



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Phil Boyle

Members of Bipartisan Task Force For Sandy Tour Damaged Communities And Meet With Leaders

PHIL BOYLE February 4, 2013

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The New York State Senate's Bipartisan Task Force on Hurricane Sandy Recovery visited hard-hit communities in Brooklyn and Staten Island to tour storm damage and speak with local officials, business leaders, and individuals about the progress and challenges of the ongoing recovery efforts.

A meeting followed the January 31, 2013 tours of Staten Island, Coney Island, Sheepshead

Bay, and Gerritsen Beach that provided Task Force members the opportunity to witness the extensive storm damage and recovery efforts in those parts of New York City. This was the fourth meeting of the Bipartisan Senate Task Force for Hurricane Sandy Recovery, which first met on December 10, 2012, in the Rockaways in Queens. Tours and meetings also took place in and around Freeport, Nassau County, and Nanuet, Rockland County.

Senate Independent Conference Leader Jeffrey D. Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) was joined by task force Co-Chair Senator Andrew Lanza (R,I,C-Staten Island) and task force members Senator Diane Savino (D-Staten Island/Brooklyn), Senator Martin J. Golden (R-Brooklyn), Senator Lee Zeldin (R-Shirley), and Senator Phil Boyle (R,C,I-Suffolk County).

Following the tour, the task force held a roundtable discussion at the Senate Majority Coalition's office in New York City Hall that was attended by state and city officials, businesses, and organizations including: Assemblyman Joseph Borelli; New York State Department of Financial Services Superintendent Benjamin Lawskey and Senior Advisor Marty Schwartzman; Gregorio Mayers and Tokumbo Shombowale from the New York City Special Initiative for Rebuilding and Resiliency; Deputy Brooklyn Borough President Sandra Chapman and Nan Blackshear; Representatives from the NYPD and FDNY; Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York President Gary LaBarbera; College of Staten Island Interim President Dr. William Fritz; Red Cross of Greater New York CEO Josh Lockwood and Alexander Lutz, Jr.; Staten Island Legal Services Co-Director of the Homeowner Defense Project Margaret Becker; Queens Legal Services Project Director Jennifer Ching; Leticia Remauro of Staten Island Community Board 1; Richard Melnyk of Continental Home Loans; Astella Development Corporation Executive Director Judy Orlando; John Tabacco of the Staten Island Sandy Relief Citizens Committee; Coney Island Gospel Assembly Pastor Constance Hulla; The Nature Conservancy Chief Conservation and External Affairs Officer Stuart Gruskin; Muhammed Acikgoz of the Turkish Cultural Center

Staten Island; Kristina Baldwin of the Property Casualty Insurers Assoc. of America; Jeff Greenfield of the Council of Insurance Brokers of Greater New York; Gary Henning – American Insurance Association; New York Insurance Association President Ellen Melchionni; and small business owners.

The participants provided critical input about the challenges they are facing and what steps can be taken to help improve preparedness and response for future storms.

The approximate number of homes destroyed or damaged by Sandy totals 305,000, displacing 40,000 people in New York City alone. Approximately 265,300 businesses were affected, resulting in significant losses of revenue and increasing unemployment.

The Senate's task force is identifying areas most in need of recovery assistance and reviewing the rebuilding and storm planning policies to remove roadblocks and ensure better storm preparedness. The task force will develop legislative solutions to implement the recommendations made by the NYS 2100 Commission, the NYS Respond Commission and the NYS Ready Commission.

Task force members play pivotal roles in developing the short- and long-term plans that will help communities get back on their feet following Hurricane Sandy. Each task force member represents one of New York State's hardest hit areas and is thus uniquely qualified to pinpoint those neighborhoods and businesses that are most in need.

Senator Phil Boyle said, "As New Yorkers continue to rebound from the devastation of Hurricane Sandy, it was vital that the Task Force tour some of our most hard hit communities. The information we gathered today will assist us in our continuing efforts to help those neighbors most severely affected by the storm."

The task force consists of Co-Chair Senator Andrew Lanza (R,I,C-Staten Island), Senator Diane Savino (D-Staten Island/Brooklyn), Senator Charles J. Fuschillo Jr. (R-Merrick), Senator-Elect James Sanders, Jr. (D-Queens), Senator Jack Martins (R-Mineola), Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland), Senator Martin J. Golden (R-Brooklyn), Senator Joseph Addabbo Jr. (D-Queens), Senator Lee Zeldin (R,C,I-Shirley), and Senator Phil Boyle (R,C,I-Suffolk County).