

Public Hearing

before

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

*"The Committee will take testimony from members of the public
who have been impacted by Hurricane Sandy"*

LOCATION: Henry Hudson Regional School
Highlands, New Jersey

DATE: December 11, 2012
3:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Senator Paul A. Sarlo, Chair
Senator Brian P. Stack, Vice Chair
Senator Nellie Pou
Senator Jeff Van Drew
Senator Loretta Weinberg
Senator Jennifer Beck
Senator Anthony R. Bucco
Senator Joseph M. Kyrillos Jr.
Senator Kevin J. O'Toole
Senator Samuel D. Thompson



ALSO PRESENT:

Catherine Z. Brennan
Howard K. Rotblat
*Office of Legislative Services
Committee Aides*

Christopher Emigholz
*Senate Republican
Committee Aide*

***Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by
The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,
Hearing Unit, State House Annex, PO 068, Trenton, New Jersey***

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SENATOR PAUL A. SARLO (Chair): Good evening, everybody -- or I should say good afternoon. Welcome to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee. My name is Paul Sarlo; I'm the Chairman of the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee. And this is a continuation of the hearings that we're conducting in the aftermath of the worst hurricane, the worst storm to hit our region that most of us or many of us recall.

I want to give a special thanks, as I always do, to our Senate President, Steven Sweeney, and our Minority Leader, Senator Tom Kean -- who also was with us today on the tour -- for utilizing this Committee, our Budget Committee, to shepherd, to take testimony, to learn about what we've done, where we went wrong, where we can do better, and how do we rebuild smartly, and how do we get the residents the help that they need. How do we make sure that every level of government is working to get the residents of this state the help they need in the aftermath of this storm.

So let me first begin; let's take a roll call, please, of the members who are here.

MS. BRENNAN (Committee Aide): Senator Beck.

SENATOR BECK: Here.

MS. BRENNAN: Senator Kyrillos.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Yes.

MS. BRENNAN: Senator Thompson.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Yes.

MS. BRENNAN: Senator O'Toole.

SENATOR O'TOOLE: Here.

MS. BRENNAN: Senator Bucco.

SENATOR BUCCO: Here.

MS. BRENNAN: Senator Sarlo.

SENATOR SARLO: Here.

MS. BRENNAN: Senator Stack.

SENATOR STACK: Here.

MS. BRENNAN: Senator Van Drew.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Here.

MS. BRENNAN: And Senator Pou.

SENATOR POU: Here.

MS. BRENNAN: You have nine members present.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you.

This afternoon, under the leadership of Senator Beck and Senator Kyrillos, they organized a tour for this Committee. We visited Union Beach, the Highlands, and Sea Bright. We met with residents, we met with local officials, and we had an opportunity to see the devastation firsthand. And as I said to the folks up in Moonachie and Little Ferry: What we see is resiliency of the people out there -- brick-by-brick, sheetrock-by-sheetrock, board-by-board, beginning to rebuild their businesses and their homes.

I apologize, but I'm wearing my windbreaker here, and I've been wearing it. We've been to Toms River, we've been to Seaside Heights, we've been to Belmar, Brick Township, Little Ferry, Moonachie; and we're going to continue to visit those areas to make sure folks know that the legislative branch of government is also working in conjunction with our governor -- Governor Christie -- and our Federal government to make sure

that the help is getting from the Federal government, from the State government, down to the people who need it.

We recognize there is bureaucracy. We recognize the frustration is going to turn to anger. I know we're going to hear a lot about your frustrations today.

We're going to ask that everybody respect what we have, because we do want to hear from as many people as we can. We've asked people to sign up. We're going to give everybody three minutes. We have a light system set up here, just to give you a little idea, when it goes to yellow, that it is approaching the three-minute mark.

I would love to be able to sit-- The Committee would love to be able to sit and listen all evening and for many days to everybody, but we do want to get to as many people as we can. We are under certain time constraints.

Members here will be stepping in and out, but we always have presence here. And everything is being recorded by the Office of Legislative Services. We are taking this testimony; we are creating a record for ourselves as we go back to begin to put legislation together in a bipartisan manner.

Any member who would like to say anything?

Senator O'Toole.

SENATOR O'TOOLE: One comment, Chair.

First of all, thank you. This is the fourth public hearing that you have held, and under your leadership we've--

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: (off mike) Use the microphone.

SENATOR O'TOOLE: I'm trying to use the microphone -- sorry.

Under Chairman Sarlo's leadership, he is committed to having at least four public hearings. Not everything works in Trenton, but this is one of the few times that Republicans and Democrats have worked together to try to make sure that we come up with real solutions.

Paul, thank you for allowing this collaboration to take place. I've had many-- I'm a North Jersey Senator, but we have real concerns about what's happened down here -- that's why I'm here. I will tell you candidly that Senator Kyrillos and Senator Beck have been advocates in our caucus; and Senator Thompson talked about the real problems we have. As Chairman Sarlo has said before, this is just not about hearing complaints; it's about really coming up with solutions. And I think Chairman Sarlo said in the past, after these four public hearings or five public hearings, Paul, the idea is to have a package of 10 to 20 bipartisan bills and bipartisan solutions that are going to help try to stitch New Jersey back again.

So that's why we're here. We're here to help; it's frustrating, it's slow, but we are here to help with the rebuild. And we are committed to helping.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you.

I'd like to first call upon Assemblyman Declan O'Scanlon, who works in conjunction with Senator Beck. In addition, our Mayor here from the Highlands, Frank Nolan, who is with us. We met him down on Paradise Court, I believe it was. Please come forward.

And they're going to be followed by our host, Christopher Rooney, the Superintendent of Schools here. We want to thank him for

opening his schools today. We know this school was a shelter in the weeks in the aftermath of the storm. So we want to thank Christopher Rooney also for opening his doors today and allowing us to be here.

Assemblyman.

ASSEMBLYMAN DECLAN J. O'SCANLON JR.:
Senator, thank you, and all members of the Committee. I appreciate you being here today. I appreciate you being willing to hold this hearing, especially here in this section of New Jersey which was as or more devastated as anywhere else in New Jersey. It seemed to get short shrift when it came to certain outlets of the media. That's changing with your help, and we appreciate that.

This district, the entire Bayshore which you just toured today with stops in Union Beach, Highlands, and Sea Bright, and-- Let me tell you, you can connect the dots all the way down. Everyone who faced the Bayshore suffered some level of the same devastation that you saw today.

We've heard from some folks regarding the aid that these folks are going to need -- that why should we help the rich people down by the water who should have known better than to be living there anyway? And not from anyone on this Committee, by the way; but some folks say that.

I think today you can dispel both of those rumors. First off, the people living here in the Bayshore -- these are working folks. These people get up everyday. These are people who live in modest homes that they're proud of -- many times for multiple generations -- who have lost everything. As far as the contention that, "You shouldn't be living there anyway," first off, there have been generations there. Many of these houses were never touched by water. It wasn't even contemplated that they would be touched

by water. The FEMA rules and regulations and standards that were in place didn't require many of these folks to even have flood insurance. Many of them did. And those people, though, were generally prepared for a storm that you could be prepared for. This was unprecedented. There were buildings that had stood for 80 years or longer that were just devastated. No one could expect that. Also, this region is in the best -- helping the people of this region is in the best interest of everyone in the State of New Jersey because it is such an economic engine for the State of New Jersey.

So there's both a reason to help these people, for those people and their well being -- as compassionate human beings that we are -- but also for the good of the entire State of New Jersey.

We learned a lot of things during this storm. It was so overwhelming that there wasn't anyone to turn to during the course of the heat of this storm and the weeks in the aftermath. You couldn't sit there and decide, "Well, whose job is this?" If you had a duty, if you had an issue, you just had to figure out how to get it done yourself.

We learned many things: Mayors, council people, individuals, volunteers, restaurant owners, everybody pitched in. We learned about how to coordinate disconnecting, secondary power lines. We learned about the complications of putting people in shelters -- what those requirements were. We learned that if you needed to move folks from one area shelter to another, you have a whole different set of things that you have to keep track of. You can't just dump everyone and bunk them in one big room; you need separate places for shelter workers. And then you need showers. And then you find out that the only place you can find showers -- mobile

showers -- is in the back of a tractor trailer truck that's in Arkansas that the Southern Baptists have to drive in.

We also learned that throughout a massive storm like this next time, in order to prepare, you need a batch of spare tires for police cars. Why? Because the nails that were holding in the roofs of these proud people's homes the night before are now strewn with the rest of their houses as toothpicks in the street; and they puncture the tires of all the police car tires. Those very nails, by the way, that the last time they saw the lights of day was when the great-grandfather of a number of these people -- who still own the homes today -- drove them into those roofs when they themselves built them. It was an amazing experience that none of us wants to go through again. But it also-- there's a positive silver lining here. It also showed the true color of these people -- the resiliency, their pride, their willingness to help each other.

We had folks who --- and I say this in a flattering way, because they are able to describe themselves this way -- we had clam diggers standing next to brand-new people who came here and lived in multi-million dollar homes standing next to each other, helping each other, but all the things they owned by the curb. And they were there for each other, and they continue to be there for each other. It was an amazing response to an unprecedented event.

They're going to need a lot of help, going forward -- particularly fixing the gap between what FEMA will cover, what insurance will cover, and what their actual costs to rebuild will be.

Many of these folks own their homes outright and didn't know that they needed flood insurance, if they were in a flood zone, or weren't

required to, as I mentioned before. Fixing that gap between what's covered and what it's going to take for them to rebuild, it's legitimate for us -- collectively, as a people, as a State, as a nation with Federal help -- to figure out how to help these people get their homes, their lives, their businesses back together.

I look forward to working with you as we move forward in that process.

SENATOR SARLO: Mayor.

M A Y O R F R A N K N O L A N: First off, I want to thank everybody for coming to Highlands today, and I appreciate all the help we've gotten so far.

Declan, sitting next to me -- I think we talked to each other probably seven times every day right after the event happened. We're first with a lot of different challenges here in Highlands, as the other towns are too. And I think some are unique to certain towns as opposed to the others.

We lived in this building; I lived here for 17 days. We had to open up an emergency shelter. What we did was we had a few hundred people living here. Declan got us the shower units that we used at the secondary shelter, too, from out-of-state. We opened up the kitchen here; the restaurants in town donated the food that they had in their restaurants. Several of our first responders and other people worked at these restaurants as managers or in other capacities -- had keys, an alarm codes -- so we went in to these restaurants with army trucks, with the fire department, and we unloaded all the food to feed the hundreds of people who were coming up

here. A lot of folks came here for a hot meal because they were working on gutting their house during the day in the days after the incident.

We basically have 1,250 homes downtown -- like Declan said, are second- and third-generation homes -- that are now gutted down to the studs. And they're basically waiting for FEMA, their insurance if they had insurance, and what's going to happen. We have a few residents who served our country who were wounded in combat, so they don't have to pay property taxes, and rightfully so because they are permanently disabled. They also owned their houses outright because they were third or fourth generation. They're being told they are covered by nobody and they're wiped out because they didn't raise their house last year after Irene -- because they didn't get a letter from whomever they should have gotten a letter from because they didn't have taxes to pay and they didn't have a lien on the house.

So we have situations like this that are probably unprecedented in the Bayshore area on a scale that they're on. We need to provide, basically, how to get people back into their homes. There's not going to be an answer for the small towns -- that is part of it, getting people to other towns -- or our town's going to disappear. We're looking at a 20 percent drop, if that happens, in our ratables. So then what do we do? Do we raise the taxes on the other people? And the household income in Highlands, average, is \$50,000 -- that's two people. So if we raise the taxes -- they're already high taxes like in everywhere else in the state. If we raise those taxes, we're going to lose more people. So what do we do? And then this town disappears and, I guess, maybe gets absorbed by another town. Well,

we're not going to allow that to happen. I know you folks don't want that to happen, either.

