

January 30, 2014

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo

Governor of New York State

NYS Capitol Building

Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:   
  
As you know, the Town of West Seneca in Erie County has suffered a serious challenge as a result of storm flooding.  Over 70 homes and businesses have suffered enormous losses during a very difficult time of the year.  
  
Recognizing the challenges faced by this community, on January 6, 2014, you  
issued Executive Order 122 declaring a state of emergency for Erie County. Pursuant to this declaration, state disaster officials and employees from the New York Department of Financial Services have offered help to affected homeowners.  However, much more still needs to be done.

As we have seen with recent disaster events across the state, such as Hurricane Irene, Superstorm Sandy, and the most recent flooding in Central New York, the efforts of Federal Flood Insurance, FEMA, and state disaster officials is simply not enough to bring these disaster-ravaged communities to a level from which they can begin to recover.  Real life gaps exist that cannot be plugged by federal or private insurance, or federal grants, leaving a wake of destruction and disaster that has yet to be remediated.  
  
On page 731 of this year's (2013-2014) State Operations Budget (S.2600-c), there is a $200 million appropriation to assist localities that have suffered from a natural or man-made disaster.  As has been done with other localities this past year, I strongly urge you to direct an expenditure of funds from this appropriation to assist the families and businesses of West Seneca, as well as the municipality itself.  They are all in desperate need of help, and the present, albeit significant, assistance provided from the state has simply not been enough.  From municipal infrastructure to housing, businesses, and the economy, this community has yet to really start the process of recovery.  They need our help.

While immediate assistance is necessary, the Senate took action to advance a long-term solution to these types of disaster recovery efforts by passing a package of bills, including S.5987, which would establish a supplemental state disaster aid program.  Until this package can become chaptered, however, the state needs to use its current authority in the present State Operations Budget to deliver assistance to the people of West Seneca.  As you have done in the previous disasters, we ask you now to provide the same assistance to West Seneca.  
  
Thank you for your time, consideration, and assistance. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact my office at any time.  
  
  
  
Sincerely,  


Patrick M. Gallivan

Senator, 59th District

PMG:zp