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## Governor Christie's Press Briefing In Sea Isle City on Storm Preparedness

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Governor Christie's Press Briefing In Sea Isle City on Storm Prepa...

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### Transcript:

**Governor Christie:** I want to thank the mayor.

Thank you all for being here, and I want to thank my friend Congressman LoBiondo. He has been an extraordinary partner in dealing with all those various natural disasters we've had to deal with in the last 5 ½ years.

I was saying to the group of elected officials that I was just meeting before we came out that there was no one who engaged in more aggressive and effective hand-to-hand combat for the people of New Jersey on the floor of the Congress than Frank LoBiondo did. Everything we've been able to do in the reaction to Sandy in the last three years would not have been possible without Congressman LoBiondo, and so while we're facing another challenge I'm glad he's here.

So I met with the local officials, not only from this county but from the neighboring South Jersey counties this morning. We had a statewide conference call this morning with over 350 elected officials from around the state, and I've had three meetings now and about to go to my fourth meeting with my cabinet in the last 48 hours to make sure that we are prepared for what's happening.

All morning we've been receiving the latest updates from the National Weather Service, and we know what we're dealing with I think in a general sense now.

The nor'easter that we're experiencing right now and that will continue throughout the rest of the day and into tomorrow is diminishing a bit.

We're not getting the amount of rain that we thought initially we were going to get which is good news from a flooding perspective, but we're still going to have moderate to major flooding in our four southern counties, in Cape May, Atlantic, Cumberland and Salem, so we need to be prepared for that and I believe these officials are prepared for whatever we're going to have to deal with and I can tell you that the state is well prepared for that as well.

The good news on Hurricane Joaquin is that it continues to track east, not west, into the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, and if the track continues the way it is now we're not going to have to worry about Joaquin having any type of major effect on the Jersey shoreline and on our citizens, and so so far so good. That's very good news for us. We're prepared if it comes, but we're very happy to hear that they'll be visiting someplace else. We've already done our bit for hurricane tourism here in New Jersey.

We expect about one to three feet of flooding in the Cape May and Atlantic County region, so you need to be ready and prepared for that. We're prepared for everything from working on the beaches with the DEP to make sure that we replenish and we provide protection there, but also to the extreme of sheltering if we needed to shelter as well, working with the county officials, and we have statewide assets available as well if we need to.

The worst of this is going to come today. We've got high tide happening as we speak, around 12:30 through to about 3:00 this afternoon. We're going to see 6 to 10 foot waves, maybe as high as 16 feet, over the course of the weekend, which will really damage the beaches and lead to more beach erosion and less protection obviously for the shoreline.

Right now we don't have any major outages. I think there are about 147 outages in Cape May County right now from a power perspective. Of course those are extraordinarily major if you're one of those 147, but we're glad that we don't have anything more than that.

We have the BPU engaged with Atlantic City Electric and also with JCP&L to make sure that we're getting real-time information on that. We have hundreds of crews, out-of-state crews heading to New Jersey to prepare to deal with anything that might happen as a result of the storm to make sure that power restoration happens as quickly as possible.

What I want folks to be ready for in this area of the state is to be ready and be prepared to respond to the flooding and to respond to any loss of power. Go to places where you can be safe and warm. It's going to get colder tonight. It's going to get down into the 40's tonight, and so I don't want people—if you've lost power, staying at home you can't be warm. If you have a generator at home, please go onto our website and remind yourself of the safe operation of those generators. Unfortunately during Sandy we lost lives to carbon monoxide poisoning because people didn't know how to appropriately use their generators, so please if you're—if it's been a while since you've used it, go onto our [ready.nj.gov](http://ready.nj.gov) website. We have instructions on how to safely use those generators if you're going to use them to keep yourself warm in your home if there is a loss of power, but those are the things that we're most concerned about at the moment, reaction by residents in the lower-lying areas to flooding and to potential loss of power.