We need help on many levels. We need help with getting our own people back into their houses. We have no Borough offices -- the Town Hall was wiped out with five feet of water. There are five steps up and then on top of that had a foot-and-a-half of water in Town Hall. So all the computers, all the offices there where we have our Borough meetings-- The First Aid building had five feet of water. The Community Center, which was raised out of hurricane impact area, had a foot-and-a-half of water; floors were buckled. We don't have the-- So we have everybody working out of our firehouse, which was new four years ago -- obviously out of the flood plain -- and that had a foot-and-a-half of water.

We rented out our own trailers, at the cost of \$30,000-plus, to the town, because nobody could provide us with them, we were told, in a timely fashion from FEMA.

So where we stand right now is we have two ambulances with our first aid department that have been servicing the town. And if we don't have a place to keep them that is warm, we're going to lose them too because they freeze when it gets too cold and then they're not able to be used.

So I am sure there are other circumstances that are similar in other towns and they're a little different -- they have unique needs also. But really that's where we stand. I have 1,250 homes that are in disrepair; 400 or so are more than 50 percent damaged. We're waiting to see the new height requirements from FEMA as that comes out, I'm hearing, in the next few days, and what direction we're going to go. And then we're going to

hope that there's a house-lifting grant program on a wide scale that will help these folks stay in their homes and stay part of the community that, like we've talked about, are third and fourth generations living in this house.

My wife is a fifth generation of her family born here. And she gets a text every other day from somebody who's celebrating that they just got heat and hot water. So they've been living in their Cape-style house on the second floor for seven weeks and a day with no heat or hot water because they have nowhere else to go. We lived here for 17 days because we had nowhere else to go. It wasn't for anything other than that. There was nothing else we could do.

We have volunteers coming in from other towns, which is, obviously, the best. We need all the help we can get. There are other towns that their mayors are doing robocalls -- Mayor Rast in Atlantic Highlands did. We had 200 people show up from Atlantic Highlands to help our folks gut out their houses. Forty-eight of the 53 firemen's houses were impacted here, half of our police force, all of our first aid, most of our Council, most of our employees for the Borough. So this is a massive problem we have here.

SENATOR SARLO: Mayor, what we're hearing, we're hearing similar stories all over. And don't be shy in asking, because we see your police, we see your fire, and we see your public works. They're out there; their homes are destroyed, but they're out there helping others.

MAYOR NOLAN: Absolutely.

SENATOR SARLO: Everybody's coming together. We know there's a cash-flow shortage. The immediate needs-- Have you done an emergency appropriation yet?

MAYOR NOLAN: We've done them; yes, sir.

SENATOR SARLO: How big was that, roughly? Just for the Committee's sake?

MAYOR NOLAN: I believe it was \$982,000 -- that was for our initial cleanup. Because what we did was, as we were sitting on the second street of the town called Shore Drive, up from Bay Avenue, the water got to the bottom of the stop sign. Myself and another councilmember and the Borough Administrator, honestly, we just started calling contractors to get the trees because we knew we were done the next day when the water went out.

SENATOR SARLO: But I think the big thing is your tax base, going forward; the valuation of lands. Because, unfortunately folks can't be taxed if their homes are not to be--

MAYOR NOLAN: Correct. And you can't keep taxing higher.

SENATOR SARLO: And they can't live in their homes.

MAYOR NOLAN: Right. And the other variable we have here is, downtown we had 14 businesses that had about 3 to 500 year-round jobs -- up to and including our clam plant in town. And if they're not there, then those jobs are gone, too. So, quite frankly, our unemployment went up 20 percent in Highlands, too.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you.

MAYOR NOLAN: Thank you, sir.

SENATOR SARLO: Yes, Senator Van Drew.

Mayor, a question from Senator Van Drew.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Just on the FEMA issue: Could you just detail that a little bit more. And just candidly, were you satisfied with the results you got or were you not?

MAYOR NOLAN: Well, let me-- I'll give you an exact idea of what we did. Every day for the first 14 days after the event we had a meeting at 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. in our OEM office in town. And what we did was, we made an assessment of what we needed and sent it up, as we were told to do, through our county OEM; and then that would go on to FEMA at the ROIC. We did 26 requests for stuff that we're still waiting for.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Why did they tell you that the trailers you needed were unavailable?

MAYOR NOLAN: We were told, basically, you can get them quicker if you do it on your own, and we did. I mean, we literally had no-- I wasn't like, "Hey, I need a second building to put files in." We needed a building to operate out of because folks -- they needed to get some information on what we had to do.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Was there a reason for that, or they just said you can get them quicker elsewhere; don't--

MAYOR NOLAN: I've told this story many times. Senator Beck had one of the people from FEMA who were higher up call me the night before Thanksgiving; and this was the guy who was going to handle it and they were going to take care of it. We had already gotten two trailers; we still need more, obviously. This was just two to get going for our police and our Borough offices. And they said, "Yes, no problem. This is the guy--" So the guy calls me up 8:30 at night -- 9 o'clock at night, the night before Thanksgiving, and he went through the whole thing which I just did

with you folks. And he said, "So, what did you do so far for your immediate needs?"

I said, "Well, we rented out a couple of trailers; it cost the town about \$30-some-odd-thousand and we still need some more to do other stuff."

"Well, that's probably quicker; just go that route."

"Okay, thank you."

SENATOR VAN DREW: Last question, Mayor.

SENATOR SARLO: The most important thing, though, is that you get reimbursed. So if it's quicker to do it that way, do it that way and we'll get you reimbursed.

MAYOR NOLAN: I appreciate that.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Mayor, if you were a teacher and you were going to give FEMA a grade, what would you grade them?

MAYOR NOLAN: *D*.

I'll tell you what: I would give the organization a *D*; I'd give the people that have been here an *A*-plus.

SENATOR VAN DREW: The actual volunteers and the people who work with you would give--

MAYOR NOLAN: The people who were here I would have to say--

SENATOR VAN DREW: But organizationally you still felt their organizational issues--

MAYOR NOLAN: There were breakdowns -- let's say that. I manage, in the private sector, a big automotive dealership. And the apparatus is broken. The people are fantastic.

SENATOR VAN DREW: And that was not *B* as in boy; that was *D* as in destruction.

MAYOR NOLAN: *D* as in not good -- yes. But the people, I would tell you, A-plus. (applause)

What we did was we had a town hall meeting the Saturday after the event at our grammar school, which is uptown but down from here. And we had roughly 650, 700 residents show up. FEMA came; they had a heavy presence. They had air cards -- we still didn't have power then -- with the laptops. And they literally sat there and processed every single person initially; and that was fantastic. Nobody could have asked for more. We had people outside who volunteered serving hot soup and everything. So it was a good thing at that point.

What's happened since then is almost everybody I know who I have talked to --- they got a letter saying they're not getting any money, and that's determined, in my mind, as a denial. When you ask FEMA, they say it's not a denial; it means you have to go to the next level. But it doesn't say that in the letter. And, quite frankly, if you're spending 50 minutes on the phone doing that to get to know to go to the next level -- just tell me who to call in a letter and we'll take care of it.

But the people who were here -- I will tell you: A-plus. They have good people. The process is broken.

SENATOR SARLO: And I think we're going to hear a lot of that. It is true -- the people from FEMA who have been brought here to New Jersey in all of our committees are doing an amazing job and are really trying to help the folks. Unfortunately, government always tends to get in its own way and the bureaucracy-- Congress, no different than legislatures.

And I'll be critical of even all legislatures. Congress has put a lot of different restrictions on them, and there's a lot of different restrictions on them and the bureaucracy gets in the way as money tries to flow down to the states. Now, I do think that the Governor, working closely with Congress, and a push from the Legislature in a bipartisan manner -- I'm hoping we're going to be able to break through those log jams.

MAYOR NOLAN: And Senator, in fairness, I will tell you this. I think everybody understood; I think everybody here would agree. We knew this was such a grand event on a scale that there was not going to be one group or one agency that was going to come in and satisfy all your needs. But I think at seven weeks and a day later it's time that stuff starts freeing up. We have to get -- and I'll only speak for Highlands -- we have to get our people back in their houses, not in hotels. See, the people downtown also lost their cars, so they can't go to a hotel in Sayreville and come back and fix their house; plus, they have children in the school district that are obviously local.

So I recognize everything that's gone on so far; we all understand the magnitude of the event. But it's time, now, for some movement. It's time.

SENATOR VAN DREW: It's time. Thank you, Mayor.

SENATOR SARLO: Senator Kyrillos.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and let me just take a quick moment to thank you and the members of the Committee for coming to Monmouth County -- to this part of Monmouth County. I know Senator Beck will speak shortly and feels the very same.

Mayor, I just want to congratulate you, and really all the local officials -- the local leadership -- in our area and up and down the coast, the parts that were affected. You really personify the mayor, the councilman, the police officer, the volunteer first aid squad, and others who have risen to the occasion during these very extraordinary circumstances -- these very painful times. And it's enormously frustrating to hear from our residents -- and we're going to hear from a lot of them -- the disconnect between the various levels of government, from private philanthropy. And it's been many weeks now and we have to get our houses back in order. We have to get our lives back together. And so we're going to do our very best. It's going to take weeks, months, and years to pull it all together.

But thanks for what you're doing. And I know I learn a little bit every day -- a little bit more on how to help everybody along the way. You got some good news today, and I think it's a small amount compared to what we hope to get from Federal resources as things evolve. But, you want to just tell the group about the news from the Robin Hood Foundation?

MAYOR NOLAN: Sure. We had some folks here on Friday from the Robin Hood Foundation; they're involved with the 12/12/12 concert. I got an e-mail, actually, after I met you folks down at the mobile home community, that they are sending Highlands a nice, generous gift of \$200,000 to get us started -- Hope for Highlands. (applause)

SENATOR KYRILLOS: That's great. Mayor.

I'll just take a moment-- And your guys were great in the calls that ensued, and the follow-up visits, and the application process. But, Mr. Chairman, if I could: Sea Bright Rising was notified today; they're going to

get a \$100,000 check, which will double the proceeds of what they hope to raise this Saturday night at their big event. You mentioned the \$200,000 for the Hope for Highlands organization. The Union Beach Disaster Relief Fund will be getting \$100,000, and the Borough of Keansburg Trust will get \$100,000. And so--

MAYOR NOLAN: Fantastic. And they all appreciate it; I mean, it's obviously--

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Everyone appreciates it and, again, this is symbolic too of the great outpouring from people here at home and from people all around the state and around the country as well.

MAYOR NOLAN: And, Senator, if I may -- and I appreciate you saying how good a job myself and the elected officials did. We could not -- I want to emphasize this more than anything else -- we could not have done a good or bad job -- obviously it turned out to be good -- without the private help that we received. I mean, we have people-- I have a woman who is battling ovarian cancer who handled 100 volunteers -- handling the logistics of that -- who stepped up right after the event to do that. We have so many stories that I could sit here until tomorrow and tell you about how many people did so many great things. And then, quite frankly, they made -- and I appreciate it -- they made us look good because we did not have one harsh injury or fatality from this event. And I have to tell you that the thing I'm most afraid of than anything else is that it starts now -- because the weather is going to start getting very cold very soon. And it's funny, too, because after the holidays people tend to be a little depressed anyway because there's nothing to look forward to. It's dark out, it gets dark at 5 o'clock. It's really cold, etc., etc. We really need

something to start happening. And I agree with you: This is a year- to two-year fix, totally, from where we used to be to now. But we can't start in 18 months, we have to start, like, January. And if we have benchmarks that we hit and reach, then I think everything will be okay.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Thank you, Mayor.

SENATOR SARLO: Last question, Senator O'Toole.

SENATOR O'TOOLE: Yes, thanks.

If could just elaborate, Mayor: The issue that's come back -- and I've read about 20 letters here today -- the issue that's really confounded me the most is this issue of flood insurance. I have more people saying, "Well, we've loyally purchased flood insurance for the last 10, 20, 30 years," and then they go, during a crisis or a flood, and they find out the carrier saying, more times than not, "Well, you're really not covered," or, "You have some other issue." What's your experience in town in terms of the flood insurance?

