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A Commitment To Recovery

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Tags: [Budget and Spending](#)

Rebuilding New Jersey In The Wake Of Superstorm Sandy

"I've called this experience New Jersey's Katrina because the damage to our state is nothing that we've experienced ever before. ...We have a long way to go to rebuild and restore our communities, but the people of New Jersey have already shown that we are ready to meet the challenge."

—Governor Chris Christie, November 28, 2012

Ensuring New Jersey Has The Necessary Resources For Recovery

Working in a Bipartisan Manner To Secure Federal Disaster Assistance:

Governor Christie has worked closely with the Obama Administration, Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York and Governor Dannel Malloy of Connecticut to secure the necessary Federal Disaster Assistance New Jersey will need during the recovery. Governor Christie has voiced his support for the \$60.4 billion Assistance request that President Obama has submitted to Congress.

New Jersey is setting an example across the country of how to work across party lines in times of real challenge to its people. Governor Christie is committed to working in a bipartisan manner with Senators Menendez and Lautenberg and the entire New Jersey Congressional Delegation to ensure New Jersey gets the aid it needs to rebuild.

Creating A Cabinet-Level Position To Oversee Sandy Recovery Efforts:

Taking a critical step forward in the recovery and rebuilding of New Jersey communities, Governor Christie tasked Marc Ferzan to manage Superstorm Sandy recovery efforts within the Office of the Governor.

Mr. Ferzan is responsible for directing the vital task of overseeing and coordinating Governor Christie's long-term recovery efforts for New Jersey in cooperation with all federal, state, local, private, and non-governmental partners.

In addition, Governor Christie announced the retention of Witt Associates, a team with vast experience in disaster recovery and large scale mitigation management, to assist in the long-term rebuilding process.

Fighting For Greater Federal Reimbursement For Debris Removal Emergency Protective Measures:

Governor Chris Christie has formally requested federal approval of 100% reimbursement for state and local government costs associated with debris removal and emergency protective measures that continue in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy.

To ensure that priority operations continue in hard-hit communities across New Jersey, the Governor requested that FEMA exercise its broad authority to implement 100% federal assistance for these costs for a period of at least 90 days.

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To date, FEMA has provided over **\$18 million** to New Jersey municipalities for debris removal.

Securing \$20 Million Dollars In Quick Release Emergency Infrastructure Funds:

New Jersey has secured \$20 million dollars in quick release emergency funds provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

These funds may be used for immediate and emergent repairs to roads, bridges and tunnels that are critical to complete. The funds provide key additional resources to repair infrastructure and prepare the shore for next year's tourism season – an economic essential for the region.

Easing Infrastructure Repair Permit Requirements:

As a result of the widespread damage caused by Superstorm Sandy, Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin has signed an Administrative Order allowing approvals of DEP permit requirements for in-kind repairs or replacement of critical public infrastructure such as roads, bridges, bulkheads and culverts.

Cities and towns will have six months to provide needed documentation of storm damage for retroactive DEP approval for public infrastructures projects. That documentation is key to getting federal reimbursement for the emergency work.

Helping Families & Homeowners

Extending Deadline For Disaster Assistance Through FEMA:

At the request of the Christie Administration, the deadline has been extended for New Jersey residents affected by Sandy to register for FEMA disaster assistance until March 1, 2013, well beyond the original 60 day window.

The registration process serves as a referral point for FEMA programs and those of partner agencies such as the U.S. Small Business Administration, American Red Cross and the Salvation Army. FEMA disaster assistance for individuals and families can include money for rental assistance, essential home repairs, personal property losses and other serious disaster-related needs not covered by insurance.

Comprehensive Temporary Housing Assistance:

Following the storm, thousands remained in need of housing assistance on an intermediate to long-term housing basis. FEMA has identified and presented multiple options to get people the assistance and housing security they need in the short term now, and if necessary in the long term.

41,000 New Jersey households are currently receiving temporary rental assistance from FEMA. While FEMA is ready to assist any of these households should their circumstances and individual needs change, the majority of New Jerseyans receiving this assistance currently have their immediate housing needs met for the short and long term.

For those households who are not receiving temporary rental assistance, FEMA is working with them to provide the best option available to meet their individual needs:

There are currently 2,600 individuals and households staying in hotels and motels under Transitional Sheltering Assistance for whom FEMA is actively working to secure temporary housing over the long term.

