

Alliance for a Living Ocean • American Littoral Society • Assn. of NJ Environmental Commissions  
Clean Ocean Action • Environment New Jersey • New Jersey Audubon • NJ Environmental Federation  
New Jersey Environmental Lobby • New Jersey League of Conservation Voters • New Jersey Sierra Club  
NY/NJ Baykeeper • Raritan Headwaters Association • Save Barnegat Bay • Surfrider Foundation

December 8, 2012

Dear Senators and Congressmen:

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy and other extreme storms of increasing severity and frequency, our environmental organizations declare support for the people, businesses, and character of the States of New York and New Jersey and realize we have a historic opportunity to ensure that the federal recovery aid provided results in better protections for people, business and the environment.

Our organizations have been actively working on storm recovery – from on-the-ground clean-ups to legislative advocacy, and have been working with all levels of government as well as the affected public to develop a comprehensive and coordinated plan for rebuilding our communities and restoring our coast, beaches, and inland bays.

We appreciate that in our nation's capital, you have been tirelessly working to bring stories from the storm to your colleagues in the Senate and House of Representatives, and to bring aid from around the world to our devastated communities.

As you continue to work on Hurricane disaster relief, and especially recovery funds and rebuilding grants, we ask that you condition disbursements in a manner which reduces future risk from storm damage, fights climate change, drives resiliency, and fosters adaptation to a “new normal.” If we rebuild to the same flawed standards as existed before recent storms, lives and clean ocean economies will be just as vulnerable as before.

If we continue to settle for the status quo of lax building restrictions and make no demands for truly scientific engineering of recovery, rebuilding, and restoration projects, we will be ensuring that our communities will be endangered – needlessly – in the next storm or the next flood. It is time to recover and time to rebuild, but we must do so responsibly.

Therefore, we urge you to condition federal funding for New York and New Jersey reconstruction to ensure that our rebuilt communities are environmentally – and thereby economically – resilient. By promoting green infrastructure, more environmentally sensitive land use planning, and natural-resource-dependent and publicly accessible uses, you can protect public health and welfare and drive the responsible recovery of an entire region.

Sincerely,

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