

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



SENATOR MARIO R. MATTERA
2ND SENATE DISTRICT

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

CORPORATIONS, AUTHORITIES AND
COMMISSIONS
ENERGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

COMMITTEES

CIVIL SERVICE AND PENSIONS
LABOR
TRANSPORTATION

ALBANY OFFICE
ROOM 508
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247
(518) 455-2071

DISTRICT OFFICE
180 EAST MAIN ST., SUITE 210
SMITHTOWN, NEW YORK 11787
(631) 361-2154
FAX (631) 361-5367

E-MAIL
MATTERA@NYSENATE.GOV

August 30, 2024

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12248

RE: SUFFOLK COUNTY STATE OF EMERGENCY

Dear Governor Hochul:

Once again, we are writing to share our collective appreciation for your continued interest in the residents we jointly serve. By visiting our region as you did on Tuesday, August 27th, you have demonstrated to the residents and businesses that were severely impacted by the torrential rains and heavy storm conditions that swept across Long Island this past Sunday, August 18, through Monday, August 19, that the State of New York is working together to help them to recover.

As we have all stated, it is vital that we work together on every single level of government to deal with the devastation that this historic rainstorm has wrought upon our region. To that end, we are truly looking forward to continuing to work with you on this issue for the good of our entire region and state.

As such, we are seeking your immediate assistance in making sure that every single impacted resident gets the aid they sorely need.

To that end, we are requesting that the state apply for relief under the FEMA Individual Assistance Program. While that request must come from the County of Suffolk, we are working with County Executive Edward Romaine to have that request officially made and urge you to apply to the federal government. This funding will help our residents who right now are losing hope and need all the assistance they can get.

This potential grant of up to \$42,500 would be a lifeline for impacted residents. While this relief has only been granted to New York State twice in the past twelve years (once for Superstorm Sandy in 2012 and again for Tropical Storm Ida in 2021), the reality is that the severe storm earlier this month,



in many instances, caused damage akin to those suffered from Superstorm Sandy. We must collectively seek out any source of assistance for our residents as quickly as possible.

In addition, we ask again for New York State to lift the arbitrary financial threshold currently in place regarding the Emergency Assistance Program being offered through New York Homes and Community Renewal. This program would provide grants of up to \$50,000 to fund or reimburse certain qualifying health and safety related repairs to address damage caused by the storm that are not covered by insurance or other disaster relief programs.

But the maximum income threshold to be eligible for the Program is too low, as it is based on income (currently it is set at 150 percent of the area median income) and will exclude many homeowners in our region due to the high cost of living and high taxes of this region. These residents are already struggling to pay their bills and exclusion from the Program will only add to the overwhelming burden they face and will further harm our overall economy. This must be avoided.

And finally, we jointly request that your office organize a comprehensive public meeting for our residents to get the answers they need. While office hours that the New York State Department of Financial Services staff provided this week at Stony Brook University were well-intended, the reality is that this event frustrated many of our constituents who attended.

The ambiguity surrounding what programs are available is leaving our residents with more questions than answers. They need to have a complete understanding of the resources available instead of the current patchwork that is leading to misinformation and confusion.

Our offices jointly pledge to help you organize this meeting for our residents. We are all united in our determination to work with your administration to provide the real answers that our residents need.

Our state must help all of those affected by this storm. This catastrophic event, where in some hamlets nearly eleven inches of rain fell in just three hours, has washed away roads, destroyed homes and flooded entire neighborhoods. This is a natural, unforeseen disaster that is impacting the lives of many of our residents, our businesses, and our local governments. They need immediate assistance to rebuild so our region can come back stronger. New York State must be there for each and every one of them.

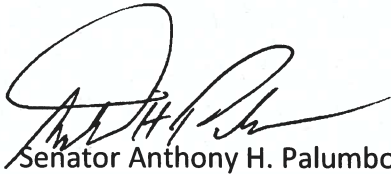
Our priority remains to provide assistance to every resident as quickly as possible to keep everyone safe and to rebuild what has been destroyed. Lack of swift action will imperil the community, the economy, the environment, and the future of all of our region's residents.

We urge you to help all of our residents who were impacted by this storm, and we look forward to collaborating with your office in any way possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mario R. Mattera". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "R".

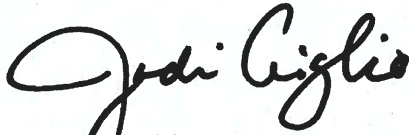
Senator Mario R. Mattera
2nd Senatorial District



Senator Anthony H. Palumbo
1st Senatorial District



Congressman Nicholas LaLota
1st New York Congressional District



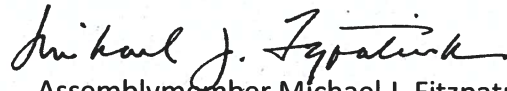
Assemblymember Jodi Giglio
2nd Assembly District



Assemblymember Edward A. Flood
4th Assembly District



Assemblymember Doug Smith
5th Assembly District



Assemblymember Michael J. Fitzpatrick
8th Assembly District



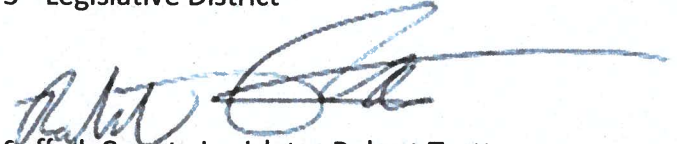
Assemblymember Keith P. Brown
12th Assembly District



Suffolk County Legislator Steven Englebright
5th Legislative District




Suffolk County Legislator Leslie Kennedy
12th Legislative District



Suffolk County Legislator Robert Trotta
13th Legislative District



Supervisor Edward R. Wehrheim
Town of Smithtown



Councilman Thomas J. McCarthy
Town of Smithtown



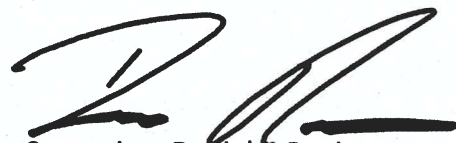
Councilwoman Lynn C. Nowick
Town of Smithtown



Councilwoman Lisa M. Inzerillo
Town of Smithtown

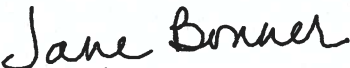


Councilman Thomas W. Lohmann
Town of Smithtown



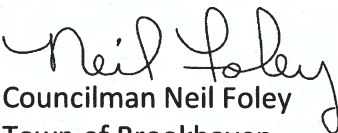
Supervisor Daniel J. Panico
Town of Brookhaven


Councilman Jonathan Kornreich
Town of Brookhaven

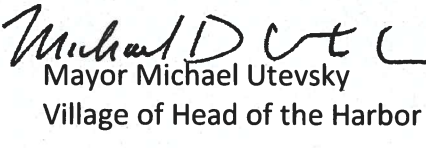

Councilwoman Jane Bonner
Town of Brookhaven


Councilman Neil A. Manzella
Town of Brookhaven


Councilman Michael Loguercio
Town of Brookhaven


Councilman Neil Foley
Town of Brookhaven


Councilwoman Karen Dunn Kesnie
Town of Brookhaven


Mayor Michael Utevsy
Village of Head of the Harbor