MAYOR NOLAN: I've seen either people have it or they don't have it. And then you also have contents or no contents. You have some folks who, like I said-- See, the demographics here is a little different than the other towns. A lots of these folks don't have the highest insurance possible because they don't have a lien holder on the house that's making them do that. So they might only have a minimal insurance. And then-- I'll tell you, from personal experience, my house was wiped out like everybody else's here -- my mother-in-law's house. So I've gone through this twice, and I can tell you the exact thing that happens. The people will come out -- 90 percent of the time great people just like the FEMA people. Then you start dealing with the apparatus of the insurance company. And

what happens is one says "flood" the other says "wind" and the other says "you should have raised the house," or you know. The house I'm in was built in the 1950s and never saw water. Irene, Donna -- never saw water -- and we had 3 to 4 feet in the first level of the house. So if you can imagine, first of all, the emotional part of that: Everything on your first floor is gone. So we had a thousand kitchen sets out; a thousand refrigerators, a thousand stoves -- right down the line. Then the fact -- to be told that, "Well, you have to go see that guy and you have to go see this guy." I mean, before I came to meet you folks down at the mobile home community, I was at FEMA and now they need two more documents. I've gotten in X amount of dollars from my flood insurance as a partial settlement and not another dime since. So we're paying dollars and cents to live in places and they still need more documents. So I will tell you, in my opinion, they're trying to hold on to the money as long as they can and then dispense it when they have to. Is that everybody? Absolutely not. But most of the stories you hear are going to be the bad ones, obviously.

SENATOR SARLO: That's the pattern.

Thank you, mayor. We want to hear from some of the other folks.

MAYOR NOLAN: I appreciate it. Thanks for your time, folks.
(applause)

SENATOR SARLO: And Mayor, just as you're beginning--
Yes, let's hear it for the Mayor. It's a good thing.

Mayor, work with your governing body and your other organizations as you begin to take these donations in from some of these organizations. It's very important for somebody to process and set up a

protocol of how to get them to the people who need it the most. That's the worst thing that could ever happen -- is donations don't end up in the right hands of the right people. So just make sure you set up a protocol.

MAYOR NOLAN: Agreed. Just to give you an idea of what we plan to do -- and I talked to Paul Smith who is the Mayor of Union Beach; I think he's going to do the same thing. We're going to have Borough employees that we hire just for this who are going to literally go door-to-door. The problem is, right now, I don't think anyone knows what they're getting yet so we don't know what they need. And I have to tell you there are manufacturers that are willing to give us 1,000 beds. We don't really know what we need yet and I'm not going to take something that we don't need.

SENATOR SARLO: Exactly.

MAYOR NOLAN: Thank you sir.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you.

MAYOR NOLAN: Thanks, everybody, for coming to Highlands. (applause)

SENATOR SARLO: Christopher-- For a few minutes I'm going to have Christopher Rooney, Superintendent, Atlantic High School (*sic*); he's going to be followed by two residents -- Sandra Craig-Barry and Joseph Hawley. They'll be following the Superintendent.

C H R I S T O P H E R J . R O O N E Y : Senators of the Committee, Office of Legislative Services, I'd like to first thank you very, very much for coming and I welcome you to Henry Hudson Regional High School.

Since 2005, I have served as the Superintendant of Atlantic Highlands Elementary School District, and for the last 12 months I have

served as the Superintendent at Henry Hudson Regional, Atlantic Highlands School District, and Highlands Elementary School District. These boards of education and communities have committed to shared services, and making them work for their students and the taxpayers we serve. There are numerous full- and part-time employees who are shared between the two and three districts. In addition, we share with several other districts. If you can think of it, we share it first.

I bring this to your attention so you may have an understanding of the financial responsibility that these communities have taken that are not always so readily available in other places. All three of my boards of education do an outstanding job of balancing the educational needs of my children -- the students -- with the commitment to represent the taxpayers.

You've already heard or will hear today the numerous stories of devastation that Sandy has wreaked upon our area for the last six weeks. We woke to a new reality on that day. Our communities have been torn apart by Sandy. Though my school buildings fared well, the communities I serve did not.

We are providing services to 50 displaced families, post-Sandy. While that number may not seem like a large number, it represents that close to 1 in 4 of my students in all three of my districts are now displaced. We are providing every imaginable service, from counseling to transportation, to keeping our building open later to make sure the children have a place to do their homework with the lights on. We're making sure that they're clothed and fed properly. The staffs in all three districts have gone above and beyond the call of duty. My teachers have been gutting

homes, serving food, arranging for school supplies, to making sure the kids have shoes and clothes.

While there are numerous heroes who have risen throughout this period, none have done more than the teachers of these three districts. My role as Chief School Administrator is to always prepare and plan and project -- prepare for the worst, plan for the best, and project where my districts need to be down the road. Clearly, we all have a long road ahead of us.

There are six concerns that I would like to raise with the Committee as you develop the State budget.

The first -- will the State budget contain provisions for municipalities that are unable to collect enough taxes to make school payments?

Will municipalities have to go through reevaluations due to storm damages?

Will the Legislature consider laws permitting school districts to modify school calendars without negotiating with each individual employee? Currently, there is case law that requires me to do this.

Could there be a uniform memorandum agreement for the State for shelters in school facilities? This might require latitude for site-specific circumstances. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, a Federal law, requires school districts to provides levels of services that have never been seen previously.

Will the Legislature consider reallocation of existing funds from areas not impacted as severely as ours are in these high-impact areas? Often these Federal funds do not get completely exhausted by all school districts.

And finally, could future insurance premium increases to school districts be legislated to be no greater than the State budget cap that is placed upon school districts?

While I recognize these six concerns are very small in comparison to everything we are facing as a state, we must continue to work together to address the small issues before they become larger, unmanageable issues.

I'd like to thank the Committee for their time in coming to Henry Hudson Regional School District today. Thank you very much.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you. And thank you for your leadership here. And we do recognize a drop in valuation of land will have a major impact on our school districts; two-thirds of our property taxes pay for our schools. We get that; we are hearing that all over. It's going to have to be part of our budget fix for next year.

SUPERINTENDENT ROONEY: Thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you.

Sandra Craig-Barry, Joseph Hawley, residents of Highlands. They are going to be followed by Fran O'Connor from the Borough of Sayreville, followed by Chris Wood from Sea Bright Rising.

S A N D R A C R A I G - B A R R Y: Hi. I'm Sandra Craig-Barry. I'm not a resident of the Highlands. I am a business owner in Atlantic Highlands.

SENATOR SARLO: Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: We can't hear you.

MS. CRAIG-BARRY: This one? Is that better? (referring to PA microphone) Better?

SENATOR SARLO: Better.

MS. CRAIG-BARRY: I am a business owner in Atlantic Highlands. I'm one of the largest employers in Atlantic Highlands. You ask me how FEMA has helped us. I was told to register with FEMA; I went there and they had a sticky note on their door, "Closed due to inclement weather." (laughter) Totally unacceptable.

I had to feed, shelter, and clothe my employees because we had no assistance. I would make a meal every day in my home in Middletown, which was running on generators, bring it into my employees every day. And that was their only meal of the day. I emptied out my grown son's closet and actually donated the clothes to my employees, two of which were from the Highlands and who are homeless. Where was FEMA?

I also was very disheartened that no one from the State or local or Federal government ever came to me and said, "Your business has been devastated. You took on four-and-a-half to five feet of water." We lost everything. But I still am employing all of these people and paying their health care benefits. And I'm worried about my employees. But no one in my government is worried about me -- no one.

We have shelled out hundreds of thousands of dollars to stay in business, and to employee these people, and to keep the tax revenue for the State of New Jersey. I am so reminded of that as I mail in my corporate business tax today.

My final comment is, I left my business today to meet with you, and I do appreciate you coming. I was on time and took the time out

of my busy day. And I understand that you were touring this area which we are living in. This meeting started 35 minutes late and I was pretty offended by that. (applause) Our time is just as valuable as yours, and I wish you would treat us as one and the same. (applause)

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you.

Folks, we're going to ask-- I know these are emotional times, but if we could just keep all the applause down. I know it's an emotional time, but we're trying to listen and we want to take down as much testimony as possible. So I understand these are very emotional times for a lot of people. So I'm just going to ask everybody to hold your applause.

Sir, please.

J O S E P H H A W L E Y: My name is Joseph Hawley. I live at 215 Shore Drive in Highlands.

I'd like to start by thanking the Committee, especially Senator Beck and Senator Kyrillos, for organizing this. Senator Beck knows full well what went on around here, due to her connections to Highlands, and it's appreciated that you would come.

I want to thank the Highlands police, the first aid, the first responders who came out at all hours of the night; The Mississippi State Police, the New Jersey State Police, and the Illinois State Police who came to watch over us and bring us food and whatever; and the Red Cross. FEMA is a whole other story. The day after the storm they came around in the middle of all the debris and were asking people questions. And the questions were-- People said to them, "What's your name? Can we speak, call you back, or speak to a supervisor?" And they said, "Our policy is to

not give our names out.” Which I don’t even know why they came around if they’re not going to give names out for people to contact.

The suggestion I wanted to make to the Committee today is -- a lot of people in Highlands receive food stamps. Highlands has a lot of senior citizens and disabled people living here. And, as you know, there’s going to be an increase in Social Security and disability -- 2.7 percent -- on the first of the month, January 1. And my suggestion to you is-- Well, I don’t know if the Committee must be aware of the fact that when there is an increase in the food stamps-- When there is an increase in Social Security--

SENATOR SARLO: Yes, we actually-- We talked about this before, sir. An increase in Social Security, they reduce your food stamps.

MR. HAWLEY: They reduce the same amount of food stamps, so people are saying, “Well, what’s the sense of even getting an increase when something like that happens?” And the suggestion is, to the Committee is, that all the areas that are declared disaster areas that the State administers the food stamp program, if they could keep the food stamps in place for at least another year where people aren’t cut. Because all that money will go back into the economy -- the local economy -- and help out the businesses, not only here but in the area. I think that’s an important point because what’s the sense of getting an increase in Social Security when your food stamps are cut by the State by the same amount? It doesn’t make sense. All the elderly people who I know in my building -- which, by the way, people criticize elderly people all the time. The elderly people-- One woman, 96 years old, cleaned out six homes on Second Street

in Highlands on the first floor. That's how many people were out helping people clean and helping people get their houses back into order.

But a lot of the older people were saying today, "What's the sense of even getting the increase in the Social Security when they're taking money away in food stamps?" It doesn't make sense. And that's what I'd like to say.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR SARLO: Sir, we're going to look into that. We've made note to the Office of Legislative Services to look into that. I'm not sure if that's a State fix or a Federal fix, but we're going to take a look at that.

MR. HAWLEY: Thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: Fran O'Connor, Borough of Sayreville; followed by Chris Wood, Sea Bright Rising; followed by Lori Dibble, resident of Highlands; and Jean-Marie Donohue, resident of Monmouth County.

Good afternoon.

F R A N O ' C O N N O R: Good afternoon, Senators. Thank you for giving us this opportunity.

My name is Fran O'Connor, and this is Richard Bednarz, and we are here on behalf of the residents from the Borough of Sayreville.

Today, December 11, marks the 20th anniversary of our first devastating flood in Sayreville. That storm 20 years required our homes to be evacuated and uninhabitable for weeks. After that flood the Army Corps of Engineers came in and initiated studies to deal with our flooding

problems. Their studies have been ongoing with no tangible flood protection in Sayreville in any immediate future.

In the ensuing years, after 1992, our community flooded multiple times to the extent that many times the only vehicle that could come down our street was a boat; but primarily most of the flooding was limited to street flooding and to basement flooding. That is, until March 2010. In the past 32 months, the residents of Sayreville have been hit with three catastrophic floods. On March 13, 2010, we experienced a colossal flood to the same, if not greater proportions, than that of 1992. When this storm hit we had water in our basement over 6 feet high and flood waters overflowed another 4 feet into our living areas. This storm, the water came in so swiftly and without warning that we had no time to react and no time to prepare, and as a result we spent the next few weeks packing up our treasures and our memories and putting them into black plastic garbage bags and bringing them to the curb. It was a heartbreaking loss of personal property.

