



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Another Step Down the Path of Recovery

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

Earlier this year, our shoreline communities were victims of historic flooding along the shores of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. Thousands of homes, businesses and properties are still picking up the pieces from the damage they suffered.

While visiting many of these shoreline communities as the waters were rising, it became immediately clear that financial help would be needed. That is why I cosponsored the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence Seaway Flood Relief and Recovery Grant Program, which provided \$45

million in funding to impacted year-round and seasonal homeowners, small businesses, farms, not-for-profits and municipalities. It has since been announced that everyone who was eligible for funding and applied for it, would receive help.

My additional efforts to help, included several flood workshops throughout our communities, where impacted property owners received information about the application process and other information they would need to get the help they sorely needed.

However, as I spoke with people from across the region, it was also clear that money alone was not enough. They had questions—a lot of them—and they wanted answers. To help get residents those answers, I, along with three colleagues, co-hosted a joint hearing on the flooding. Residents who attended the hearing in Oswego County were able to hear directly from experts on flooding and those who control the water levels of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River.

It was at that hearing that most everyone involved began to understand just how much we all need to work together to help people today and in the future—both financially, and in coming up with plans to minimize damage from any future flooding.

As we make those efforts to listen to each other and work together, I want to encourage anyone affected by this historic flooding to set aside 10-15 minutes and help the International Joint Commission's Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Adaptive Management Committee by filling out this [online survey](#).

This survey is a way to share your experiences, and photos, with this special joint U.S. – Canadian panel. The deadline to participate is December 31st. Every little bit of information can help as we begin to formulate plans for our future.

Whether it be a flooded home or business or an eroded shoreline, I promise that I will continue working to help our communities and do everything I can to protect what people have worked so hard to enjoy.