



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

Bonacic: Dec's Inaction in Shandaken Puts People and Small Business at Risk

JOHN J. BONACIC February 12, 2011

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February 12, 2011 State Senator John J. Bonacic (R/C/I – Mt. Hope), is condemning the failure of the NYS DEC to approve emergency flood remediation measures in Phoenicia. In December, Bonacic, along with representatives of Ulster County Executive Michael Hein, met with officials from the DEC, DEP, and Town of Shandaken on the need for emergency repairs to the Stony Clove Creek, in Phoenicia. The area has been subject to two major floods in recent months.

At that time, the DEP agreed to pay for engineering services to design a solution and the Town agreed to implement the solution. The sole job of the State DEC was to approve the solution – and the DEC agreed to act fast.

“The State DEC’s failure to approve an emergency Phoenicia flood control project, is inexcusable,” said Senator Bonacic. “Those affected are real people with their lives, businesses and livelihoods at stake, the DEC’s lack of action is irresponsible at best and life threatening at worst. The residents of Phoenicia should not be flooded because of bureaucracy.”

Shandaken officials have informed the Senator's office that the DEC rejected several versions of the flood remediation plan, including at least one rejection because of what DEC deemed cover sheet inadequacies. "We have massive amounts of snow in the mountain, which, when combined with spring rains, make the threat of flooding all too real. I am often critical of the DEP for keeping their reservoirs too high, but here the fault lies with the DEC – and in fact I have to extend thanks to the DEP for immediately engineering the solutions as they promised – solutions the DEC has failed to approve."

"The Senator and I are unified in our support of our residents and we must require that the NYS DEC act quickly to assist them through this crisis, said Ulster County Executive Michael Hein. "It is simply unacceptable that there appears to be a continuous delay and disregard for the residents of Phoenicia."

Shandaken Town Supervisor Rob Stanley said, "We are going to have a real emergency here in Phoenicia this spring if the Stony Clove is not addressed. We need the DEC to be more proactive here and step away from their "computer models" in order to assess the reality of the dire situation in Phoenicia"

Phoenicia has been hit with multiple floods over the years. The level of flooding has not reached the level of being eligible for Federal disaster aid. The net financial effect of that is that property owners and local taxpayers must pay to cover the costs locally.

"We need the State to be an ally, not an adversary with our local governments. I will be asking the new DEC Commissioner – Joe Martens, and the Governor to intervene to encourage local DEC officials to be proactive and helpful, instead of act as roadblocks,"

concluded Senator Bonacic.

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