Have a preparation plan. We've been talking about this for a long time. If you lose power, if there's some flooding, where are you going to go? Where are you going to go to be safe and warm? Do you have friends or family? If you don't, contact your local officials. We'll have sheltering available for people if you absolutely need it, but your first area of resort should be to friends or family that are in the area if you lose power or if there's flooding that forces you to leave your home. We don't expect there should be widespread incidents of that type of flooding, but if there is we want you to be prepared with a plan to be able to do that. Your local officials are ready to help in that regard as well.

We have every asset ready and available to be able to help folks in those circumstances, but you need to be able to have a plan to execute on, so we need you to do that and to be ready.

We're very fortunate, at least at the moment, that the hurricane is heading out to sea and not heading toward the coast, but this is another indication of why the preparedness measures and the resiliency measures that we've been taking and are continuing to take post-Sandy are so important.

You know, we were just having a conversation with the elected officials in the room behind me.

I continue to be frustrated—I speak only for myself, but I continue to be frustrated by the opposition of some folks in this state to us completing the dune system, and we're wasting time and taxpayer money in court in cases that we ultimately will win on eminent domain to build these dunes to protect the people and the property of the people of the state of New Jersey, and so I'll say again quite candidly to towns like Margate, you know, you are amongst the most selfish people in the state of New Jersey, and if this hurricane had come to shore, the damage that would have been done to lives and property in Margate, I hope it's worth the vanity act that you're all engaging in, because we're going to win eventually, but you're just costing the state taxpayers money and you're costing your fellow citizens potentially, if we have another bad storm, their property and their lives, and I don't understand how people can be that selfish. I really don't.

The great news is that the overwhelming majority of people, overwhelming majority of people, in the state have voluntarily come forward with their easements and projects are being built as we speak all across the state, but there are projects being delayed, here in this part of the state and in northern Ocean County, because of the resistance of folks to common sense, so I hope that what this does is refocus everybody again and near miss like this to how lucky we are that it didn't come, not only because we would never want something like that to happen again, but also because everything that we have planned to do, everything that Congressman LoBiondo and I fought to get funded, these projects—it is, in this current climate, unprecedented for the federal government to pay for 100% of this type of project, and because of the fighting that I did and Congressman LoBiondo did on the floor of the House of Representatives and others, we got the federal government to agree to 100% funding and we have people standing in the way of getting that done, and so we need people who are in positions of elected responsibility but other citizens across the state who feel strongly about this to be speaking out and saying that we want people to be responsible.

You know, you hear all these ridiculous stories, you know, if you give an easement that we're going to put a public bathroom or a hot dog stand or something like that. Listen, I ran for governor of New Jersey. I have no interest in running a hot dog stand and, even though I feel at times like I might be running a public bathroom when I'm at the Statehouse I'm not, OK? And I have no interest in running public bathrooms anywhere up and down the Jersey Shore.

We want those easements to build dune systems that protect your lives and your property and nothing else, so we're going to continue to work and push to get that done. Three years nearly now after Sandy it is one of the real frustrations of my governorship that that isn't done and it isn't done because of a small handful of people/

Let's work hard and work together over the next 48 hours. There is plenty that we're going to be able to do to be able to protect each other and to keep each other's interests in the forefront. You can be guaranteed that I'm going to be down here and keeping an eye on how things are going, cut through red tape that needs to be cut through, try to minimize the frustrations of the men and women standing behind me who are on the frontlines and who, you know, have to deal with the day-to-day challenges that running a municipality in this state confronts them with in addition to when something like this goes on, so let's be prepared. Let's be smart. Don't stay in a cold house. Don't stay in a flooded house if that happens over the next 24 to 48 hours, and let's make sure that you have a plan in place that you execute on. Our plan is in place. If we need to execute on it we will, and the men and women you see standing with me are united together regardless of political party, that our first and biggest job is to protect the lives and the safety of the people of the state of New Jersey, and so we are united in that and I appreciate all the folks, Republicans and Democrats, who are standing with me to make sure that we do that together.

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**Press Contact:**

Brian Murray  
Brian Murray  
609-777-2600



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Office of the Governor  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
609-292-6000