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## Governor Christie Announces \$300 Million Buyout Plan To Give Homeowners The Option To Sell Sandy-Damaged

Thursday, May 16, 2013

Tags: [Hurricane Sandy](#)

*"Willing Seller" Program Provides Flexibility for Residents and Communities including Some Passaic River Basin Properties*

**Trenton, NJ** – Governor Chris Christie today announced a plan to use \$300 million in federal funding that would give homeowners the option of selling their properties damaged by Superstorm Sandy in tidal areas of New Jersey. The buyout plan involves approximately 1,000 homes impacted by Sandy, in addition to another 300 repetitively flood-damaged homes located in the Passaic River Basin. The program is designed to give homeowners the ability to choose the best option for their individual situation.

The offers to willing seller homeowners are expected to begin starting in July through New Jersey's existing Blue Acres Program, with the first closings expected by Labor Day and all of the closings done within one year. The initial targets will include about 350 homes in Sayreville and South River in Middlesex County that were impacted by flooding from the Raritan and South Rivers, and Delaware Bay homes in Lawrence Township in Cumberland County.

"This buyout program will give homeowners added flexibility and another option as they rebuild from Sandy," said Governor Christie. "The process is a way to help people and property get out of harm's way, but as I have always said, we will not force any of these residents to sell their homes or force any towns to participate in buyouts. This is a willing seller program for beleaguered neighborhoods and communities in flood-prone areas that have suffered the wrath of Sandy, and who believe that buyouts are the best option for their future."

The state is targeting clusters of homes or entire neighborhoods that were ravaged by the storm for buyouts. Those homes eventually will be razed and the areas maintained as open space that can handle future flood waters, while keeping people and property out of harm's way.

"It is up to these communities to make the tough decisions on whether to sell or rebuild," said Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Bob Martin. "We understand this is a very personal and difficult decision to make for people who were decimated by Sandy and may have also suffered damage in previous storms, but who still love where they live. But for those who choose the buyout option, we promise to work diligently to move the process along as quickly as possible and to minimize government red tape and bureaucracy."

A specially created buyout team at the DEP is working to process sellers' applications and get the paperwork portion of this effort done quickly. The DEP has transferred personnel temporarily to handle the expected influx of willing sellers and to process the applications efficiently and help families get through the process as painlessly as possible.

Case managers will reach out personally to individual homeowners by the end of May to help guide them through the buyout process. Homeowners interested in selling their homes through this process also may contact the DEP's Blue Acres Program at 609-984-0500.

Property appraisals and title work will begin in June.

The buyout program is a joint effort of the DEP, State Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). DEP administers all Blue Acres purchases and OEM handles the financing through FEMA.

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The Blue Acres Program is part of the DEP's Green Acres land preservation program. Blue Acres was established through voter approval of a Green Acres/Blue Acres referendum in 1995.

The initial Blue Acres Program targeted purchase of lands in floodways in the Delaware, Passaic and Raritan rivers basins, but was later expanded to include all state waters. Eligible properties are those that have been storm damaged, that are prone to incurring storm damage, or that may buffer or protect other lands from such damage.

For more information on the Blue Acres Program, visit: [http://www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres/blue\\_flood\\_ac.html](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres/blue_flood_ac.html)

For information on Sandy Recovery, visit: <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/special/hurricane-sandy/>

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