And then we ripped out our furnaces, our water heaters, our air conditioners, the walls, the floors, the furniture and we spent weeks remediating the mold out of our houses. And then we rebuilt.

For many households, including myself, from that March 2010 flood we had over \$100,000 worth of damage to our homes. Following this storm we requested, through a Freedom of Information Act request, the amount of money that was expended through the National Flood Insurance Program just in the Borough of Sayreville to cover insurance claims, adjustors' salaries, and the damages in property to the Borough of Sayreville. A copy of that response is included in the packet that each one

of you has, which has the blue cover on it. Just in Sayreville, just for the storm of 2010, the Federal government spent \$62 million on those insurance claims and salaries and Borough damages -- \$62 million on one storm.

We had no sooner put our homes back together when we were struck again, by Hurricane Irene. Sadly, our homes were once again flooded, our basements were completely submerged, and flood and sewer water filled our homes again.

We were left with no other choice: We ripped out our brand-new appliances, our furniture, the floors, the walls. Many of those things were not even paid off yet. And, once again, we remediated our homes and we rebuilt. Many residents were forced to take out loans and second mortgages just to pay for the replacement of those most basic items.

While I do not have the final expenditures from the Federal government from Hurricane Irene, one could surmise that the \$62 million price tag is probably conservative, given that the flood footprint has increased with each flood. In the past two-and-a-half years we have replaced all of our major appliances, including big ticket items like our furnaces; we re-sheetrocked, we purchased new furniture -- not once, but twice. During this time we searched for an alternate to provide flood protection to our area. In facts, it was almost exactly one year ago to the day that I testified before this very Committee and asked for support in the funding to pass then-Senate Bill 2445. That day I testified that the storms causing the flood in our area are coming with increased frequency and increased severity. I testified that these storms have eroded the ground

under our homes and have caused our foundations to be severely compromised.

Despite many of us pumping concrete under our homes to provide support, we were desperately fearful that if we were hit by another storm our foundations would not be able to sustain the damage.

And then our worst fears have come true. We were hit by Hurricane Sandy, and a total of 39 foundations collapsed or caved in. Another 200 of our primary residents' homes were severely damaged by the effects of the storm. My home, in addition to the 6 feet of water in the basement, had an additional 12 feet of storm and sewer water, taking out my entire second floor.

In your packet is just a sampling of home after home showing all of our collapsed foundations.

Many of our homes still do not have power or running water because the street -- the infrastructure of our street is so compromised. We are a strong, hardworking community. Following the 2010 flood and the 2011 flood, the residents of Sayreville threw their shoulders back, we rolled our sleeves up, and we relied on our fortitude to rebuild our homes.

We have now suffered overwhelming damage -- both physically and emotionally -- three times in three years. We are suffering health issues related to mold; we are in significant financial debt from having to replace our homes twice, only to have them destroyed each year. We pay \$3,000 a year in flood insurance, and we are now paying rent and still paying our mortgages and our taxes on homes we can not live in.

It does not make economical sense to put more money into our homes when there is no protection and it is no longer safe to live on our street,

We now need our government to help protect the safety and welfare of the citizens of Sayreville. You are our elected legislators and you will be entrusted with the job of appropriating Federal and State money. We ask you to please remember the 240 homeless families in the Borough of Sayreville who now are in need of a buyout.

Thank you.

R I C H A R D B E D N A R Z: My name is Richard Bednarz; I'm Fran's neighbor across the street from Weber Avenue -- well, at least I used to be her neighbor.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: Can't hear you.

MR. BEDNARZ: My name is Richard Bednarz; I'm from 85 Weber Avenue. I used to be Fran's neighbor, but I'm also homeless as Fran is.

First of all, I'd like to thank the Mayor for his honesty in the self-grade he's provided local government. I don't know if our mayor would be as honest with his grading of how Sayreville's doing. And I don't think the government would be too honest with their self-grading on how they're handling this so far. But, indeed, what we've learned now, having gone through four of these disasters, is the government has to change -- not tomorrow, now. We need a commitment now that the government will change.

We also face some very cold, hard facts: Our development should never have been built. In 1996 the builder came to the planning

commission petitioning for the zoning to have the houses built. He was denied by the town of Sayreville. He went to the municipal judges in Middlesex County and it was overturned. So this is on his hands and on his family's hands. A grave mistake for the price of greed.

Flood insurance. Many people know this -- it's not mandatory, yet it seems to be mandatory in the buyout situation because it changes the priority. If you are a family that has flood insurance, you go higher up the list. So that creates an unlevel playing field.

There are inconsistencies among the adjustors who come to your house and evaluate the damage. I have a personal experience where I have a limit on my contents and the adjustor required me to submit a claim for my entire damages. I have spent countless hours--

SENATOR SARLO: Before you get too far along, she has a question on something you just said.

MR. BEDNARZ: Sure.

SENATOR WEINBERG: A clarification. Did you say that if you have flood insurance--

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: Can't hear you.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Did you just say that if you have flood insurance you go higher up on the list for a buyout?

MR. BEDNARZ: Yes, because it's based on-- One of the requirements for the buyouts or the determining factors is how many claims you've submitted.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Got that. Thank you.

MR. BEDNARZ: Senator O'Toole mentioned flood insurance before. I'd like to cite an article that was posted about two weeks ago that

talked about the National Flood Insurance program and how, being a government program, guess what? It's underfunded, based on all the catastrophes we've dealt with in the past years. It cited a specific example of a homeowner in Texas with a market value of their house of \$135,000 who, in the course of his lifetime, in the home of 30-plus years, has submitted 15 claims to the National Flood Insurance program and has been paid a grand total of -- drum roll, please -- \$1.3 million. When is the insanity going to stop? This is insane. (applause) This is insanity. We keep throwing good money after bad.

We in Sayreville have been promised for 20 years for flood relief; first it was the Army Corps of Engineers who moves like snails. In 20 years we haven't seen anything, but now we're hearing a price tag of \$142 million to build a dam. We came up with our own solution, and got it through local government, for \$10 million to build a wall on the same footprint. Unfortunately, we had time against us, and as Mrs. O'Connor has repeatedly stated and we have stated in the press, we don't have time. Our houses are eroding.

The 1992 flood -- three months afterwards I went to my basement, from my house to my attached garage, and I almost fell flat on my face because in the course of 24 hours, my garage floor dropped a foot-and-a-half because all the ground underneath is compromised. Well, guess what's going to happen now, ladies and gentlemen? The same types of problems are going to occur.

Governor Christie has committed in the press, publicly, to putting a priority commitment to permanent residents -- to buying out the permanent residents first. Senator Sweeney has visited our block in

Sayreville twice since the flood occurred and has promised fair market value at pre-recession values for the buyout. Notoriety -- it's a shame that it took a disaster of this nature for us to get on *NBC Nightly News*, but we've been on *NBC Nightly News* because of the calamities that we're faced with.

But there is some good here. There's always some good in every bad situation, because disaster redefines heroism and it tells you who your real heroes are. And our real heroes wear different faces, believe in different gods, believes in different religions, but they bleed red like all of us do. And I want to personally thank all the first responders, the police, the sanitation workers. And I could say, if I never make it to heaven, I know what an angel looks like because they all wear yellow hats and they're the North Carolina Baptist men.

Thank you. (applause)

If I could just make one more comment. Senator Sarlo, we would love for the Committee to visit us on Weber Avenue. Our mutual friend Jurgen (phonetic spelling) knows where I live.

SENATOR SARLO: He called me.

MR. BEDNARZ: Okay.

SENATOR SARLO: And I have a good friend with twin girls, Barry Green, who lives in your neighborhood. His home is no longer there. He's living in Lyndhurst now temporarily; but his home is gone. He had no flood insurance -- very similar situation.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Chairman, one quick question.

One quick question, because I'm trying to get the bureaucracy of it all; you know, whether we were talking before about FEMA and the trailers -- different issue -- Army Corps of Engineers. Because I have more

water surrounding my district -- I come from Cape May County, Cumberland County -- than anyone. We deal with the Army Corps on a very regular basis. Is it your opinion that they were -- I forget what you said -- they were much too slow. Do you believe that there was -- before all this happened you were beyond hope, now you should be bought out. Everybody understands that. Was there a point in time there could have been an effective, practical, relatively cost-efficient solution that would have avoided this?

MR. BEDNARZ: Yes, absolutely.

MS. O'CONNOR: Absolutely.

SENATOR VAN DREW: So again-- And I just point this out because I think it's good for us as legislators to hear. There is a lot of good that's been done, but there's a lot of failure as well -- at every level. I'm not pointing to anybody, but, again, as we all get frustrated sometimes with these bureaucracies -- the real-time effect of what happens to people, you're an example of it. Because there are times when the response needs to be more rapid, and more intelligent, and more practical. And I've been at meetings where we have every level of every agency discussing it -- discussing what actually does end up being a disgusting situation, because we get nothing done because they are all arguing with each other.

But, again, just to answer that question: You do believe that there was a point in time that you could have been saved?

MR. BEDNARZ: Absolutely.

MS. O'CONNOR: Without a doubt.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Okay. Thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you. Thank you, folks.

Chris Wood, Sea Bright Rising, followed by Lori Dibble and Jean-Marie Donohue.

Folks, I'm going to ask everybody -- and I hate to do this -- we're going to follow the clock here. Three minutes it goes to red, and then we're going to ask you to move on.

CHRIS WOOD: Okay, I'll be quick.

Thank you, Senator Kyrillos, thank you, Senator Beck, for keeping a light shining on the north shore of New Jersey. It's very important, and I'm glad you're all here to witness the devastation locally.

I am a local business owner in Sea Bright, New Jersey. I am the cofounder of Sea Bright Rising, a nonprofit set up basically to help the residents of Sea Bright. We're part of the community and we're going to be part of the community, moving forward.

What we did, from what I understand, is somewhat unprecedented. We started a grassroots organization looking for volunteers and help to get, essentially, the town fed. The outpouring of support from the community was unbelievable and we had tractor trailers full of food, we had supplies -- so much that we actually became a distribution center for other towns. It was remarkable.

What also happened was we reached out after the nor'easter to the National Guard. We needed more assistance -- meaning we needed mobile kitchens. From what I'm told this is very unprecedented that the National Guard worked hand-in-hand with community organizers. The National Guard committed originally to 72 hours; they stayed for four-and-a-half weeks. It was emotional when they left; people formed amazing bonds. I've met with multiple generals, captains, you name it. They said

that this could be a blueprint, moving forward, for working in communities during future disasters.

As a member of Sea Bright Rising, one of the biggest problems we have that I see in town is that people don't have answers -- period. So what we're doing is we're setting up the Sea Bright Solution Center. What that's going to encompass is attorneys -- obviously there are huge tax consequences for all these people who have been hurt by the storm. They have accounting questions, they have legal questions, they need to deal with licensed electricians, licensed plumbers. We're going to put these people together in order to get the residents in Sea Bright answers that they need, because, quite honestly, they haven't gotten them and they don't know where to go.

So that's what we're doing in Sea Bright Rising. As of today, we've raised close to a half-a-million dollars. We've probably distributed somewhere close to \$55,000. We've written, I think, somewhere like 20-plus checks. You know the stories; everybody has the same story. Everybody's paying their mortgage and everybody's paying for a hotel room. So people need financial assistance. I mean, that's just one thing of many, but we're here to help.

SENATOR SARLO: We met Chris on the streets with the Mayor today. His business is down there. And Chris, after you get done rebuilding and Sea Bright gets repopulated, we're all going to come back and have a beer with you in your establishment.

MR. WOOD: I appreciate that. I would like to thank the Robin Hood Foundation, too. They just gave us a tremendous endorsement

as well, as Senator Kyrillos mentioned earlier. And thank you, Joe, for that help.