There are also approximately 340 households that FEMA is working with to provide direct federal housing either in Fort Monmouth or in mobile units.

FEMA's figures are based on highly individualized information from households and families reflecting their current housing situation and therefore these numbers remain fluid.

At the Christie Administration's request to help transition Sandy-displaced residents from hotels and motels and into more permanent housing solutions as quickly as possible, FEMA is now permitting households receiving FEMA rental assistance to use this funding to pay for security deposits. This allows displaced New Jerseyans, who are residing in a hotel or motel because they do not have money for a security deposit, the opportunity to move into a rental unit.

To assist New Jerseyans displaced from their homes due to Hurricane Sandy, The New Jersey Housing Resource Center (HRC) is utilizing its online housing locator to help find them affordable transitional or long-term housing. This free service consolidates rental resources identified and provided by the New Jersey Apartment Association, New Jersey Association of Realtors, New Jersey Builders Association, landlords, private organizations, federal agencies such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the public. Currently, there are more than 2,200 housing opportunities available on the HRC website throughout the state of New Jersey.

Protecting Homeowners From Higher Insurance Deductibles:

Taking action to save homeowners money following Superstorm Sandy, Governor Christie signed Executive Order 107, prohibiting insurance companies from imposing costly deductibles on New Jersey homeowners. An important part of the recovery of New Jersey will be the influx of funds that occurs when insurers settle claims by New Jersey homeowners. This action will increase the total size of the payments made by the insurance industry, helping residents rebuild their homes and speed New Jersey's path to recovery.

Creating Direct Resident To Government Access With Mobile Cabinet Offices:

To assist consumers who have suffered property loss as a result of Superstorm Sandy, the Christie Administration announced the Department of Banking and Insurance will have staff members available at locations in Middlesex, Monmouth, and Ocean counties to handle consumers' questions, take complaints, and assist them in filing insurance claims related to damages caused by the storm.

Food Assistance For Storm-Impacted Families Enrolled In SNAP:

The Christie Administration announced the approval of federal waivers that will make food assistance available to recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or D-SNAP is a program that provides a one-time electronic food benefit to people who could not otherwise afford the food because of other disaster-related expenses.

The program accepted applications from November 26 through December 4th. An estimated 9,111 residents applied.

Providing Food And Shelter In The Immediate Aftermath Of The Storm:

In the immediate aftermath of Superstorm Sandy there were 127 shelters open across New Jersey housing over 7,000 residents. The State also supported 7 shelters intermittently over a three-week period.

Over 1 million pounds of food and nearly 5 million meals and snacks were served through the Community Food Bank of NJ, the Southern Baptists, the Salvation Army and the American Red Cross.

A total of 28,750 emergency meals were provided to 12,617 seniors post-storm. Additional services were performed such as checking on and visiting seniors with special medical needs and assisting with special transportation needs as they arose.

Disaster Crisis Counseling:

Over 100 Disaster Crisis Counselors were deployed to emergency shelters following the storm to work with residents in need. Recently, New Jersey was awarded a grant from the federal government for nearly \$2 million to extend and expand this outreach through the end of December with an additional 120 counselors on the ground. New Jersey Hope and Healing is on the ground helping individuals cope with the emotional impact of recent storms and flooding.

Helping Businesses**Helping Small Businesses Get Back On Their Feet:**

Governor Christie announced the implementation of a business impact assessment for small businesses affected by Superstorm Sandy. The survey, created in partnership with statewide business groups, the New Jersey Business and Industry Association (NJBIA), the State Chamber of Commerce, Commerce and Industry Association of NJ (CIANJ) and National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB) will help inform the Administration and industry leaders about the most pressing needs of those small businesses affected by Superstorm Sandy.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, the Christie Administration has worked expeditiously to get programs and direct assistance to small businesses:

Over \$397 million in U.S. Small Business Administration disaster loans have been approved and over 5,600 impacted residents and businesses have applied for this type of assistance.

The U.S. Department of Labor has approved a \$15.6 million National Emergency Grant to fund the administration's plan to hire unemployed New Jersey residents to assist with clean-up and recovery efforts.

