



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lee M. Zeldin

## Senator Zeldin Comments on Bipartisan Task Force on Hurricane Sandy Recovery Preliminary Report

LEE M. ZELDIN February 4, 2013

Task Force Makes 10 Initial Recommendations After Completing Tours of Storm Damaged Regions

Senator Lee M. Zeldin (R-C-I, Shirley), Chairman of the New York State Senate Committee on Consumer Protection, today joined fellow committee members of the New York State Senate Bipartisan Task Force on Hurricane Sandy Recovery at a press conference held in Albany to announce the release of a preliminary report and recommendations on Sandy relief and storm planning.

The preliminary report and recommendations come after Task Force members toured storm damaged communities across Long Island, Staten Island, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and the Hudson Valley.

Following each tour, the Task Force held roundtable discussions with over one hundred community, private sector, and government stakeholders, including major insurance carriers and members of the Governor's administration. Today's preliminary report outlines the Task Force's key findings from these roundtables and sets forth 10 preliminary recommendations. The Task Force will release a final report in the coming weeks.

The Task Force's key findings and preliminary recommendations include:

- Developing certification and licensing procedures for mold remediation contractors.
- Supplementing existing business loan programs with direct grants to businesses severely impacted by Sandy.
- Working with the Department of Financial Services to expedite insurance claim check processing to ensure that homeowners get the resources they need to rebuild their homes as soon as possible.
- Developing better statewide protocols for gasoline distributions so that the energy needs of first responders and other critical service providers are properly prioritized.
- Exploring the use of soft barriers as a means of mitigating future storm damage.

Senator Zeldin said, "Our tours and roundtables within storm damaged communities in the New York Metropolitan area was certainly an eye-opening and enlightening experience. The damage wreaked by Hurricane Sandy is nothing short of staggering. With cases of flooding, structural damage, losses from power outages and more, the clean-up and rebuilding process for Sandy is certain to be long and expensive. In addition to Staten Island, Long Beach and New York City, the damage to many communities on Long Island, particularly the Third Senate District, has been absolutely devastating. I am working closely with village, town and other local officials who are still assessing the damage to ensure that we receive every dollar necessary to rebuild stronger than we were before Sandy first made landfall.

"Additionally, insurance issues have been very problematic. First though, I would recognize the hard work of many insurance companies that are working hard to provide homeowners and business owners with accurate reimbursements. Many companies are taking calls and

working issues at all hours of the day and night and are keeping their customers well informed and appropriately compensated. They are prioritizing the massive volume of claims they've received in order to help people in serious distress. However, some unscrupulous insurers are shamefully offering appallingly low reimbursements to their customers. Whether this practice is occurring because of sheer incompetence, or being unprepared to deal with a disaster of this magnitude, or poor planning, or whether people in dire need are being unjustly and deliberately low-balled because of plain greed, doesn't matter. I want to emphasize to residents in Suffolk County that they do not have to accept inadequate offers from their insurers. I am investigating these injustices and will be working on legislative solutions to address them as well as other storm related issues. In the meantime, my office is available to anyone who thinks he or she is not being treated fairly."