L O R I D I B B L E: My name is Lori Dibble. I used to live at 32 Paradise Park. I want to thank you guys -- the Senators -- for coming to Paradise Park today and seeing the condition of our homes.

I'm here today in three capacities: one, as a homeowner whose home was destroyed; two, as the President of the Homeowners Association at Paradise Park; and three, as the Policy Director for the Manufactured Homeowners Association of New Jersey.

Manufactured housing is the largest source of unsubsidized, affordable housing in New Jersey. We also are in communities that have a very unique real estate situation -- where we own our homes in land-lease communities. In order for us to rebuild we need the cooperation of the broader municipality, the landowner, and the homeowners. In this case, we are not part of the rebuilding effort. Our homes sit exactly in the same condition as they were the day after the storm. This is because we fall through the gaps in rebuilding efforts and in efforts to bring us back into the community. Our homeowners and our residents are scattered throughout the state now. We don't even know where half of them are.

I have been working diligently with nonprofit developers and community development financing institutions to put together packages to bring new homes back to these communities at favorable interest rates, working with the manufactured housing industry. But we need the political and the good will of the municipalities and the community owners in order to do this.

I'm asking three things from the State: One, that the State look at these situations and make sure that the consumer protection laws that are in place regarding the governance and the operation of manufactured housing communities be upheld; and that community owners not be able to use, under the cover of the storm, this as a reason to close communities that are otherwise viable. In our community, 12 of the homes were determined by an architect to be habitable -- or to not to have received substantial damage. Insurance companies are not providing people with relief. FEMA is not providing people with relief. But we're being told by the community owner that the community is condemned. We have not had utilities turned on and people are living in homes with no water, no power, and no heat.

So I'm asking that the State make sure that the consumer protection legislation -- the Mobile Home Protection Act and the Affordable Housing Act -- that there be some oversight; that the homeowners in these communities not suffer in addition to what they've already suffered.

Second, I'd like the State to work with the nonprofit developers, especially the nonprofit developers of affordable housing and the community development financing institutions, to come together and work with community development -- block grant funds, housing and mortgage financing funds -- to provide substantial assistance to communities in, not just Paradise Park, but other areas as well. In Highlands-- Many people in Highlands are going to have to--

SENATOR SARLO: I'm going to have to ask you to begin to wrap it up.

MS. DIBBLE: Okay.

--to remove their homes. But we need to have ways to bring infill housing in for people whose homes have to be torn down. And this is the kind of program that the municipality can't do on its own. We need the help of the different agencies on a State level.

And that's all I have to say. And we hope to rebuild and we hope to be part of the rebuilding effort.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you. Thank you to both of you for your toughness and your grit. Thank you.

MR. WOOD: Thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: Senator Beck.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: (off mike) I'm in a bad situation. I'm a resident of (indiscernible). I didn't lose my home in the storm -- Sandy; I'm losing my home because they condemned the property that my home is sitting on. I'm still living in my home. I'm the last one here with my neighbor, who suffered a stroke eight months ago.

They're taking my home. In my home is a floor and (indiscernible). They turned my water off. I'm living with a generator, eating meals, and the people have been fantastic -- everybody. But the owner of this park, for seven years, to get us to leave, offered us a buy-out. Everybody accepted. And the day of the buy-out the storm comes. I'm not leaving. I'm in my home and I'm not leaving my home.

Thank you. I appreciate (indiscernible). I'm sorry I--

SENATOR SARLO: No, that's okay, sir. We understand.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: Thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: No problem.

Senator Beck.

SENATOR BECK: I'll hold my question until the next speaker is finished.

SENATOR SARLO: Joseph Passiment, Superintendent (*sic*) of Schools, Monmouth County; and Ryan Rosemary (*sic*) from the Highlands. They'll be followed by the next panel-- Ryan Rosemary, if you could come up; followed by Thomas Hansen, owner of Grumpys Tackle, Seaside Park, New Jersey; followed by Mary-Beth Thompson, if she's-- No, not here. Rick Lill from Normandy Beach.

J O S E P H F . P A S S I M E N T J R .: Good afternoon, Senators. My name is Joe Passiment and I'm the Interim Executive County Superintendent here in Monmouth County, and I also serve that same role in Union County. I am responsible for 76 school districts in both counties.

As you heard, there is a lot of devastation that took place around this county, as well as the state. I heard the word *bureaucracy*, and I have a problem. Last year a law came into being that allowed school districts that no longer had a vote on the budget to move their school board elections to November. We have current statute and code that requires the submission of budgets by March 4 each year, and then there is a short period of time that I must review budgets. Public hearings are held and then those districts -- and I only have two within both counties that have an April election -- the rest are in November. Because of the current situation we're in, I am asking for consideration to modify the current statutes and codes to allow a longer time to review these budgets. School districts, municipalities, are going to have a very tough time putting together their budgets. It is critical that I have additional time to review those budgets to

ensure that those 76 school districts have a quality education program for their students, as well as there is a stability in the community.

Now, what I did is I put together a piece of paper that has been handed to each of you that identifies the codes and statutes that I believe need to be changed, as well as a new timeframe that I would like to have considered at least for this year.

And I will answer any questions that you have.

SENATOR POU: Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR STACK: Yes, Senator.

SENATOR POU: Just a real quick question. Have you discussed or mentioned any of this -- shared any of this information with the Commissioner of Education?

MR. PASSIMENT: Yes, I have.

SENATOR POU: And what position or actions, if any, has he responded back to you on?

MR. PASSIMENT: Well, he understands that there are codes and statutes that will require amendment.

SENATOR POU: So it can only be done through legislative action? It cannot be waived through certain executive authority or power within the Department of Education? Each and every one of the items that you're referring to are all statutorily required?

MR. PASSIMENT: Yes. On the left side I have the actual statutes, but there are also codes. Now, certainly he can change codes, but I don't think he can change the statutes.

SENATOR POU: Well, and that was why I asked the question. Because he's mentioned both, and I know that in terms of certain actions

we can do ourselves, but within certain administrative codes certainly he has the wherewithal to do that, and that can give you almost immediate relief.

MR. PASSIMENT: Yes. And I do understand that.

SENATOR POU: Has he been able to-- Have you been able to put those particular code requirements in place now? Has he agreed to do that?

MR. PASSIMENT: Not as yet, but certainly he's working on that.

SENATOR POU: Okay, all right. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR STACK: Thank you, Senator.

Thank you very much.

MR. PASSIMENT: Okay, thank you very much.

SENATOR STACK: Please.

R O S E M A R Y R Y A N: Good afternoon, Senators. I'm Rosemary Ryan, a Henry Hudson Board of Education member and a lifelong Highlands resident. And I'm also the volunteer that Mayor Nolan was speaking about who is battling cancer. Actually, I've battled it; I won. (applause)

I'm speaking today on behalf of the Henry Hudson Board of Education and the school administration. Henry Hudson Regional School became a shelter of last resort on Monday, October 29, 2012, and remained a shelter for the next 17 days. During these 17 days the Borough of Highlands, extremely devastated by Hurricane Sandy, was left to run the shelter at our school. This resulted in a financial burden on the Borough of

Highlands and the School District, which had to provide 24-hour custodial services, and the sanitation of the building after the shelter closed on Wednesday, November 14, 2012, at a cost to the school district of \$13,285. This does not include the cleaning supplies used.

Henry Hudson also hired a private security guard -- at the cost to this School District of \$11,800 -- to protect the shelter residents and the school's resources, as the Highlands police force, who worked diligently to protect all the citizens of this devastated community, were not able to staff the shelter in the beginning.

Henry Hudson also incurred other costs as well. The use of the food for the shelter residents, damage and loss of cooking utensils, and a fryer with the cost of \$6,000. Damage to the floors in our gymnasium, which were just resurfaced due to the leak from Hurricane Irene, roof damage, paper supplies for the Red Cross, and carpet needed to be replaced due to animals being sheltered and the allergies of our students. Over 13 trees were down on our property and our neighbors' property. There was also damage to the bathrooms.

The grand total, amounting to almost \$50,000, is what this already-stretched school budget must incur. The Board secretary is presently seeking help from the insurance company; but if it is not covered by insurance, the school district will have to seek payment from an already-devastated Borough of Highlands to assist with the cost.

How can this Board of Education, in good conscience, seek payment from a town whose resources are already stretched beyond capacity due to Hurricane Sandy? What this has done is created a difficult situation with our local government and our school's Board of Education,

who is charged with efficiently running the district to the best of our ability. Had there been an alternative presented to the Borough officials on the use of the school as a shelter, then maybe these expenses would not have been so great.

Having the school remain a shelter was important for the local residents, as Henry Hudson Regional School was a safe haven. However, now our students who missed three more days than any other school district are faced with a much longer school year and the loss of all Federal holidays through and including Memorial Day. It also requires that we are open on Saturdays if any snow days are needed to be used, and this will incur more expenses in heating, electricity, custodial services, etc.

We need your help with this financial burden, as does the Borough of Highlands. Thank you for allowing me this time to present our concerns.

SENATOR STACK: Thank you very much.

Does anyone have any questions? (no response)

Thank you very much.

Thomas Hansen, Grumpys Tackle; Rick Lill from Normandy Beach.

T H O M A S H A N S E N: Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

I was one of the fortunates whose home in Toms River was pretty much undamaged. My store in Seaside Park escaped a flooding by about 2 inches because it's on an elevated slab. And I'm sitting with a 3,500-square-foot store full of merchandise with no customers.

This is day number 45 that my store has been closed since the State of Emergency was put into place. I have absolutely no idea, no indication as to when the general public will be allowed back into Seaside Park. Opinions range from New Year's or late into the spring.

I have my employees collecting unemployment instead of collecting paychecks which would put money into the State's coffers. The lump sum of my sales tax contribution for last month was a zero. That's going to continue for quite a long time. The long-term economic impact is going to be horrible, and I'm not belittling all the suffering. I've got friends, neighbors, customers who are homeless also. You've heard plenty of that. I'm looking a little bit further forward.

Full season is a peak stripe bass season, and generally accounts for better than a third of my income for the month of November, the first few weeks of December. As of right now my business revenues are off 29 percent of last year; last year was a poor year due to the economy.

With the number of people who have been damaged, even if the Park was open tomorrow I wouldn't be able to generate any income because so many people are certainly more concerned about getting a house back together and getting a job, getting anywhere. If I did open it would only be part-time with only one employee -- not my full thing.

I have applied to FEMA for economic injury aid, and that is going to be a short-term solution for my situation because the interest is going to be paid; it's going to add to my overhead and make difficult business more difficult.

I don't know where my future is going without getting the economic engine started, and started quickly. I've heard nothing at all

about it. For my particular situation, the driver of my income is Island Beach State Park, which is currently closed for the foreseeable whenever with no answer as to when it will be reopened. I believe that Park is the only park in the state which produces an income which supports the other parks, and it draws far and wide, tourists and fishermen alike. Of course, I'm concerned with the fishermen, but without these people coming through spending money in New Jersey, the economic engine is not going to restart. I really want to make sure that getting that economic engine restarted is going to happen. Everybody's talking about what's going to happen to the property taxes. Everybody's talking about everything going up. We need to get the economy really jumped.

I have customers -- regular customers during my peak season -- who not only come from -- a lot of them from an hour and better away in New Jersey; but I also go into New York state. I go to Connecticut, I go to upstate New York, Pennsylvania -- a lot of customers. I have guys who drive in from Ohio for striper fishing; Delaware, Maryland, Virginia. These people bring a lot of money into this state. We need that money to survive this storm and the recovery.

SENATOR SARLO: We've been talking-- We're working-- We've been talking to the folks in Toms River who are controlling the access. They're doing the best they can. And some of the reports that we got from the natural gas folks and others is that access to the island is going to happen -- the piers a lot sooner than originally estimates. I cannot give you what that time period is, sir--

MR. HANSEN: Right.

SENATOR SARLO: --but it appears that the access to the island -- the timetable is a lot sooner than originally anticipated.