Recovery Assistance Services For New Jersey Businesses:

To support the recovery of New Jersey's businesses and protect the overall economic interests of New Jersey in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, Governor Christie announced a series of business assistance services for those affected by the storm. These services include:

Up to \$500,000 for commercial lines of credit to businesses that need access to cash to improve their damaged property while awaiting insurance proceeds, with all related EDA fees waived.

Grant awards for businesses to assist with on-the-job training costs for new workers hired specifically to assist in disaster-related activities.

Availability of the Business Resource Centers at any of the currently operational local One-Stop Career Centers across the state as temporary hubs for businesses and for job seekers and displaced workers.

The availability of Disaster Unemployment Benefits for displaced workers.

Dispatch of Rapid Response team members to identified Disaster Recovery Centers to assist displaced workers.

Availability of services through New Jersey Youth Corps to assist non-profit, public and governmental entities in a variety of ways for disaster relief and clean-up.

In addition, BAC's Business Call Center is also the one-stop resource for more information on how to get businesses back up and running.

Restoring New Jersey Services

Working To Get Power Restored Quickly:

The Christie Administration met regularly with the four electricity providers in the state to remove any delays and speed the process of restoring power to New Jersey residents. Governor Christie also coordinated with the federal government as well as the governors of twelve different states in an effort to increase the manpower in the state working to repair power lines and equipment.

Within 9 days of the storm, electricity had been restored to nearly 90% of customers throughout the state, out of a peak of 2.7 million commercial and residential customers.

Over 17,000 out-of-state utilities crew members joined with 10,000 based in New Jersey to speed up power restoration efforts.

The Board of Public Utilities has also begun holding a series of public hearings in each of the service territories to solicit public comments regarding the state of preparedness and responsiveness of the utility companies prior to, during and after Hurricane Sandy.

The Board of Public Utilities (Board) is requiring the Electric Distribution Companies (EDCs) to take specific action to improve their preparedness and responses to major storms. The Board approved 103 separate measures based on recommendations contained in a report prepared by the Board's consultant Emergency Preparedness Partnerships (EPP); recommendations provided by Board staff in the BPU Hurricane Irene Electric Response Report; and stakeholder comments received by the Board at numerous public hearings.

Bob Hanna, President of the N.J. Board of Public Utilities: "The Board's action ...is yet another step in the Christie Administration's continuing efforts to address safety and reliability concerns related to the delivery of electric service to New Jersey ratepayers. The Board today directed the regulated electric distribution companies to implement needed improvements within hard deadlines."

Returning Our School Children To A Sense Of Normalcy:

Governor Christie emphasized from the beginning the need to return to a sense of normalcy, especially for our school children. Schools in New Jersey saw unprecedented damage, totaling approximately \$25 million, causing the Department of Education to seek solutions to get children back in school.

For school buildings that are so devastated they are effectively unable to open for an indeterminate amount of time, the DOE is working to assure that they are reopened no later than the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year;

DOE is working with the Army Corps of Engineers, FEMA and others to bridge the gap;

DOE provided "Homepage" option for districts to provide assessments of these damages – and help facilitate solutions to address challenges;

DOE is working with the Executive County Superintendents to gain specific on-the ground assessments at the project level.

For buildings that are open but significantly compromised, DOE is working to restore the State to the status quo as quickly as possible – i.e. no cafeteria/auditorium, limited classroom capacity, combined buildings, split sessions;

Maintaining the 180 school days requirement for all school districts.

Getting New Jersey Moving Again:

As of January 14th NJ Transit has restored service levels into New York to 100 percent. In addition, the restoration of service along the North Jersey Coast Line, which suffered the brunt of the damage wrought by Superstorm Sandy, has been restored to 96 percent of its pre-Sandy schedule.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation and its contractors:

Removed over 4,400 truckloads of debris from state and local roads from Sea Bright to Seaside Heights.

Cleaned 4,330 dump truck loads of sand for municipalities to recycle and replenish their beaches.

Installed 600 feet of metal sheeting to reinforce the ocean side of the Mantoloking breach.

Route 35 at the breach has been rebuilt and NJDOT is now working to re-establish the connection between County Route 528 and Route 35 at the site of the breach.

Replaced 1,100 traffic signs such as "Stop, One Way or speed limit signs).

Reopening Atlantic City Casinos:

All twelve Atlantic City casinos back in operation within one week of storm. Despite being in the eye of the storm, all hotel operations and gaming activity at the twelve Atlantic City casinos are back in operation by November 5.

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