



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Seward Applauds National Grid's Emergency Economic Development Proposal

James L. Seward

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ISSUE:

- [Agriculture](#)
- [Economic Development](#)
- [Energy](#)
- [Local Government](#)
- [Small Business](#)



COBLESKILL, 09/21/11 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) today joined officials with National Grid in announcing economic development aid for upstate communities hit hardest by recent storms.

“Our small businesses and farmers, many who have lost everything in the wake of Irene and Lee, are working diligently to rebuild. Small towns and villages are also faced with a monumental task of repairing damaged infrastructure,” said Senator Seward. **“With budgets already stretched to the max, financial assistance is needed to help make people whole and I am pleased National Grid is stepping up to help energize the rebuilding effort.”**

“We initially provided innovative solutions to quickly restore electricity and gas to the 156,000 impacted customers,” said Kenneth Daly, National Grid president for New York. “Then we made a substantial contribution to our customers through the Red Cross. Clearly more needs to be done, so we are proposing an innovative economic development program to provide a more sustainable way to help these customers and this region.”

National Grid has submitted a proposal to the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) that would provide expedited access to \$6 million in economic development aid to the affected communities.

“When we were working with our affected neighbors to restore electric and gas service after the devastation of the recent storms and flooding, we said we would return to do more to help them get back on their feet. We are grateful to the New York PSC for its open welcome to our proposal and look forward to the Commission’s review and requested approval so that we can quickly target the funds to where they can help. The timely recovery of these communities is essential to the economic viability of the region and the state,” added Daly.

Kenneth Adams, Empire State Development President, CEO and Commissioner said the National Grid proposal supports New York State’s efforts.

“Since the immediate aftermath of the destructive storms, Governor Cuomo made it clear that his priority was not only to restore existing services to affected areas, but establish new programs and resources to help residents and businesses in those areas face their challenges going forward,” Adams said. “National Grid’s proposal is an efficient and effective response to the needs on the ground in New York State, and the company’s initiative is greatly appreciated.”

National Grid’s proposal, which aims to fill financial gaps remaining after federal and/or state programs, insurance and other emergency sources of dollars have been utilized includes four proposed programs:

- **Emergency Commercial District Investment**, which would provide funding to help offset costs incurred by communities for repair and replacement of gas and electric infrastructure and street lighting; reconstruction of roads, bridges and transportation infrastructure; demolition of buildings condemned as a result of wind or water damage; and façade work on damaged buildings.
- **Emergency Agriculture Fund**, which would provide funding to impacted farmers and agri-businesses to cover the costs of repair and replacement of gas and electric infrastructure and replacement of equipment necessary for the operation of the farm or agri-business including pumps, lighting, ventilation, heating, etc.

- **Emergency Economic Development Bridge Loan Program**, which would provide funding to commercial/industrial and agricultural businesses, utilizing existing emergency lending agencies and institutions. The program would provide no-interest loans to authorized Local Development Corporations (LDCs) and designated emergency agricultural lenders.
- **Emergency Main Street Revitalization Program**, which would provide funding for renovation of buildings temporarily vacant due to the impact of storm damage. Projects must be located in a central business district/commercial area and the building itself must be temporarily vacant due to the impact of the storms. Funds can be used for site preparation and construction of commercial and industrial renovation and rehabilitation of commercial, industrial or mixed-use buildings under 100,000 square feet.

National Grid plans to make funds available in 2011 and 2012 to ensure that customer needs can either be met immediately or addressed as the specific need becomes more apparent. National Grid had previously announced a \$1 million donation to disaster relief efforts throughout its U.S. business and has been proactively helping its impacted customers and communities address their energy needs.

The new proposal calls for additional funding to support the emergency programs should the need exceed existing National Grid economic development program resources.

Once the programs are approved, communities and businesses in eligible counties can get more detailed information on the application process and apply for funding by visiting www.nationalgridus.com and clicking on Upstate New York.