MR. HANSEN: I'm looking forward-- I'm going to have very few customers because of so many people hurt. That's my own personal economy which concerns me deeply. But it also impacts the State because I'm not going to have payroll going into the State and I'm not going to have sales tax going into the State. This is the concern that I'm having, looking forward beyond the immediate "we gotta have help now."

SENATOR SARLO: I just need you to begin wrap up.

MR. HANSEN: Right. The State Park just needs to be open to draw the people in -- for all the tourism, for all the fishermen.

The other really bad concern that I have is, I'm hearing that the New Jersey fisheries have been devastated. I believe it. But the only aid that is available is for the commercial fishing section. I'm hearing a lot about that. I'm not hearing a thing about the individual tackle store owners. I'm the one store in my neighborhood that survived this storm pretty much intact. I only lost about \$10,000 worth of bait. The three others stores all had water knee-deep or better. I don't know when they're going to be back open. If the recreational fishermen don't get some support that entire economic engine is going to die.

Thank you for the time.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, sir. Thank you for being here.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR SARLO: Yes, Senator Kyrillos.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: I just want to report to this gentleman who just spoke to us -- I've forgotten your name. It's my understanding

that some of the emergency assistance to the fishing community also will go to the recreational side, not just to commercial fishermen but to businesses such as yours that cater to the recreational fishing community. Jim Donofrio of the Recreational Fishing Alliance has been in talks with, I believe, the DEP at sorting that out right now. So if you know him you should call him. If you want to give me your card I'll have him reach out to you -- or how we can notify you in any case.

MR. HANSEN: I've already been talking to people from the DOP (*sic*) when I went down to a tackle dealer show, even though I have no store to sell anything from. And people--

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Well, I don't know the details, but I think that you'll be part of the mix, so I hope it will come to you.

MR. HANSEN: It's all talk and it's all trying to get some leverage to make that available. And right now, to the best of my knowledge, nothing has been done at your level.

Thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Chairman?

SENATOR SARLO: Yes.

SENATOR VAN DREW: I have one.

Same gentleman, real quickly: You know, I've been dealing with the fishing industry, again down in my neck of the woods for many years. First of all, it's good for the Committee to hear. A lot of folks don't realize what a major economic driver recreational fishing is in the State of New Jersey. It is one of our top industries. When you combine it with commercial, it is very much at the top of the industries. And you've been

going through a challenge over the last number of years because of the economy. One of the first-- Unfortunately, one of the first things people have been giving up is recreational fishing, boating -- the cost of running boats; I don't have to tell you, you know it better than I do.

One thing you should make sure, and Senator Kyrillos is right on the money. I've been speaking to the RFA as well, and Jim Donofrio-- You should, along with your colleagues, be in touch with them, pushing them, pushing with DEP, and making sure that it isn't just talk; that we do something effectively to try to help you all get through this. Because it's a major industry and a major revenue for the State. So stick with it. I know you're not a bureaucrat; we've heard over and over again how the bureaucracies-- Sometimes it's a lot of talk and no action. You really have to stick with it and make sure that there is some action and not just talk. And we will be glad to help you.

MR. HANSEN: Thank you.

RICHARD LILL: Rick Lill, Normandy Beach. That's the northern section of Toms River on the barrier island. I have two comments, both which can actually be financially helpful.

The first is: I am one of the lucky ones, like the gentleman next to me. My house did not get flooded. I designed it myself and I made sure it was high enough. I had electric, gas, and I had plenty of water. I survived the storm. On the island, I stayed for a week. When I was forced out of my home -- either by leaving or with handcuffs, as they say -- I ended up throwing out frozen food. I survived; I had plenty of water, I had over 600 gallons of water, 50 gallons of gas for three different generators. I can

go back to my house today and live comfortably. I left the island with three cars, two cats, a dog, and my wife, and my boat was still tied to the dock.

SENATOR WEINBERG: I hope not in that order. (laughter)

MR. LILL: Yes, you're right.

Okay, so my comment really is, is my house is ready to move into. And I'd like to move back into it.

SENATOR SARLO: I've been through Normandy Beach. You're one of the lucky ones.

MR. LILL: Yes, I am lucky. I'm very, very lucky.

And my second comment -- and I hope you guys can help with that and maybe give me a Christmas present, or my birthday's the 27th; get me in by then or something. The other point is: I've gone on the island from both Manoloking and Toms River. And my concern is that there's military presence at every change of community.

SENATOR SARLO: Correct.

MR. LILL: But Normandy Beach-- I live close to Fourth Avenue. If the Post Office was open on Sixth I couldn't get to it because I can't cross the military barricade. Why do they have it open for the rest of the island but right in the middle -- Brick and Dover, or Brick and Toms River now -- they don't let you through? If I work in one house and I have to go to Bricktown, I have to go off the island, drive all the way around, and drive back on the island through Bricktown to go there.

SENATOR SARLO: Yes, the checkpoint is still-- Toms River is still-- You're a Toms River resident, I'm assuming?

MR. LILL: Yes.

SENATOR SARLO: Yes, and that's where the checkpoint is, where Toms River still has it, down on (indiscernible) checkpoints.

MR. LILL: Is there anything we can do to improve that just so when we get on the island-- I don't mind the military presence, but the fact that we can't cross-- I mean, that's my town. Normandy Beach goes from Ninth Avenue to First Avenue.

SENATOR SARLO: Yes, just so you know, December 8 through the 13, New Jersey Natural Gas has a major start-up operation going on.

MR. LILL: I understand the gas, and I can understand the safety concerns for that.

SENATOR SARLO: Safety concerns -- they don't want anybody on the island--

MR. LILL: But we did-- There were times when I had a contractor's pass to go on Toms River, as well as to Bricktown. They were letting me pass through the checkpoint.

SENATOR SARLO: Okay.

MR. LILL: That stopped about a week and a half ago.

SENATOR SARLO: I can't answer it for you; I can't speak for Toms River.

MR. LILL: All right. Can you put some pressure on Toms River?

SENATOR SARLO: But we will have conversations; there are some very good folks down there--

MR. LILL: Because I mean, like, FEMA's going to be paying me to live someplace else, when I can live in my own house and we can save it.

SENATOR SARLO: Understand. We will use the power of this Committee the best we can to get you back to your home as soon as you can.

MR. LILL: Great. Thank you very much for your time.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you. And thank God you were saved.

MR. LILL: Yes -- the lucky one.

SENATOR SARLO: Dan Shields from Highlands Windansea Restaurant; Fred Rosiak, resident and business owner in the Highlands -- Captain's Cove Marina. They will be followed by-- Okay, go ahead. We'll come back to this.

Go ahead, sir.

DANIEL SHIELDS: Hi. My name is Dan Shields. I'm married to Senator Jennifer Beck. I just want to throw that out there so that no one thinks there are any secrets here.

I'm a resident of Highlands. I own a house at 55 Shrewsbury Avenue in Highlands. We also own a house in Red Bank. And I also own a restaurant across the street from my house, which is at 56 Shrewsbury Avenue in Highlands.

The restaurant was built to FEMA specifications about 11 years ago and withstood the wrath of Sandy very well.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Mr. Chairman, could we just ask that there be less discussion so we can hear Mr. Shields?

SENATOR SARLO: Yes. Folks, if everybody could just please-- I know many of you have been patient; just if we could give respect to those who are testifying. Thank you.

MR. SHIELDS: So we built the restaurant to FEMA specifications. The restaurant did very well in the storm and I'm not here to talk about that. I'm here to talk about being open since November 17 as a restaurant, employing a lot of Borough residents who are homeless, who show up for work every day and leave with very little money. As you know, the restaurant business is mainly-- Most of the workers on the floor are working for tips, and I have to say that business has been less than desirable post-Sandy. I would call it the *post-Sandy depression* in Highlands. We have about four or five businesses that are open; there are a few more that are slated to be open soon. I know the same is for Sea Bright. We need help promoting the businesses that are open and as they open. We need to get the word out there through the New Jersey Tourism Board, or whatever vehicle you have, to let people know that they can go east again and they can frequent the restaurants, and the shops, and the stores, and the luncheonettes, and all the places that are opening every day.

I think it was two days ago Bain's Hardware in Sea Bright opened. I mean, that's an incredible feat for Frank to open his store in the wrath of what happened to the town of Sea Bright. So we need to get that word out there that we could really use support from the residents of New Jersey to come out and support the businesses that are open and as they open.

Thank you very much. (applause)

FRED ROSIAK: Thank you. Hi, my name is Fred Rosiak and I'm a resident of Highlands. I'm also a business owner in Highlands. I own the oldest, continuously operating marina in the town of Highlands.

And I'm afraid I'm in a rather unique position to report to your Committee that just last year, from Hurricane Irene, my marina suffered over a half a million dollars damage to its bulkhead. And I was very much heartened by the television announcements talking about FEMA helping both individuals and small businesses. And I applied as a small business to FEMA, even though the neighborhood in which my marina operates -- all of the neighbors, I think, even the ones who don't like me, which are quite a few -- felt this was a community project, as our marina really protects the streets and the houses of about a 10-block neighborhood in downtown Highlands.

After literally four months and hundreds and hundreds of pages of documents that I submitted to FEMA -- tax returns from everything that I've ever been involved with, including limited partnerships -- I was told the only help that I could get would be through a small business loan with terms that, basically, were not even as good as a local bank. And, in fact, the first thing the person from SBA, who they turned me over to, said was, "Do you really think you're business can afford to repay the loan you need?" And I said, "No, it can't." And it couldn't.

The bottom line is the help from FEMA for small businesses is nonexistent, from my 12-month-ago experience. And yet my business has 40 clammers who are able to stay in there year-round and earn a living. It has another 50 or so recreational fishermen, as you said, contribute an awful lot to the town's economy between the ice and beer, and bait, and

fuel. And not one penny of any support-- I ended up having to drain-- I'm 70 years old. I drained my retirement accounts and had to tap some local private financing to make these repairs that we just finished three days before Hurricane Sandy. Now, thank God the bulkhead held up, but a café that's at the end, that's been there for over 100 years, was totally wiped through and scoured, and other sections are now in danger of needing repair.

Gentlemen, FEMA -- and ladies, I'm sorry -- FEMA didn't or was unable or unwilling to help me as a small business person and employer. And I can't afford it this time. If I close the marina there are a lot of people who are going to lose a lot of things, including what was going to be my retirement. I wish you could see some way that grants, or something of that sort -- some funding that supports the community, and jobs and, other stuff -- would be made available to small businesses. Because these businesses, as someone just reported -- the boating and fishing industry has been on its heels for a bunch of years. And we just-- I'm losing business as it is and to add a \$6,000-a-month repayment loan just doesn't make sense.

Thank you for your attention.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Chairman, one real-- I know I'm -- because this is my industry; it's the number two industry in my district. You're telling me that the terms that FEMA offered you were not even as good as the private local banks? Is that what you're saying?

MR. ROSIAK: Yes. And what's even worse, unlike my local bank, FEMA -- or SBA -- insisted I sign up my personal residence, which is--

And I mentioned that to them. And they said, "Well, that's our insistence -- that you also put your personal residence behind this loan."

SENATOR SARLO: Yes, I just want to clarify for the members. FEMA, over the years, has changed and has become very restrictive on loans to small business owners. It is a low-interest loan; but they check your creditworthiness, they check your ability to repay; and they ask you to sign your house -- to sign personally -- which most people do not want to do. Those are the conditions of a FEMA small business loan.

SENATOR VAN DREW: And Chairman, do you know what stinks?

MR. ROSIAK: Senator Sarlo, the loan low-interest was still higher than what the local community bank would loan.

SENATOR SARLO: Sure.

SENATOR VAN DREW: And what really particularly stinks about that is the purpose of it should be to help the small businessman. To be quite frank with you, large corporations are going to be able to survive this. It's the small business people, particularly in the boating industry, the recreational fishing industry, and the smaller folks in the commercial fishing industry who are the ones who are really taking hits and really have these challenges. And again, I just-- As we're going along here, we're learning. And we can't impact all the-- But all these things that have been mentioned are wrong and should be corrected. I mean, the whole reason for it to exist is to get folks like you back on your feet so we're hiring people, we're contributing to the tax rolls, and we're able to earn a living.

