



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

HELMING LEGISLATION WILL HELP SHORELINE COMMUNITIES BECOME MORE RESILIENT

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May 8, 2018

GENEVA – Senator Pam Helming today announced that the New York State Senate passed two of her bills to assist shoreline communities still rebuilding from last year’s damaging floods. The first bill establishes a Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Flood Prevention, Response and Recovery Program and the second bill establishes a Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Flood Prevention, Response, Recovery and Mitigation Task Force to examine and evaluate the causes and impacts of flooding along the southern shore of Lake Ontario.

“Last year, we provided much-needed relief to homeowners, businesses, and municipalities affected by the historic flooding. The financial assistance we delivered is the largest-ever state allocation of disaster relief in our state’s history in order to protect our homeowners and small business owners. Increased water levels in the beginning part of this year indicate that such flooding could very well be a frequent occurrence rather than a simple, one-time event. It is our responsibility to develop a

practical state government strategy to provide effective and ongoing prevention, response, and recovery measures that will assist communities along the southern shore of Lake Ontario. This legislation will direct the Task Force to help shoreline communities develop resiliency plans and mitigate the impacts of potential flooding in the future. I want to thank all of my colleagues for supporting this important legislation and fulfilling the state's obligation to these communities," Senator Helming said.

S.8181 would establish a Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Flood Prevention, Response and Recovery Program under the direction of the state's Adjutant General and Division of Military and Naval Affairs and provide financing for projects through the state Urban Development Corporation. Additionally, S.8182 establishes a Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Flood Prevention, Response, Recovery and Mitigation Task Force and also requires the Task Force to produce a report with recommendations about effective measures to prevent, respond to, and recover from such flooding events.

Last year, communities along the Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River waterfronts were subject to extensive flooding and storm damage that greatly impacted homes, businesses, and infrastructure. A historically wet spring in conjunction with Plan 2014 resulted in serious flood damage – property eroded away, houses sustained damage, businesses were disrupted or forced to close, and infrastructure was broken. With the leadership of Senator Helming, the Senate responded by securing \$45 million in flood relief as part of the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence Seaway Flood Relief and Recovery Grant Program and succeeded again this year in providing \$40 million in new funding to assist owners of residences still needing repairs to impacted property. However, more action is still needed.

The Senate also passed legislation (S.7274) co-sponsored by Senator Helming that would allow owners of primary residences and income-qualified seasonal residences access to grant funding for the repair and restoration of docks damaged by flooding between January 1, 2017 and June 30, 2017, along with the current repairs and restorations allowed under the grant program. The funding will be available through the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence Seaway Flood Recovery and International Joint Commission Plan 2014 Mitigation Grant Program created by the Senate Republican Majority Conference last year.

If you have questions about the Lake Ontario Grant program for municipalities or homeowners, please call 518-474-2057 during normal business hours. Small business owners and other eligible property owners should contact Empire State Development with questions by emailing LakeOntario@esd.ny.gov or calling 518-292-5348.

The Bills have been sent to Assembly for consideration.

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