

Christie Administration Announces First Post-Sandy Home Buyouts Completed In Sayreville

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Dozens Of Additional Closings Expected In Coming Months

Trenton, NJ – Five months after kicking-off a \$300 million statewide post-Superstorm Sandy home buyout program, the Christie Administration today announced the first two home purchases, both in Sayreville at pre-storm values, with dozens of additional closings expected in the next few months.

In addition to the first two closings, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has made offers to the owners of all eligible properties in the first round of 129 targeted acquisitions in Sayreville. Twenty-seven of those owners have accepted offers. Additional offers will be made early next month to 76 property owners in South River, with another 67 offers to follow to the owners of a second group of Sayreville properties.

"We are making excellent progress toward our goal of getting willing sellers in flood-prone areas out of harm's way," said Governor Christie. "Working closely with the federal government, my Administration is committed to expediting this process to help these victims of the storm get on with their lives as quickly as possible."

The DEP's Blue Acres Program team also has met with potential sellers and officials in additional storm-affected municipalities, including Woodbridge, East Brunswick, Linden, Old Bridge, Neptune and Union Beach. Interest also has been expressed in other cities and towns.

The Christie Administration's buyout program is targeting 1,000 properties in tidal areas affected by Sandy and another 300 properties in the Passaic River Basin that have repeatedly flooded. The state is particularly aiming at clusters of homes and entire neighborhoods for buyouts. The homes will be razed and the land will be maintained by the municipalities as open space that can handle future flood waters and eliminate the need for future disaster assistance by police, fire, emergency crews and other first responders.

"We are working to help guide these Sandy-impacted families through what can be a complex and personally difficult process," said DEP Commissioner Bob Martin. "A special DEP team of case managers is working closely with FEMA to ensure that willing sellers have their applications processed as quickly and smoothly as possible, with minimal red tape."

The first closing this week involved a single family residence on a cul-de-sac on Weber Avenue in Sayreville. The house and property were purchased for \$252,768. The owners, who lived in the house post-Sandy until the closing this week, have purchased a new residence in another section of Sayreville. The second closing involved a single family residence on MacArthur Avenue in Sayreville. The house and property were purchased for \$170,186.

These homes were two of 129 in Sayreville in the first group of homes approved for buyouts by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). To date, FEMA has awarded the state \$55 million for the purchases of 272 homes in Sayreville and South River. These communities sustained extensive flooding from the Raritan and South rivers during Sandy.

The state will continue to submit buyout applications to FEMA for other properties on a rolling basis over the next several months.

The DEP has created a special team to work closely with willing sellers and process their applications as quickly as possible. Case managers are working with individual homeowners personally to help guide them through the process.

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

When it was first established, the 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.

Homeowners interested in selling their homes through this process may contact the DEP's Blue Acres Program at 609-984-0500.

For more information on the Blue Acres Program, visit:

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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