Thank you.

MR. ROSIAK: Thank you. If I might add just one more point: I think we're all aware of solar industries that have been given grants of hundreds of millions of dollars and then have walked away from those responsibilities.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Exactly.

MR. ROSIAK: And I'm looking for \$100,000; and have to put my house and everything else I've ever worked for up behind it. I can't walk away.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Exactly. And you're right on the money. You're a good American who's worked here for decades upon decades, established a small business. You can't get the money, but-- And again, this is across the aisle, both sides. Money is going to large corporations very often that don't even have good business plans, that have no history, and they're getting a deal. It's wrong.

MR. ROSIAK: Thank you. If you could suggest any direction for me to pursue, I would greatly appreciate it.

SENATOR SARLO: Senator Beck.

SENATOR BECK: Frank (*sic*), I appreciate your testimony. And we, unfortunately, are aware that FEMA has limited help for small businesses; that's not to say that there won't be any help. Part of the package that Governor Christie requested from the Federal government included \$8 billion in assistance for businesses. We have yet to know what form that will come back to us in and how those programs will be structured. But that was the largest part of the \$36 billion that we requested of the Federal government -- was money for the small business community. So we had heard -- well, I've heard personally, obviously, from

my husband -- but we've heard through these hearings, as well, that FEMA's SBA loan is of little assistance when you've got a mortgage to pay each and every month, and you're trying to keep your employees in your building, and you're trying to rebuild -- it just isn't going to work. You're not going to survive.

So I think there's hope both from the Federal government and then, secondarily, there will be a package of bills that the Senate Budget Committee entertains that will include businesses. So that will be something that we look at in providing relief to our business community. It has not fallen on deaf ears. And, too, I think we had some folks earlier -- Joe had talked about the frustration, and I think many of these letters that I read tonight as I've been listening to all of you -- the frustration in dealing with the bureaucracy of FEMA. And the complex language that they use: Instead of saying, "You're ineligible," how about saying, "We just need more information." Because then it turns out *ineligible* means *we need more information*. So I'm not sure why they just don't say that.

We have spent hours -- and I say we; I mean my colleague, Senator Kyrillos, and myself, and Assemblyman O'Scanlon, and everyone sitting up here -- hours with residents, literally conferencing them in on FEMA's 800 line with us and personally advocating for them to FEMA. And I can tell you, I mean, you're spending an hour and 15 minutes per call just trying to get people temporary shelter assistance. It's insane; it shouldn't be that, especially after what everyone's gone through.

So these hearings have been really helpful. And I really owe a personal thank you to our Chairman, Senator Sarlo. I had talked to him early on about coming to the Bayshore area; and Senator Kyrillos had been

advocating as well. And he could have held this meeting anywhere, but I really am so happy that the Committee members and the Chairman agreed to come here to the Borough of Highlands and hear from everybody.

So thanks so much.

MR. ROSIAK: Thank you very much.

SENATOR SARLO: And to the folks out there, we took a walk down in Sea Bright, down the Ocean Avenue -- I think it's Ocean Ave; is it called Ocean Avenue? Ocean Avenue. And we took pictures, some of the members of the Senate, in front of a local restaurant. There was a sign there, "No retreat, no surrender," one of the Springsteen songs. And everybody was taking a picture and it was the Mayor and others, a gentleman over here, Mr. Woods, who said, "Everybody smile; we should smile. We should have a good attitude that we're going to rebuild this area." And that's what it's all about, and that's what-- We know the bureaucracy of FEMA. For years people debated in Congress whether we should keep it or not. Some people want to get rid of it. Now that people need FEMA they're finding out that, unfortunately, it's a little bit more bureaucratic than others.

We're going to do the best we can to help cut through some of that red tape at the State level. We can't move mountains on FEMA, but we're going to do the best we can in a bipartisan manner to work with you. We want to see everybody smile; we want to see everybody back in Highlands and Sea Bright and Seaside and Belmar and Sayreville, and we want to see everybody back in these areas and everybody-- Let's get this economy back together.

So it's a long road. I know a lot of frustration, a lot of anger is going to set in. But we're all apt to be in this together and move forward in unison.

John Weber, Surfrider Foundation, Bradley Beach, New Jersey; and Thomas Matulewicz, Long Branch, New Jersey, Habitat for Humanity. They're going to be followed by three Highlands residents: Ryan Tara (*sic*), Louisa Pazienza, and Patty Parker.

J O H N W E B E R: Okay, so it's confusing which microphone you speak into.

SENATOR SARLO: You speak into that one, sir; right there.

MR. WEBER: This one, all right.

Again, I'm John Weber. I work for the Surfrider Foundation. We are a coastal environmental group concerned with protecting the world's oceans, waves, and beaches.

Unfortunately, for the last six weeks, our members and volunteers haven't been doing beach cleanups, we've been -- just in the last two weeks of November alone we sent over 600 volunteers into homes to do debris, demo, all that stuff that's been happening in Belmar, Union Beach, Ortley Beach, Long Beach Island, Brigantine, Ocean City, and other places. So it's a whole new world; it's not about beach cleanups for the Surfrider Foundation anymore.

But I'm here to talk about budgetary-related things on a State level. As we all know the towns in Monmouth County that got devastated by this on the oceanside I'm speaking of: towns like, obviously, Sea Bright, Monmouth Beach, Belmar, Spring Lake and Manasquan. But I want to be clear that every one of these towns -- and you were there today in Sea

Bright -- every single one of these towns got a Federally designed and publicly funded engineered beach fill project, also known as beach replenishment -- every single one of them. And I say that, and I make this point, just to counter the narrative that is emerging after the storm, which is just utterly false. I mean, literally, there's a coastal scientist from Stockton named Stew Farrell, and he was quoted in an AP story as saying, "Where there was a Federal beach fill in place, there was no major damage; no homes destroyed, no sand piles in the streets."

You people walked those streets today in Sea Bright. You know how utterly ridiculous that statement is.

And it actually gets worse. On Friday there was a conference at Monmouth University, and a guy named Charles Chesnutt, who is a high-ranking official with the Army Corps of Engineers, he actually said, "Wherever there were dunes and a beach project there was considerably less damage." Now, that statement may be true, but we have no way of knowing if that's true in Monmouth County, because they didn't build dunes, okay? I dug into the Army Corps of Engineers feasibility study for Sandy Hook to Manasquan Inlet; it's this thick. Stacked, it's a thousand pages. Not only are dunes not part of it, obviously, because they didn't build them, they are not even mentioned as an alternative that the Army Corps considered and then decided not to do. They talk about offshore breakwaters, they talk about artificial reefs, all these other alternatives. They do not talk about dunes. It's really, really disappointing.

And I say all this because, obviously, people are going to want the Army Corps to come back and reengineer our beaches -- and that statement's already been made by the Governor -- and I feel like we already

put our eggs in the Army Corps basket -- and that was the basket without dunes, and it failed us. They built big, wide, flat beaches and they didn't provide a whole lot of protection in a storm like this.

So they're going to come back and I think we need to be ready. Right now they're assembling a team to assess our beaches and make a report to the State, and I think it's really important that the State have somebody independent -- a coastal scientist or engineer -- going along with the Army Corps; somebody who is not on the State's payroll, somebody who's not paid to say "beach replenishment is a great thing." You need to have somebody going along with the Army Corps and really truth out what they're going to come up with. Because there's a very good likelihood that we're going to get more of the same, and what we had -- beaches that were built 10 or 15 years ago -- they clearly failed. They failed us, they failed the residents of these towns. So we can't let this same thing happen again.

New Jersey DEP is the State sponsor of these projects. That essentially means the State is the customer. And the customer should be able to get what they want. So I just have a couple of suggestions of what the State should be asking for when it comes to these beach projects.

Obviously, all the future ones: build dunes. I mean, that goes without saying -- no exceptions. It's not a panacea, but it's a pretty good start. If a town balks and says they don't want dunes blocking their ocean views, that town shouldn't get a dime of money for sand. And this is the Budget Committee; they should have control over that.

The State should also ask the Army Corps to separate dunes from big, wide, flat beaches. Because the Army Corps is going to come in and say they'll build both. The more sand the merrier, as far as they're

concerned. You should resist that urge. There's a finite amount of good sand out there that they can use and, obviously, there's a finite amount of money. So there's no sense in building dunes and big, wide, flat beaches that may leave some towns not getting dunes. So ask them to separate out dunes from big, wide, flat beaches. Do the dunes first.

SENATOR SARLO: I just need you to begin to wrap up, sir. I have a lot--

MR. WEBER: Absolutely.

So going forward, there are some other things that the State should ask for. There have been a lot of other problems with beach replenishment. The Surfrider Foundation has pointed them out, everything from dangerous beaches in Cape May County, so much so that Senator Lautenberg called for an investigation of why so many people are breaking their necks on engineered beaches. This is an opportunity to fix those previous problems with beach replenishment and make sure that there is somebody in place to check what the Army Corps is saying; because they already came in once, they didn't give us what would protect us in the form of dunes, and we just need to make sure that they're on the right track with that.

So I'll leave it at that. The rest is in my testimony.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Mr. Chairman, if I can just address this real quickly, because it really relates to-- I'm going to agree with you and disagree with you. I still believe that the engineered beaches did better than those that weren't engineered. I absolutely agree with you with the dunes and I think that should be a standard. A lot of those folks, whether

it be in Atlantic City or the many areas in my county that have all been replenished -- and most of my beaches are engineered beaches -- what we have found though, I think, is that they did better. I just met with some folks from Stevens; they indicated to me that they did as well. I think we should have an objective look at it. I think that we should require dunes. I don't think that there's any question about that as well. But whether it's in the new structures that are built or whether it's the way we engineer beaches, I think that we can certainly help -- the newer, more scientific way of approaching both has worked better.

I'm not going to agree with you that we shouldn't have beach replenishment, though. I think that's both financially wrong, economic development-wise wrong for the coastal districts and for the shore area. People love our beaches. They want to come to our beaches. We have some of the most beautiful beaches in the state. If we lose them they're not going to be able to come. So I think it's a little bit of a tweak and a combination of what you're saying.

SENATOR SARLO: We're going to dedicate one hearing with the DEP Commissioner; I think the gentleman from our Army Corps of Engineers -- one of their top researchers; a gentleman from Stevens. We're going to be having that somewhere along the shoreline; I'm not sure yet. But we are going to have a hearing dedicated, here in the Senate, just on beach replenishments and dunes.

MR. WEBER: Super. And I agree with you, Senator Van Drew. Where the Army Corps built and engineered dunes, they worked and they protect really well. But the closest Army Corps-built dunes to where we are sitting right now is in Harvey Cedars, New Jersey. It's real far

away. So I don't know why dunes didn't get up to this part of the coast; that's a question for the Army Corps, but--

SENATOR VAN DREW: We should do more of them. You know, we have a lot of them.

MR. WEBER: Yes, I know. And so -- but (indiscernible) here. I appreciate your time.

SENATOR SARLO: Okay, thank you.

After this gentleman, we have Tara Ryan, Louisa Pazienza, and Patty Parker will be next.

T H O M A S M A T U L E W I C Z: Good afternoon, Senators all. Thank you for the opportunity for me to speak on behalf of Habitat for Humanity in Northeast Monmouth County. Our affiliate takes in all of the coastline from, basically, Keyport down to Long Branch. And you've all been through that area and you know the devastation that those folks are faced with.

Habitat for Humanity is not a first responder, as all those dedicated first responders were out here and helping folks. But we are here for the long haul, just as we've done in the Gulf Coast, just as we've done in Haiti, worldwide. Habitat for Humanity is one of the biggest home builders in the world.

