



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Thomas F. O'Mara

NYS SEEKING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON STEUBEN COUNTY FLOODING: Part of ongoing effort to secure federal assistance

THOMAS F. O'MARA October 28, 2021

| ISSUE: **EMERGENCY RESPONSE**



We are fully supportive and have strongly encouraged Governor Hochul's ongoing efforts to appeal FEMA's unwarranted decision denying Individual Assistance. We have been working closely with the Hochul administration to stress the immediate and dire need for flood relief and assistance for localities, homeowners, and business owners in Steuben County.

Corning, N.Y., October 28--State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats), Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning), Assemblywoman Marjorie Byrnes (R,C-Caledonia), and

Assemblyman Joe Giglio (R,C-Olean) today alerted Steuben County residents impacted by flooding from Tropical Storm Fred on August 18 that the state has established a new online form that residents can fill out and submit to assist New York's efforts to appeal a recent decision by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) denying Individual Assistance to flooding victims.

New York Governor Kathy Hochul is appealing the FEMA decision. According to the state Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services (DHSES), the new online form allows residents to self-report damages to their homes and/or businesses which, in turn, could help state and local officials identify supplemental damages and strengthen the request for federal aid.

DHSES officials stress that the new form is designed solely to collect additional information that could help state and local officials appeal the FEMA decision. It is not an application for relief assistance and does not guarantee any forthcoming aid.

In a joint statement, O'Mara, Palmesano, Byrnes, and Giglio said, "We are fully supportive and have strongly encouraged Governor Hochul's ongoing efforts to appeal FEMA's unwarranted decision denying Individual Assistance. We have been working closely with the Hochul administration to stress the immediate and dire need for flood relief and assistance for localities, homeowners, and business owners in Steuben County. If the state believes this additional information can be helpful, we would encourage as many local residents as possible to submit information."

According to DHSES, "In collaboration with affected counties, New York State has developed this online form allowing residents to self-report damages to their homes and/or businesses caused by the remnants of Tropical Storm Fred and Hurricane Ida. The purpose of this form is solely to collect information that may help State and local officials identify supplemental damages to develop and augment potential requests for available federal assistance programs."

The self-report form can be accessed here:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/9d10851cc63447eb9488aefd90af1689>

DHSES offers the following suggestions for providing photographs:

- Take a reference photo of the home with the address number visible or with GPS coordinates to help distinguish which damage profiles belong with each submitted property;
- Take photographs and closeups of everything that would be clear indicators of the assigned level of damage;
- Do not include photographs that are not of damage (unless it's an address reference photo);
- Do not include photographs that contain faces;
- Take close-up photographs of damages to show details, if applicable. This may include high water lines on walls for flood events, foundation cracks for earthquakes, or other damage indicators;
- Take a photo of the damage that shows the scale and extent of the damage relative to an object of known size;
- Ensure lighting and perspective allow a viewer to clearly see damages.

Following FEMA's decision in mid-October to deny Individual Assistance, O'Mara, Palmesano, Byrnes, and Giglio joined Congressman Tom Reed in a statement expressing their disappointment.

"We are very disappointed with the decision made by FEMA in regards to Individual Assistance for our area residents that were devastatingly impacted by Tropical Storm Fred. On behalf of these individuals, we will continue to work together in hopes of achieving a positive outcome. We would like to thank Governor Hochul in her efforts to appeal this decision and we join her in this process in the hope that FEMA will reconsider," the area lawmakers wrote.