



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Make Your Voice Heard on Water Levels

SENATOR PATTY RITCHIE June 21, 2019

| ISSUE: **LAKE ONTARIO FLOODING**



Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

\*\*\*[SIGN THE PETITION BY CLICKING HERE](#)\*\*\*

For the second time in just three years, people along the shorelines of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River are facing devastating flooding that is destroying homes, crippling small businesses, eroding shorelines and damaging infrastructure.

In 2017, the International Joint Commission—the group charged with regulating the levels of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River—implemented Plan 2014 to manage water levels and at the same time, restore wetlands and natural habitats. That same year, those along the shores of these bodies of water experienced unprecedented flooding.

I certainly understand the need to consider all factors when it comes to regulating water levels, including the environmental benefits. However, being that devastating flooding has taken place in two out of the three years since Plan 2014 has been implemented, I believe it is time to take a serious look at how changes can be made that would prevent any further devastation.

That is why, along with Assembly members Will Barclay and Mark Walczyk, I am calling on shoreline property owners, small businesses and other stakeholders to sign our petition calling for the suspension of Plan 2014, and reverting back to Plan 1958D until problems resulting from high water can be addressed. It is important that the International Joint Commission hear the voices of all who have been impacted and see how the water regulation plan can be made more flexible when confronted with changing weather conditions.

This petition comes on the heels of word that the International Joint Commission plans to call a special meeting to halt Plan 2014. To sign it, visit my website, [www.ritchie.nysenate.gov](http://www.ritchie.nysenate.gov). There, you will also find flooding related updates, including details—once they become available—on a new relief package announced by Governor Cuomo that is aimed at improving waterfront infrastructure and helping shoreline communities rebuild.

Recently, I toured flooding damage throughout our region to see firsthand the impact of high water. It was heartbreaking to see homes, businesses and shorelines so severely damaged. Action needs to be taken to protect our region from future flooding and prevent the likelihood of another year of record high water. If you share my concerns regarding the flooding of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, I hope you will sign our petition.