



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

## Southeast Queens Residents Join Senator Sanders for Crucial Conversation on Flooding

OLALEKAN OMODUNBI February 2, 2024

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(Queens, NY) - Senator James Sanders Jr. hosted a productive community conversation on Thursday, February 1, to address the ongoing flooding concerns in Southeast Queens. The event brought together elected officials, community partners, constituents, and representatives from key city and state agencies, including the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT), the NYC Mayor's Office of Climate & Environmental Justice (MOCEJ), NYC Housing Preservation &

Development (HPD), the Department of Sanitation (DSNY), NYC Small Business Services (SBS), NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) and the American Red Cross.

For decades, the neighborhoods of Southeast Queens have battled a relentless foe: flooding. From overflowing storm drains to rising sea levels, residents have faced the constant threat of water damage and disruption. Sen. Sanders, a vocal advocate for these communities, has been at the forefront of efforts to secure funding, raise awareness, and push for solutions.



The evening featured informative presentations, where representatives from the DEP, DOT, MOCEJ, HPD, HCR, DSNY, SBS and the Red Cross provided valuable information on their ongoing efforts and initiatives aimed at mitigating flood risks in the area.



An engaging Q&A session followed, where residents actively participated, raising concerns, sharing experiences, and proposing potential solutions. The forum fostered a collaborative spirit, paving the way for a united front in addressing this shared challenge.

"Today, I stand with these communities to listen to their concerns, collaborate on solutions, and ensure their voices are heard loud and clear. By working together, residents, elected officials, and city agencies can create a more prepared and resilient Southeast Queens. Flooding is not just an inconvenience, it's a threat to the safety, well-being, and economic stability of our neighbors," **stated Senator Sanders Jr.**





The event brought together residents, community leaders, and elected officials, including Assemblymember Khaleel M. Anderson and Councilwoman Selvena Brooks-Powers. Each shared their perspectives on the challenges faced and expressed their support for collaborative action.

"Southeast Queens has unfortunately witnessed firsthand the relentless impacts of climate change," **said NYS Assembly Member Khaleel M. Anderson.** "Communities such as Springfield Gardens, Laurelton, Rosedale, and the Rockaway Peninsula have borne the brunt of climate disaster, facing challenges from Superstorm Sandy and Hurricane Ida to high tides and flash flooding events which have become all too common. As a Superstorm Sandy survivor, my lived experience and youth activism have shaped my focus on critical issues of climate

change, emergency preparedness, and disaster response, especially in Black and brown communities. With a focus on infrastructure investments, interagency coordination, and robust emergency planning with our community partners, we will ensure Southeast Queens is more resilient and better prepared for flooding disasters."

"I believe it is important to bring the agencies and the residents of our community to the same table so there can be a direct conversation. The job is now to hold the City, State and Federal agencies accountable to our constituents in order to get them the relief they need. I thank Senator Sanders for his work in organizing this forum and look forward to seeing the improvements," **said Assemblywoman Stacey Pheffer Amato.**





**Councilwoman Selvena Brooks-Powers said** “Council District 31 intimately understands the unique challenges of recovering after major flooding. Much of our community still feels the effects of the flooding last September, Hurricane Ida two summers ago, and even Superstorm Sandy. It’s vitally important that we work to devise new solutions to prevent these long-term problems. I’m proud to stand with Senator Sanders and my other government partners to hear from the community and share where things stand from a legislative perspective when it comes to flooding issues across Southeast Queens. I look forward to working towards solutions with my government partners to curb flooding throughout the district.”



"As New Yorkers contend with the increasing and intensifying impacts of climate change, we must center residents' lived experiences of chronic flooding, as it's much worse than a nuisance and has impacts on health and quality of life," said **New York City Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice Executive Director Elijah M. Hutchinson**. "The Mayor's Office is eager to continue our productive partnership with Sen. Sanders, who has been calling attention to flooding in his district for over a decade on this important climate and environmental justice issue."

The conversation highlighted key issues such as:

**Infrastructure upgrades:** The urgent need for modernizing storm drains and other infrastructure to handle increased water volume.

**Climate change adaptation:** Strategies to mitigate the impact of rising sea levels and more intense storms.

**Financial assistance:** Resources for flood mitigation efforts and support for affected residents and businesses.

"This conversation is only the beginning," Senator Sanders concluded. "Together, we will develop a comprehensive plan to protect our communities from flooding and build a more resilient future for southeast Queens."



The event served as a powerful platform for amplifying the voices of Southeast Queens residents and mobilizing stakeholders to find lasting solutions. Senator Sanders' commitment to leadership and collaboration promises a brighter future for communities long burdened by the threat of flooding.