



- Home
- Newsroom
- Media
- Administration
- NJ's Priorities
- Contact Us

- Press Releases
- Public Addresses
- Executive Orders
- Press Kit
- Reports

Home > Newsroom > Press Releases > 2015

Governor Christie Marks Two-Year Anniversary Of Post-Sandy Blue Acres Program With 300th Acquisition

Wednesday, May 27, 2015 • Tags: [Hurricane Sandy](#)



First Buyouts In Flood-Prone Manville And Pompton Lakes Among Other Recent Milestones

Trenton, NJ – Continuing to deliver relief to New Jerseyans from the costly cycle of living in chronically flooded areas, Governor Chris Christie today announced the 300th property acquisition of the Blue Acres Buyout Program, two years after the launch of the statewide initiative. The program is a key component of the Administration's efforts to make the state more resilient in the face of future storms and floods by giving New Jerseyans an avenue to voluntarily sell their homes in flood-plagued areas at a fair price.

"Manville and parts of the Passaic River Basin have historically experienced significant, repetitive flooding, often times year after year," said Governor Christie. "While the Blue Acres program has helped many property owners whose homes were damaged by Sandy, we are also making good on the commitment we set after Hurricane Irene to help those people who sustain flooding in these other areas of the state. Through this program, we are seeing these families who were out of patience and out of options given the opportunity they need to move on and rebuild their lives."

Governor Christie was joined by Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin at the site of the now former home of Wendy Byra and Thomas Kline on Lincoln Avenue in Manville, near the banks of the Millstone River. Last month, the state closed on the home, which was severely damaged by Hurricane Irene. After the home is demolished, the property will be converted into to open space that will serve as a natural buffer for flooding.

"The devastation caused by Hurricane Irene and then Superstorm Sandy drove home the importance of getting people out of harm's way," Commissioner Martin said. "We realize how difficult it can be to leave behind homes where memories are made and to start over again. But we are pleased to give homeowners this opportunity and our Blue Acres team remains committed to keeping the acquisition process as painless as possible for those who choose to participate."

The Blue Acres Program, which gives willing homeowners to sell their houses at pre-Sandy market value, was launched by the DEP on May 16, 2013.

To date, results of the program include:

- 716 approvals for buyouts in 10 municipalities across six counties
- 673 offers made
- 468 offers accepted
- 309 closings
- 207 demolitions

When first launched, the Blue Acres program focused on acquisitions in communities hit hard by Sandy. Sandy-

Stay Connected with Social Media



Stay Connected with Email Alerts

LIKE THIS PAGE? SHARE IT WITH YOUR FRIENDS.



damaged areas in Sayreville, South River and Woodbridge were among the first to take advantage of the program. But the program also allowed for purchases of properties in flood-weary areas like Manville and the Passaic River Basin.

Manville has a lengthy history of severe flooding. During major storms, the area struggles to absorb the volume of water that results from rainfall, runoff and back flooding from the Millstone River as well as other nearby waterways such as the Raritan River, Royce Brook and various other tributaries.

Last month, Wendy Byra and Thomas Kline accepted the state's offer of \$185,000 to purchase their repeatedly flooded Manville home they had owned since 2000.

"It was a relief," said Byra, who relocated to higher ground in Manville. "We thought our home was unsellable, so we were happy with the price. After Hurricane Irene, we had two feet of water on the first floor. When Sandy came, we wound up getting a moving truck to get all of our furniture of the house out of fear it would happen again."

In addition, the Christie Administration also announced the first purchase of a home in a flood-prone section of Pompton Lakes as the Blue Acres program progresses from Sandy-impacted properties to areas of the state that have repeatedly flooded.

Like Manville, Pompton Lakes has a history of severe flooding. The borough, about three square miles in size, is at the confluence of the Pequannock, Ramapo and Wanaque rivers. As a result, the borough has had the highest number of flood insurance claims in Passaic County.

The Blue Acres Program completed the purchase of Charles and Dawn Dunne's on Ringwood Avenue in Pompton Lakes on May 4, the first in the buyout of the program in the Passaic River Basin. The purchase price was \$285,000.

The Dunes bought the home in 1984 and had minor flooding through the years. Irene, however, inundated their finished basement and left another 13 inches of water on the first floor of the split-level home, which is about 250 feet from the Wanaque River. The Blue Acres buyout allowed the couple to purchase a home on the other side of the Wanaque River, about 80 feet higher than their former home.

"We were able to stay in the community we really enjoy and love, where our kids grew up," Mr. Dunne said. "To be able to do that was wonderful."

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program has approved more than \$100 million in federal funds for the Blue Acres program, which have been processed through the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management.

Additional federal funding to acquire other properties impacted by Superstorm Sandy is being provided through the a second round of federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Disaster Recovery funds allocated to New Jersey by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The first offers of buyouts by CDBG funding have been accepted in Old Bridge and Linden.

The DEP Blue Acres Buyout team works closely with sellers and process their applications as quickly as possible. The team reaches out to individual homeowners personally and guides them through the acquisition process.

Homeowners interested in selling their homes or who have questions about the buyout program may call the DEP's Blue Acres Program at (609) 984-0500.

For more information on the Blue Acres Program, visit: www.nj.gov/dep/greenacres/blue_flood_ac.html.

For information on Sandy Recovery, visit: www.nj.gov/dep/special/hurricane-sandy/

#

Press Contact:

Kevin Roberts
Brian Murray
609-777-2600



[Contact Us](#)

[Privacy Notice](#)

[Legal Statement & Disclaimers](#)

[Accessibility Statement](#)



Statewide: [NJ Home](#) | [Services A to Z](#) | [Departments/Agencies](#) | [FAQs](#)
Office of the Governor: [Home](#) | [Newsroom](#) | [Media](#) | [Administration](#) | [NJ's Priorities](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2015
Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000