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THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



ROBERT G. ORTT
SENATOR, 62ND DISTRICT

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April 21, 2017

Hon. Andrew Cuomo
Governor, New York State
The Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

I am writing to inform you about a major cause for concern regarding the rising water levels along the Lake Ontario shoreline. A State of Emergency went into effect in Niagara and Orleans counties on Thursday, April 20, and Monroe County officials have issued a warning to residents and boaters to stay 500 feet away from the shoreline.

The water levels are currently 12 to 19 inches higher than normal, and the Niagara County Director of Emergency Services predicts the lake could crest on May 14. There is no doubt that the water will continue to rise over the next several days and the devastation from flooding will be irreversible. Residents will be forced out of their homes. Businesses will have to close. Municipal infrastructure will be overwhelmed. The fishing and tourism industry will also suffer.

The danger of erosion due to high water levels threaten homeowners and business owners every year. Property owners lose more than a foot a year due to the eroding shoreline. The International Joint Commission's Plan 2014, which went into effect this year, will only aggravate flooding and erosion along the shore due to the plan's regulations on when water is released from Lake Ontario. I spoke with residents who said this is the first year in four decades that the lake levels have been as high as they are now, and they are terrified about the long-term impact on their properties and livelihood.

Necessary steps have been put into place to ensure the safety of residents and to help protect the local economy, but we need help. I am requesting that you declare a State of Emergency to provide further resources and possible financial relief to municipalities, homeowners and business owners along the shore.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this urgent request and please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert G. Ort". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Robert G. Ort
State Senator, 62nd District

CC:

Commissioner John Melville, NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services

Senator Joseph Robach, 56th District

Assemblyman Michael J. Norris, 144th District

Assemblyman Raymond Walter, 146th District

Assemblyman Stephen Hawley, 139th District

Assemblyman Peter Lawrence, 134th District