



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Flood Victims Deserve Property Tax Break

JAMES L. SEWARD October 8, 2013

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HERKIMER, 10/08/13 – Mohawk Valley state legislators Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta), Senator Joseph A. Griffo (R/C/I-Rome), and Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi (D-Utica) today announced introduction of special legislation to assist Mohawk Valley property owners recovering from flooding during the summer of 2013.

“The Mohawk Valley and Niagara County Assessment Relief Act” would allow home and business owners that suffered major damage to apply for a tax reassessment. The legislation (S.5931/A.8194) would give municipalities in Cortland, Chemung, Herkimer, Madison, Montgomery, Niagara, Oneida, Schuyler, Steuben, and Tompkins counties the option to reassess property values of homeowners who suffered major damage during the flood events which occurred between June 20 and August 9 and issue tax bills at a reduced rate.

Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) said, **“Imagine you lost your home and everything you own, then to compound matters, you receive a tax bill for that destroyed property. Rebuilding a home is a monumental task and families and individuals need all the help they can get so they can remain here in the Mohawk Valley. Allowing municipalities to evaluate badly damaged property and offer a reduced tax assessment is a real difference maker.”**

Senator Joseph A. Griffo (R/C/I – Rome) said, "This is an important proposal to the six-point legislative plan which we unveiled in July and one in which both flood victims and

municipal leaders agreed would be important to rebuilding homes and communities. When we return to legislative session, the senate will push to adopt the six bills which will help change the way the state deals with such natural disasters."

Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi (D – Utica) said, "Mohawk Valley residents should not have to pay a full tax assessment based on the pre-flood value of their property if it was severely damaged or destroyed. This measure would provide families with much-needed tax relief to help them get back on track as they work to repair their homes and rebuild their lives."

The proposed legislation includes a graduated scale of property tax reduction levels based on the amount of damage home and business owners sustained. The bill also includes a clause protecting school districts from losing state education aid as a result of any reduced assessments.

The Mohawk Valley representatives are actively promoting several initiatives to assist flood victims today and in the future. In July they announced a six-point legislative package aimed at guiding New York's long-term recovery and mitigation efforts. The goal is to better prepare and avoid major destruction when possible and devise a new playbook to respond when needed.