

Congressman Steve Rothman Announces Additional FEMA Assistance for Bergen, Hudson and Passaic Counties After the President's Review of Flood Damage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Tom O'Donnell

office: (202) 225-5061

cell: (202) 494-8386

Tom.ODonnell@mail.house.gov

Hackensack, NJ - After touring flood-affected areas in Northern New Jersey with President Obama, Congressman Steve Rothman announced that FEMA has approved assistance to individuals and municipalities in Bergen, Hudson, and Passaic Counties. On September 2, 2011, Congressman Rothman wrote to the FEMA Region II Administrator Lynn Cantor (letter attached) urging her to grant both Public and Individual Assistance to these counties after personally touring the affected areas and witnessing the serious damage caused by Hurricane Irene throughout these counties.

"I am extremely pleased that FEMA has taken this step and recognized the level of damage in these counties," Rothman said. "I am so grateful that President Obama came to Northern NJ to witness firsthand the suffering of our people and the need for federal relief. This vital aid will allow our families to help rebuild their lives and our counties and towns to start the long task of repairing the damage caused by this tragedy."

"The President's visit and this new declaration of additional assistance reaffirms President Obama's commitment to making sure that the Federal government does everything it can to meet the needs of the many New Jersey residents and businesses who have been seriously affected by this tragedy," Rothman added.

"I will continue to work with the President and his Administration, our Governor and our state, county and local officials to make sure that we respond completely to this disaster and that those affected get the help they need and deserve. If I can be of assistance to anyone affected by the flooding, please feel free to contact my Hackensack office at (201) 646-0808," said Rothman.

September 02, 2011

Ms. Lynn Canton

Region II Administrator

US Department of Homeland Security

Jacob Javits Federal Office Building

26 Federal Plaza, Room 1311

New York, New York 10278-0002

Dear Administrator Canton:

Thank you for your leadership in responding to the damage in New Jersey caused by Hurricane Irene. I appreciate the President's expedited response to our state's request for a major disaster declaration for New Jersey on Wednesday night. I was especially glad to hear that Individual Assistance was made available for residents of Bergen and Passaic Counties in my district, and that Hazard Mitigation funding was granted to all counties in our state.

However, I am extremely concerned that Hudson County was not included in the initial declaration for Individual Assistance, and that Bergen, Hudson, and Passaic Counties were not granted Public Assistance. I understand that Preliminary Damage Assessments will be conducted in these counties on Saturday, and that more counties will possibly be added to the emergency declaration based on these surveys.

I am writing to urge you to extend an Individual Assistance declaration to Hudson County, and Public Assistance to Hudson, Bergen and Passaic Counties.

Yesterday, I saw firsthand the devastation that Hurricane Irene caused in these three counties during an on-the-ground tour with local Mayors. Businesses and families in this area face major losses, and need help now. Many homes, businesses, schools and other public buildings experienced severe flooding, and several were completely destroyed. Roads and sidewalks suffered extensive flooding and damage as well. Residents in low-lying sections of Wallington were ordered to evacuate on Tuesday, and many had to be rescued by boat. Some still remain without power.

In Hudson County, specifically, Ronald Dawkins, a U.S. Postal supervisor, tragically lost his life while trying to escape his disabled car on a flooded street in Kearny. Highways, streets and bridges in Secaucus were still flooded and partially closed almost four days after the storm, affecting local residents and businesses. I saw severe structural damage to basements and watermarks almost four feet high in some of the houses I toured in Kearny and Secaucus.

While it is too early to give a monetary estimate of the damage, it is clear from the magnitude of the destruction in my district that recovery efforts will be beyond the means of state and local budgets. Individuals, communities, and businesses in my district will need federal help to rebuild and recover from this devastating storm.

Thank you for your timely consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

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STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

Member of Congress

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