



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

## State To Pick Up Local Flood Costs

JAMES L. SEWARD November 13, 2014

| ISSUE: **LOCAL GOVERNMENT, EMERGENCY SERVICES OR FEMA**

**ONEONTA, 11/13/14** – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) today applauded the governor’s announcement that New York State will cover the local portion of flood repair costs assumed by local governments during flooding in the summer of 2013.

**“Immediately after the storms passed, I urged the governor to take this substantial unforeseen burden off the backs of local governments and taxpayers,”** said Senator Seward. **“Today’s announcement means a great deal to local leaders as they craft their own municipal budgets and work to stay within the property tax cap and meet local needs and priorities.”**

The federal government had committed to funding 75 percent of eligible recovery and resiliency project costs through the FEMA Public Assistance Program with New York State shouldering 12.5 percent of the costs. That left local governments responsible for paying the remaining 12.5 percent of the repair bills. The state is now taking on the local share of costs for municipalities in 17 counties including, in Senator Seward’s district, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Herkimer, and Otsego.

The action will mean millions of dollars in savings to local governments – in Herkimer County, for example, the local share totaled \$3.5 million.

Senator Seward had pressed for the funding, along with legislation to rewrite New York State's disaster response playbook to better prepare for floods and other storm events.

**“In recent years, we have experienced a noticeable uptick in the number and severity of storms and associated flooding. We need to be better prepared to respond when these storms hit, and we need to rebuild smarter to shore up our communities,”** Seward added.

In 2014, the state senate passed a bi-partisan legislative package to address disaster responsiveness. The legislative package included:

- S.5931 (Seward): Enacts the “Mohawk Valley and Niagara county assessment relief act”;
- S.5985 (Seward): Establishes an income tax credit for flood victims in certain counties;
- S.5987 (Griffo): Establishes and administers a supplemental state disaster aid program;
- S.6345 (Valesky): Relates to creating the upstate flood mitigation task force within the Canal Corp.

To date, the state assembly has not acted on the four bills.