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## Christie Administration Announces \$26.3 Million in Federal Aid for Post-Sandy Buyouts of 89 Residential Properties in Woodbridge

Thursday, February 6, 2014

Tags: [Hurricane Sandy](#)

### FEMA Allocation for New Jersey Buyouts Now Totals \$100 Million

**Trenton, NJ** – The Christie Administration today announced the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has awarded the state \$26.3 million in federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding for the voluntary acquisition of 89 homes in flood-prone sections of Woodbridge. This action is part of the Administration's plan to buy out homes from willing sellers impacted by Superstorm Sandy to preserve the land as open space and protect against future flooding.

With this next round of funding, FEMA has now approved \$100 million for the purchase of 361 homes in Sayreville, South River and Woodbridge in Middlesex County. These communities sustained extensive flooding from the Raritan River, South River and Woodbridge River, as well as storm surge from the Raritan Bay, during Sandy.

"We continue to make excellent progress toward our goal of moving willing sellers in flood-prone areas out of harm's way," said Governor Christie. "In cooperation with the federal government, my Administration is working hard to expedite this process and to help these victims of the storm get on with their lives."

So far, the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Blue Acres Program has made 272 buyout offers in Sayreville and South River, and has closed on 27 Sayreville homes, including four in the past week, with several dozens more nearing settlement. The acquisition process in Woodbridge is in the early stages.

Of the 272 buyout offers made in Sayreville and South River, 155 have been accepted by residents in both towns. The Blue Acres team is working to finalize closings on those 155 properties.

"We remain committed to helping guide these Sandy-impacted families through this process, knowing the impact it has on their lives," said DEP Commissioner Bob Martin. "Our DEP team of case managers is working closely with the impacted families and with FEMA to ensure that willing sellers have their applications processed quickly and smoothly, with minimal red tape."

The Christie Administration has committed more than \$300 million to the buyout program that 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 Blue Acres program also is working on potential buyouts in East Brunswick, Linden, Manville, Old Bridge, Neptune, Newark, Union Beach, and another section of Woodbridge, and has engaged in dialogue with residents and officials in many other communities.

Once acquisitions are completed, the homes will be razed and the land will be permanently maintained by the municipalities as open space, accessible to the public for recreation and conservation purposes, and able to absorb flood waters and reduce the need for future disaster assistance by police, fire, emergency crews and other first responders.

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In a separate buyout effort, the state's Blue Acres Program and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service are partnering to buy and preserve as open space the Bay Point section of Cumberland County's Lawrence Township, including 33 homes. That land will be converted to open space that will provide wildlife habitat and buffers against flooding.

FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program will provide 100 percent of the funding for buyouts in Sayreville and South River, plus this first round of Woodbridge buyouts. Additional federal funding to acquire other properties impacted by Superstorm Sandy, including the next round of homes in Woodbridge, will be provided through the \$1.46 billion second round of federal Community Disaster Block Grant (CDBG) Disaster Recovery funds allocated to New Jersey by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

An independent licensed appraiser hired by the state conducts property appraisals. The appraisals are predominantly based on the value of the property before Sandy. These appraisals are the basis for the amount offered for each property.

The DEP has created a special team in its Blue Acres Program to work closely with sellers and process their applications as quickly as possible. The team is reaching out to individual homeowners personally and guiding them through the process.

Launched in 1995 the initial Blue Acres Program targeted purchases of lands in floodways in the Delaware, Passaic and Raritan river 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](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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Trenton, NJ – In recognition of National Wear Red Day on February 7, First Lady Mary Pat Christie announced today that Drumthwacket, the Governor's official residence, will be illuminated Friday, February 7, to spotlight the importance of women's heart health. While most people associate heart disease with men, the fact is more women die of cardiovascular disease than all forms of cancer.

"The 11th anniversary of National Wear Red Day is an opportunity to empower, inform and protect the heart health of our mothers, daughters, friends and acquaintances," said First Lady Mary Pat Christie. "Heart disease claims the life of one woman every minute. That's why it's so critical to shine a light on this issue so that every woman can identify cardiovascular risk factors, take action to improve overall heart health and save lives."

Heart disease is often referred to as the "silent killer" in women. In fact, statistics show that approximately eight million women in the United States are living with heart disease today.

Some important facts about heart disease and women:

While 1 in 31 American women die from breast cancer each year, in contrast, 1 in 3 die of heart disease.

90 percent of women have one or more risk factors for developing heart disease.

Only 1 in 6 American women believes that heart disease is her greatest health threat.

A recent survey revealed that less than a third of women report any early warning signs such as chest pain or discomfort before a heart attack, as compared with most men.

To learn more about heart disease risk factors in women, visit <https://www.goredforwomen.org/home/know-your-risk/>

For more information on the American Heart Association's *Go Red for Women*, visit [www.goredforwomen.org](http://www.goredforwomen.org)

**PHOTO CAPTION:** Drumthwacket, the Governor's official residence, "Goes Red" for the American Heart Association's

*11th annual National Wear Red Day.*

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**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