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Christie Administration Agrees to Local Plan to Allow Return to Barrier Island Communities

Friday, November 9, 2012

Tags: [Hurricane Sandy](#)

Trenton, NJ - Governor Chris Christie has agreed to a plan put forward by the mayors of Long Beach Island to lift the evacuation order for the barrier island communities heavily damaged by Hurricane Sandy, to allow residents controlled access to assess damage, retrieve belongings and permitting repopulation of the island for residents whose homes are safe and habitable. The controlled access to Long Beach Island communities, under the direction of local officials with assistance from the New Jersey National Guard, will begin Saturday morning at 6 a.m., with the exception of Holgate, where infrastructure and road damage makes return still too dangerous.

"This has been an unimaginable ordeal for many of our residents, but particularly for those on the barrier islands that remained under mandatory evacuation," said Governor Christie. "As painful as it's been, it was necessary to protect them from the dangers that Hurricane Sandy left in its wake, including gas leaks and other utility hazards, roads wiped out or heavily damaged and debris scattered across the landscape. We want them to return in an orderly, safe and secure way, so they can begin to take control of their lives and their property."

Under the resident access plan developed in coordination with the Ocean County Office of Emergency Management (OEM), local officials will determine which parts of their towns will be accessible and which days that access will be provided. For guidance, safety advice and protocol for procedures that begin tomorrow, residents should consult the Long Beach Island Joint Emergency Operations Center for Hurricane Sandy website: <http://www.lbieoc.org/>

The return of residents is being guided by local mayors under an existing hurricane evacuation and repopulation plan of the impacted municipalities of LBI. The plan provides for orderly return of residents and business owners once infrastructure and utility dangers have been sufficiently mitigated. Under the local plan, the LBI governing bodies have decided which areas can be repopulated and have determined that Holgate, to the south, is not ready for repopulation.

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