senator, 55th District



Michael J. Norris
Assemblyman, 144th District



Robert E. Antonacci
Senator, 50th District



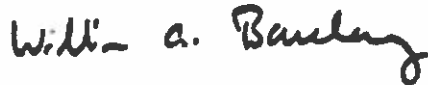
Stephen Hawley
Assemblyman, 139th District



Mark Walczyk
Assemblyman, 116th District



Peter Lawrence
Assemblyman, 134th District



William A. Barclay
Assemblyman, 120th district

cc:

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
Hon. Cheryl Dinolfo, Monroe County Executive
Hon. Steve LeRoy, Chairman, Wayne County Board of Supervisors
Hon. Tucker Whitman, Chairman, Cayuga County Legislature
Hon. Ronald Nesbitt, Supervisor, Town of Webster
Hon. William Reilich, Supervisor, Town of Greece
Hon. James Basile, Mayor, Village of Fair Haven
Hon. Dave McDowell, Mayor, Village of Sodus Point
Basil Seggos, NYSDEC Commissioner
Bryce Carmichael, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Lana Pollack, U.S. Chair, International Joint Commission