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## Christie Administration Announces \$11.9 Million FEMA Grant For Post-Sandy Buyouts Of 76 South River Homes

Wednesday, August 07, 2013

Tags: [Hurricane Sandy](#)

**More Than \$41 Million Total in Federal Funding Awarded for Buyout Program**



**Trenton, NJ** – The Christie Administration today announced that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has awarded the state \$11.9 million in Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding for the voluntary acquisition of 76 homes in South River as part of the Administration's plan to buy out homes impacted by Superstorm Sandy.

"We continue to make tremendous progress toward our goal of moving willing sellers in flood-prone areas out of harm's way," said Governor Christie. "My Administration remains committed to working closely with FEMA to help these Sandy-impacted homeowners move forward with their lives as quickly as possible."

"We know these are very difficult and very personal decisions," said Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Bob Martin. "We are working tirelessly to help residents understand this option and ease them through the process, working one-on-one with them and coordinating our efforts closely with our state and federal partners. The homes will be demolished and made into open space that will mitigate future flooding."

The buy-out 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 Christie Administration has targeted Sayreville and South River in Middlesex County for the first phase of acquisitions under the \$300 million buyout program and is continuing to hold meetings in other storm-affected municipalities to explain the program.

FEMA has previously awarded nearly \$29.5 million in Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding for the purchase of 129 Sayreville homes. The first offers to willing seller homeowners in Sayreville were made last month through the DEP's Blue Acres Program, with the first closings to be completed as early as late summer or early fall.

The 76 South River properties FEMA approved for acquisition are on Armstrong Avenue, Augusta Street, Belmont Avenue, Causeway, Elizabeth Street, Freeman Street, Herman Street, Kathryn Street, Lee Street, Levinson Avenue, Little Martin Avenue, Maple Street, Martin Avenue, Reid Street, Washington Street and Water Street. The state is targeting clusters of homes and entire neighborhoods for buyouts. These homes will be razed and the land will be maintained as open space that can handle future flood waters. The DEP has created a special team to work closely with sellers and process their applications as quickly as possible. Case managers are reaching out to individual homeowners personally and help guide them through the process.

This 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 financing through FEMA.

Launched in 1995, the initial 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.

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For more information on the Blue Acres Program, visit: [http://www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres/blue\\_flood\\_ac.html](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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### Transcript From July 16, 2013 Press Conference:

Governor Christie: Sandy affected, either substantially damaged or destroyed 365,000 homes in New Jersey, 365,000. Now we're not going to get everybody back in their homes in the first eight months. We haven't. A number of people have gotten back in but not nearly everybody. This is going to take some time everybody, and because—the good thing about having federal money is we have federal money. The bad thing is we get federal red tape that goes along with it, you know, like the old saying, I'm from Washington and I'm here to help. You know, it doesn't always work smoothly. That's why Bob and his team have case managers available to help you work through all that and we got to work through it together, but we have the funds available to be able to give people a new start, and we want to give them that new start. I know it's not easy, and I know it's been eight long months so far, and I ask you for your patience knowing that asking you for that, you know, gets you a little pain right in your gut. But I know also that the only way we're going to be able to fix this big problem is to work together to do it, and I hope you understand that I'm going to continue to work as hard as I can to make it happen for everybody here in South River who wants to move on with their lives someplace else, to be able to sell their home and to get the money they need to be able to go to another home where they'll feel comfortable and be able to live out their lives with their families.

**Press Contact:**  
Michael Drewniak  
Colin Reed  
609-777-2600



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