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Governor Chris Christie Announces \$21 Million in Mitigation Grants for Home Acquisitions and Elevations in Seven Flood-Ravaged Communities

Thursday, March 1, 2012

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Phase II of Governor's Accelerated "Buy-Out or Elevate" Program to Deliver Relief to Families and Strengthen Flood Readiness and Prevention Efforts

Trenton, NJ – Governor Chris Christie today announced that New Jersey will receive \$21.6 million in Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant funding to acquire ("buy-out") and elevate properties in flood-ravaged areas in the northern and central part of the state, as a result of heavy rains from Hurricane Irene on August 27 to September 5, 2011. Seven communities will receive funding; specifically, Pompton Lakes, Cranford, Denville, New Milford, Parsippany-Troy Hills, Paterson, and Westwood. Funding became available to the state under a Major Presidential Disaster Declaration for Hurricane Irene.

"We continue to aggressively pursue long-term solutions which will break the cycle of flooding, rebuilding, and additional flooding that prevents our communities and our residents from fully recovering from disasters like Irene," said Governor Christie. "Through the cooperative efforts of the State Office of Emergency Management, State Department of Environmental Protection, FEMA and other federal partners, we are now able to launch Phase II of an accelerated risk management process, which will reduce losses from future flood disasters and give families in these areas some peace of mind."

Last year, Governor Christie announced the Federal Emergency Management Agency's approval of the 2011 New Jersey State Hazard Mitigation Plan. The approval enables the State to continue its future eligibility to receive FEMA disaster and hazard mitigation assistance for the residents of the state through 2014. Phase I of the Accelerated Hazard Mitigation Program was announced in December; eight communities were eligible for acquisition funding under Phase I.

The communities included in Phase II of property elevations and buyouts have experienced major flood events over a period of years. Seventy-five percent of the cost of the acquisitions is funded by FEMA with a 25 percent match for each project funded by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Blue Acres Program for the acquisition portion of the Phase II. The homeowner's participation in an acquisition or elevation measures is voluntary.

The following flood mitigation projects have been approved:

Pompton Lakes Acquisition Project: \$2,247,187.50 in Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds have been approved for the Borough of Pompton Lakes to buy out recurring flooded homes, demolish the properties and return the land to green space.

Cranford Township Elevation Project: \$3,132,000 in HMGP funds have been approved for the Township of Cranford to implement a comprehensive construction program to complete the elevation of selected dwellings above base flood elevation and restore homeowners to a safe, flood-free home environment.

Denville Acquisition and Elevation Project: \$2,017,500 in HMGP funds have been approved for the Township of Denville to purchase several repetitive loss properties (eight primary and three alternatives, as funding permits) that sustained considerable damage during Hurricane Irene on August 28th, 2011. The properties identified for acquisition and demolition are located amongst the highest concentration of "severe repetitive loss" structures as classified by FEMA within the Township of Denville. In addition to buy-out, the Township will assist in elevating selected dwellings above base flood elevation and restore homeowners to a safe, flood-free home environment.

New Milford Acquisition Project: \$1,209,225.75 in HMGP funds have been approved for Borough of New Milford to buy out recurring flooded homes, demolish the properties and return the land to green space.

Parsippany-Troy Hills Acquisition and Elevation Project: \$7,220,205.75 in HMGP funds have been approved for the Township Parsippany-Troy Hills to buy out recurring flooded homes, demolish the properties and return the land to green space. In addition to buy-out, the Township will assist in elevating selected dwellings above base flood elevation and restore homeowners to a safe, flood-free home environment.

City of Paterson Acquisition Project: \$4,322,335.50 in HMGP funds have been approved for the City of Paterson to buy out recurring flooded homes, demolish the properties and return the land to green space.

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Westwood Acquisition Project: \$1,551,042.75 in HMGP funds have been approved for the Borough of Westwood to buy out recurring flooded homes, demolish the properties and return the land to green space.

Floods have been and continue to be the most frequent, destructive, and costly natural hazard facing the State of New Jersey. The large majority of the State's damage reported for major disasters is associated with floods. For more information about reducing risk from floods, visit www.ready.nj.gov or www.floodsmart.gov.

The Passaic River Basin Flood Advisory Commission delivered a report to Governor Christie in February 2011, and, at the Governor's direction, DEP has been aggressively implementing its recommendations. The 15-point plan can be found at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/passaicriver/docs/passaic-report201101.pdf>

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