
NEW YORK
STATE
LEGISLATURE



June 28, 2019

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor
New York State
State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Re: Funding for Property Owners Impacted By High Lake Levels and Flooding

Dear Governor Cuomo:

As state representatives of communities along Lake Ontario, we commend your leadership and your administration's swift actions in assisting communities prepare and respond to this year's flooding. The resources the state deployed have helped communities and we are grateful for the assistance. Unfortunately, Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River's water levels have reached record levels and we are seeing damages that are exceeding what our communities experienced in 2017.

As you can imagine, residents and businesses are extremely frustrated by the fact that this is the second time in three years that they are dealing with flooding. Many property owners and businesses are still working on recovery and mitigation repairs from the damages that they experienced in 2017. This year's massive widespread flooding, record-high lake levels and wind storms have caused even more property damage and shoreline destruction. Unfortunately absent a change in Plan 2014, this will continue to be an ongoing issue for our communities.

We applaud your recent correspondence to the International Joint Commission calling for the modification of Plan 2014 which has proven catastrophic. It is no coincidence that the water management plan – which was specifically devised to create higher highs and lower lows of the lake in favor of environmental, shipping and hydropower interests – has caused such devastation. Long before Plan 2014 was adopted the higher water levels the plan established were a major concern. To prevent future flooding it is imperative that the plan is changed and we appreciate you advocating for changes with the IJC and for supporting our efforts on this front.

Due to the severity of damage that our communities have faced again this year, many residents and businesses have inquired whether the state will provide direct assistance to those who have been impacted. Many point to our swift action in 2017 and are urging the state to once again do the same. Providing direct recovery assistance as well as technical expertise in erosion protection structures would be very beneficial to the communities we represent. It would

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give reassurances to property owners and businesses that they can rebuild. Further, we are concerned that without recovery assistance, many property owners and businesses will not have the financial resources to rebuild, protect or make critical repairs to their property.

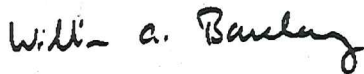
That is why we were pleased the Appropriation Budget Clean-up Bill (A.8434/S.6616) amended the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence Seaway Flood Relief Recovery Grant program to include damages sustained as a result of flooding and severe storms that occurred between January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019. With this change, it appears that property owners may be eligible to receive direct recovery assistance this year. This is very positive for our communities in the efforts to rebuild.

As you can imagine, many residents have been inquiring with our offices if funding will be made available. We are hoping that you could provide further details on the anticipated 2019 program funding, the timeline in which residents can anticipate assistance and if there are changes to the eligibility and funding amounts. Further, in 2017 there were a few situations where residents were unable to secure funding due to housing type (manufactured home, trailer), how the property was owned or leased and if the person was considered an elected official (individuals who served on a town board or on the school board were considered ineligible to receive funding). We are hoping that with the new funding, the program would be able to assist some of these individuals who were previously ineligible.

We are encouraged by your commitment to providing future resiliency planning and financial support to communities along Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River. We hope that through our collective efforts that we are able to change Plan 2014 and bring direct aid to property owners, businesses and local communities so they can rebuild stronger and more resilient.

We look forward to working with you this critical matter.

Very truly yours,



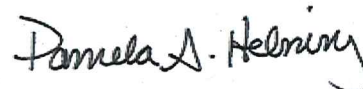
Assemblyman William A. Barclay



Senator Rich Funke



Assemblyman Ken Blankenbush



Senator Pamela Helming

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Assemblyman Stephen Hawley



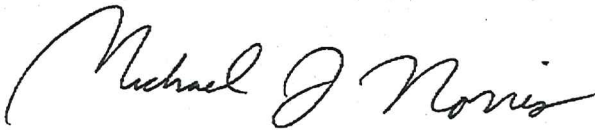
Assemblyman Mark Johns



Assemblyman Brian Manktelow



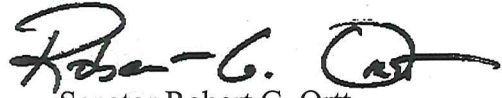
Assemblyman Angelo J. Morinello



Assemblyman Michael J. Norris



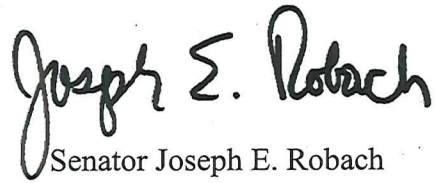
Assemblyman Mark Walczyk



Senator Robert G. Ort



Senator Patty Ritchie



Senator Joseph E. Robach