



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## Lanza Joins Schumer, Donovan, De Blasio, Oddo to Announce Major Step Forward in Army Corps Seawall Project

ANDREW J. LANZA December 15, 2016

*I'm proud to join Senator Schumer, Congressman Donovan and Borough President Oddo in announcing this major step towards protecting Staten Island's shoreline and reducing the risks associates with coastal storms. I thank the Army Corps for swiftly providing the formal approval needed to begin intensive design work and I look forward to the final construction phase of the Staten Island Sea Wall Project."* Senator Lanza

Staten Island, NY—December 13, 2016....U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer, Congressman Dan Donovan (NY-11), Mayor Bill de Blasio, Staten Island Borough President James S. Oddo, and Staten Island elected representatives today announced the planned line of protection for Staten Island's east shore cleared a major hurdle on the path toward construction. In October, the lawmakers urged the Assistant Secretary of the Army to swiftly approve the Army Corps' "Director's Report" for the Staten Island Seawall Project. Assistant Secretary of the Army Jo-Ellen Darcy has officially approved the project's "Final Feasibility Report," which allows the Army Corps to advance to the design phase. The lawmakers today said the final approval is good news for Staten Island, and occurred months ahead of schedule; before the lawmakers' joint push, the Army's decision was expected to be released in 2017.

"Staten Islanders can breathe a sigh of relief because the vitally important East Shore Sea Wall Project is officially one step closer to becoming a reality," said **Senator Schumer**. "I am

pleased that the Army heeded our call by quickly signing off on this project, ahead of schedule, so that construction can begin as soon as possible.”

**Congressman Dan Donovan** said, “This project will be transformative for tens of thousands of Staten Islanders, which is why it has had my constant focus for the 18 months I’ve served in Congress. The Army Corps, National Park Service, and city and state agencies have worked collaboratively and at a good pace so far – I expect the progress to continue until the last shovel leaves the ground. Staten Islanders need comprehensive flood protection and, just as importantly, the flood insurance relief that the seawall should afford. Thank you to my colleagues in government who have partnered with me – this has truly been an exercise in collaboration across parties and jurisdictions.”

“The Staten Island levee will provide vital protection to the East Shore community - a community that is on the front lines of climate change, as we saw so clearly during Sandy,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “This complements the more than \$20 billion resiliency plan we’re undertaking across the five boroughs to protect our neighborhoods and infrastructure from flooding, sea level rise and other climate risks, helping us create a more resilient, sustainable and equitable New York City. I thank the Army Corps and all of our government partners for their continued collaboration and quick efforts to reach this milestone ahead of schedule.”

**Staten Island Borough President James Oddo** said, “The Army Corps Seawall Project is one of the most important projects for the future of our borough, as demonstrated in tragic detail by the devastation caused by Sandy. That is why Senator Schumer, Congressman Donovan, and I sent our letter to Assistant Secretary Darcy back in October urging the expedited approval of the Director’s Report. The federal government must do all in its power to remove each and every bureaucratic obstacle standing in the way of a completed line of protection on the East Shore, which is still dealing with the effects of Sandy. The fact that the Assistant Secretary of the Army agreed with us and issued this approval months ahead of schedule is

excellent news. It's not too often that government acts ahead of schedule on anything, much less on approving a project of this scope and size. I was happy to work in a bipartisan way with my federal colleagues."

Earlier this year, Schumer successfully pushed the Army Corps to expedite the review process of the Staten Island Sea Wall Project by issuing a "Director's Report." Specifically, the "Director's Report" does not require a Civil Works Review Board and therefore expedites the review process because it cuts out this unnecessary step. The project's final public notice period began in September and finished on October 17<sup>th</sup>. Once the public notice period ended, the "Director's Report" was sent directly to the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) for review and approval. Following the completion of the final public notice period, Schumer and Donovan urged the Department of the Army to swiftly approve these plans.

The project is divided into three phases: feasibility, design, and construction. During the feasibility phase, which just concluded, the Army Corps determined whether construction was possible, estimated costs and benefits, and completed preliminary engineering work. During the design phase, engineers and architects will create detailed blueprints and construction plans. During the construction phase, the Army Corps and contractors will build the seawall based on the design.

Assistant Secretary Darcy's formal approval releases funds for the Corps to begin intensive design work. In a letter sent to Schumer and Donovan, the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) wrote: "Today, I determined that the project is technically feasible, economically justified, and environmentally acceptable. The Corps will undertake pre-construction engineering and design, and construction of the project subject to the availability of funding provided for in PL 113-2."

Engineers will spend the coming months preparing specifications for the 4-mile long line of protection to defend against a 300-year flood. Construction is scheduled to begin in late 2018 or early 2019.

**New York City Council Minority Leader Steven Matteo** said, “It has been more than 50 years since a seawall to protect our vulnerable East Shore communities was first planned, but the approval of the Director's Report is a big leap forward to making this vital project a reality. While we still have many obstacles to overcome – including the acquisition of properties, the remediation of Great Kills Park and the final design process – I am more optimistic than ever that we will put a shovel in the ground in the next few years. We must continue to be vigilant and work together to ensure that happens.”

**New York City Council Member Joe Borelli** said, “Fortunately, Congressman Donovan and Borough President Oddo were able to bring this shore protection project to Staten Island. I thank them for their extraordinary efficiency, which brought final approval to this project months ahead of schedule. It is my hope that this will lead to more progress, as every year that passes without robust shore protections poses a risk to all we have rebuilt.”

**New York State Senator Andrew Lanza** said, “I’m proud to join Senator Schumer, Congressman Donovan and Borough President Oddo in announcing this major step towards protecting Staten Island’s shoreline and reducing the risks associated with coastal storms. I thank the Army Corps for swiftly providing the formal approval needed to begin intensive design work and I look forward to the final construction phase of the Staten Island Sea Wall Project.”

**New York State Senator Diane Savino** said, “I want to thank both Senator Schumer and Congressman Donovan for their leadership and effort in getting this project realized. While many of our residents are still dealing with Hurricane Sandy related issues like Build it Back,

it is great that we are moving ahead to ensure the safety of New Yorkers.”

**Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis** said, “For those who lost everything in Hurricane Sandy, the seawall can't be built fast enough. Until the day the wall is complete, there will be fear and anxiety every hurricane season. We are fortunate that our federal representatives and the Department of the Army have made maintaining Staten Island's shoreline protection a distinct priority and I will do my part to ensure that the state's portion of funding and other approvals are achieved on time," said Assemblywoman Malliotakis.

“Hurricane Sandy devastated Staten Island and other parts of the city, highlighting a growing vulnerability across our coastline to storms and the growing impacts of climate change,” said **Daniel Zarrilli**, Senior Director, Climate Policy and Programs and Chief Resilience Officer at the New York City Mayor’s Office. “We applaud the USACE for moving quickly to approve this crucial project and transitioning to the design phase early next year. Through close collaboration with our elected officials, we are closer to making this important project a reality for the residents of Staten Island’s East Shore, and are continuing to deliver on the Mayor’s commitment to build a more sustainable, more resilient, and more equitable city.”