



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

From the Desk of Senator Jack M. Martins

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Long Island Shows Its Resolve

We've had hail the size of baseballs, an earthquake, and now Hurricane Irene. Maybe Mother Nature is trying to tell us something. Metaphors aside, each incident serves as an intense reminder that preparation is always the best prevention. Along those lines, we've heard debate for a number of years as to whether Long Island is prepared for a hurricane. I think this past weekend we demonstrated that we are.

I've been making my way around our district to assess the damage and I've seen flooding, downed trees, and many residents and businesses without power as of this

writing. Yet, while I ate breakfast in the dark this morning, I was thankful that except for some isolated incidents, we proceeded without major injury or catastrophe. Things could have been disastrous instead of just inconvenient. Thanks to the careful planning of our state and county, their partnerships with towns, villages, and local nonprofits, and the outstanding cooperation of volunteers and neighbors we were able to avoid any tragedies.

Well before Irene made her way up the seaboard, our local governments had sprung into action, doing an exceptional job of getting information out to the public. Shelters were immediately up and running, with locations established for those with special needs. Utility companies trimmed potential problem trees and businesses started boarding up. I even saw neighbors move about their communities helping seniors get groceries and put lawn furniture away. Of course, most impressive was the evacuation of more than 100,000 people in low-lying areas and from hospitals and nursing homes -- all seamlessly without a hitch.

We know none of this would be possible without our police department and first-responder volunteers. They helped evacuate while responding to numerous emergencies, including the usual thrill-seekers who make foolish decisions. All this deserves some reflection. There are literally thousands of people who worked around the clock doing millions of little things to keep us safe. It's a testament to how fortunate we are to live where we do.

Now that the hurricane has passed, it's time to recover. LIPA crews are trying to restore power. If you see a downed or dangling wire, assume it is live and contact LIPA at 1-800-490-0075.

Also, if you have sustained damage to your home, contact your insurance company with your policy number. Take photographs or video of the damage to document it. If there are repairs that need to be made immediately but seem dangerous, please hire a professional. You can always provide your claims adjuster with receipts and records afterwards.

Those who need assistance shouldn't hesitate to contact the New York State Insurance Department's Consumer Services Bureau at 800-342-3736 which operates Monday through Friday. Disaster related calls only should go to the Department's disaster hotline at 800-339-1759.

The federal government has also set up a website for disaster assistance through FEMA at disasterassistance.gov.

Long Island handled this hurricane with calm, poise, and goodwill. Not only did our infrastructure stand strong, but so did our spirit.