I'm here to say that Habitat for Humanity is going to target families who have homes that have been destroyed, or must be replaced, or must be razed to try to help those families below the medium income. There are some restrictions, but we're geared up to build a home -- a three-bedroom, about a 1,200-to-1,300-square-foot home raised to new flood levels -- for about \$150,000. Now, that number cannot be done without

help from government donations. Because we're a nonprofit organization; all the money that comes into us goes back out into home building.

To make this happen we need funds. We are getting them through donations; we get them from all different sources. To help these families we have a plan to move ahead, and I think it's going to work. I think it's going to make a lot of people feel more comfortable about what they're going to do with their homes in the future. We are working with homes that have not been completely destroyed, going in and doing sheetrock work, insulating, and all that other stuff. That's important -- to get those homes back in.

I'm going to give out a phone number for anybody who's interested. I think you should take the number down. It's our Habitat for Humanity Northeast phone line. It's 732-0728-0441. I'll repeat that: 732-728-0441.

And the website is habitatforhumanitynortheastmonmouthcounty.org. If you go to that site you'll find applications or you can just leave your name and address for applications to see if you qualify. And again, it's income restricted. We're looking to help those families who are below the medium income in this area.

We're working on a house right now in Keansburg -- 63 Oak Street. It's up on pilings, seven feet in the air. It's the only home in Keansburg in that area that had no flood damage at all. And I think the way things are going with these flood plain maps that are coming out, most of the new homes that are going to be built will be on piles. We're ready to do that, we're ready to move ahead with it. We'll need funding, we'll need

help. And, again, we're here for the long haul. We're going to be here for many, many years doing what we have to do.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, sir.

MR. MATULEWICZ: Thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you to the both of you.

Tara Ryan -- I think it's actually Councilwoman-elect here in Highlands; Louisa Pazienza. Is Patty Parker here? You'll be up next, Patty, if you could--

T A R A K. R Y A N: Good afternoon. My name is Tara Ryan and Highlands is my home. I want to tell you what Superstorm Sandy did to my town.

We expected to be without power for a while, and we knew there would be flooding since downtown Highlands is below sea level. We did not expect the water to come into the downtown at such a level and rush that it destroyed hundreds of homes and every single business in the downtown area. We did not expect to be without power for a full two weeks. We did not expect to have to shelter dozens of families who had lost everything -- everything -- in the flood.

Our town leaders did work above and beyond what anyone could even have imagined in the pre-Sandy life. It was because of these men and women that not a single life was lost in the storm; but hundreds of lives have been changed.

Let me tell you a little bit about my experience with FEMA. I personally did not have to file with FEMA, but because of my background I helped many people with their applications. And I have rarely seen such disorganization in such a large organization.

I have gone with people to the center on Route 36 and sat with them and entered the same type of information in several different cases, and every single person got a different answer. The people who helped them that day -- and there were several of them -- without a doubt, every single person was wonderful. They were kind, they were caring, they reached out, they showed they care for these people. But when the answers came back it was just ridiculous -- that there seemed to be no rhyme or reason why people were turned down. And I'm still trying to figure this out for some people, and I've had absolutely no luck and it's heartbreaking to have to tell people that, "I'm sorry, I can't help you now." And that whole organization needs to be looked at very, very carefully.

People have lost their homes; most of them do not have the money to rebuild. Many homes will have to be lifted to prevent flooding in the future. Where will this money come from if not FEMA? Our town could turn into a ghost town if we do not get sufficient financial aid. The whole town will need to be reassessed and taxes will certainly rise. Many people will not be able to afford these additional taxes. Will they walk away from their homes and their mortgages as so many have already in our state? We need help -- a lot of help with both actual funds, but also a plan to save our town.

Many of our restaurants employ locals. We need to get help for our businesses so that they may reopen and let the local residents get back to work to earn the money to repair their homes. The restaurants in Highlands make most of their revenue in the summer season -- Memorial Day through Labor Day. Many of the customers come from Sandy Hook. They would come there for a meal after a literal day at the beach. Sandy

Hook suffered extreme damage during the storm also and now we hear that the Park may not open this summer. It's imperative to the financial success of our business community that Sandy Hook be reopened this summer, even at a greatly reduced capacity. I cannot emphasize this too strongly: Please, please do what you can to get this Park reopened for the season.

One week after Sandy destroyed my town, I was elected to help lead our residents out of this almost unimaginable mess. Before Sandy hit, I was quite confident in my ability to lead and help resolve challenges and problems that any town would face. But now I'm concerned, greatly concerned about how I can help Highlands. The lessons of Katrina and New Orleans are frightening. Even now, years later, the city is not back to so-called normal -- and it never will be. I want to help Highlands recover financially and socially. I want us to get back to normal, but also better, stronger, and safer.

I'm asking for your help in achieving this goal. Please make funds available to us; please make planning options available to us; please make social services available to us so that we may be able to rise above this unbelievable tragedy and help the residents of Highlands rebuild, restore, and return to a normal life in our wonderful little town by the water.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR BECK: Chairman, may I just--

So let me just ask a quick question. So the letters that people are getting back say they're ineligible, correct?

COUNCILWOMAN RYAN: Correct.

SENATOR BECK: So after several of these, what was explained to us -- which is just mind blowing -- is that ineligible is actually not a denial.

COUNCILWOMAN RYAN: Correct.

SENATOR BECK: That you have to call-- That means that they need more information and you have to call back and sit on the phone for an hour.

COUNCILWOMAN RYAN: An hour.

SENATOR BECK: Two hours, or whatever. And then something happens, some bit of information either they didn't have or they do have, they had to confirm. I've been doing this personally in my office and I know many-- I know Joe has, and others have--

COUNCILWOMAN RYAN: Right.

SENATOR BECK: So I hear your frustration, but are you finding that even when you do this a second time, that you're still getting the denial?

COUNCILWOMAN RYAN: Here's what's happening: So many of the people who are applying lost all their papers; they lost them in the flood.

SENATOR BECK: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN RYAN: They cannot retrieve the paperwork to show what they need to show in order to get help. Secondly, many of the people are still trying to work, or they're displaced, staying with relatives, they've lost their phones -- they lost their home phones, they've lost their cell phones. Many of them never had a computer, don't know how to use a computer. It just goes on and on. And I have found

that it's better for me to focus on, perhaps, just two or three people to help, because I initially thought that I could help a dozen people a day to go through this -- it would be quick. And it's just not working out that way. And it's very frustrating. And I have access to a computer in my home, and printers, and phones, etc., etc., etc., and a background in social work, so I know more than the average person of how to do this. It's very sad. We need help.

SENATOR BECK: Yes. And so I'm going to ask you if you would leave your contact information with Nick Raspanti, who is my Legislative Director.

COUNCILWOMAN RYAN: I will, okay. Thank you very much, Senator Beck.

SENATOR BECK: And then we can talk after the meeting.

COUNCILWOMAN RYAN: Fine, thank you.

LOUISA PAZIENZA-McMILLAN:

My name is Louisa Pazienza. I am a homeowner here in Highlands.

My home received moderate wind damage, and that's kind of a key phrase -- wind-driven rain; wind damage.

You can't hear me?

SENATOR SARLO: Speak loudly, really--

MS. PAZIENZA-McMILLAN: All right.

SENATOR SARLO: All right. (laughter) A little conviction, now. Here we go.

MS. PAZIENZA-McMILLAN: All right. Can you hear me now? (affirmative responses) Did you get my name, or should I repeat it?

SENATOR SARLO: No, we're good.

MS. PAZIENZA-McMILLAN: Okay.

I'm a homeowner here in Highlands and my home received moderate wind damage, which is kind of a key phrase. I didn't have flooding; I'm higher up in elevation.

My family -- my children, my small children and I -- first evacuated to a hotel; then when we came home, of course, we didn't know what we were going to find. And it was clear we weren't going to have power for quite some time. And we had to come here.

So this is my second time in this building. And, I have to say, this was a very, very fine shelter that is, I think, affectionately referred to now as *The Hilton on the Hill* -- because we were so well cared for here. And our officials did such a great job. The Red Cross was outstanding. The Highlands Police are the best; they're our finest.

And we need-- I think one of the things that was most important for me as a homeowner and a single mom with two little girls is communication -- during the storm -- and not knowing what was happening because there was no power. The hotel we evacuated to had no generator so we had no power there. So I had no idea what was happening back home.

But what I was getting was, I was getting reverse 9-1-1 calls on my cell phone; I was getting text messages from the police department; and I was getting information -- which was the most valuable thing I could get to know what was going on and what the procedures were going on in our town. And that infrastructure has to be-- Our police department is gone. And they're working-- They have one room in this fire department and we

need to have that infrastructure rebuilt; it needs to be updated and maintained for our police. And our Borough Hall is gone. Part of the problem, that Tara was referring to, was when I was trying to put my claim in, Borough Hall has my recorded mortgage and deed, which I don't have a copy of due to other circumstances. But I couldn't get that information to prove I was a homeowner. So that was a problem in trying to put my FEMA claim in; and also contacting my homeowners policy, which I also didn't have because of other factors. Some of us came into this in a hardship already for other reasons.

So our town is destroyed. I mean, it's depressed. There is no business. You drive through it -- there's nobody there. And my concern is that the property value is going to be highly affected. And then, of course, if we're going to be taxed on top of that -- that's going to be a big problem for not only people who don't live in their homes, but for those whose homes are livable. I am able to live in my home. The damage is minimal. I'm fortunate; I'm one of the lucky ones. But still I have no response from FEMA. I was told, kind of off the record, that I was going to be denied anyway because I had homeowner's coverage. But who knows what that's going to cover? And that's not resolved yet either. And how long into this are we already?

So the process is a mess trying to deal with FEMA, and trying to get those documents out of our Borough Hall which is ruined now and we can't get access to it.

SENATOR SARLO: I'm going to ask you to begin to wrap up.

MS. PAZIENZA-McMILLAN: Yes, I know. I'm Italian, you know.

SENATOR SARLO: I know.

MS. PAZIENZA-McMILLAN: It takes a little while to slow down and wrap it up.

So I just wanted to say that it was very invaluable, and as a homeowner to have that -- those mobile text alerts from our police and our officials. And to make sure that we get this rebuilt as soon as possible so that we can keep our town safe. They were the first responders out there. Our churches have been a repository and they've been functioning as a repository for all the needs that people have in the town. Their donations have come in from all over the world, basically. We've had Canada -- shipments from Canada come into Our Lady of Perpetual Help; we've had, all over the country, people donating clothes. And the people downtown need clothes. They need shoes, they need food. We need washing machines. We need refrigerators. People can't live without these very basic necessities in order to maintain our lives.

So obviously the shore generates a lot of revenue and taxes for the State. And people say, "Well, why build there?" Well, because people go to the water, people go the beach. And when they go to the beach, they buy. And when they buy, it's revenue for the State. So that's why we're going to rebuild. And we need to rebuild it so we can not only get revenue for the State, but for the local counties because people live there and this is their livelihood, and these are their jobs.

And when that happens then property taxes are where they should be. And we need to do this and we need to do it as fast as possible.

Thanks for listening.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you; good job.

We're going to be followed-- The next group up will be Tom Fote, Jeff Tittel, and Jim Parla from Highlands.

PATTY PARKER: Ready?

SENATOR SARLO: It's all you.

MS. PARKER: Okay.

Hi, I'm Patty Parker, and I gave you my sob story on a piece of paper, but I'm just going to make a few fine points.

I've been in my home for 19 years, and the only time we had water was in Hurricane Irene -- we had 12 inches in a nonliveable foyer. Then, with this storm, when Hurricane Sandy made landfall, I was in the emergency operations center volunteering with the Office of Emergency Management.

The tide only went down a few feet in the morning -- high tide -- so I wasn't able to go home to move the items higher than we already did. My family was relocated to a hotel, as per the evacuation plans. As the storm approached we prepared the emergency responders and started our rescue process. My family was safe so we continued with the emergency operation plans.

We had to relocate the emergency operation center to higher ground as well, so we were packing up the fire department, first aid, police department as the storm approached.

When I went home for the first time on Tuesday, I couldn't believe what happened to our home. I had two-and-a-half feet of water in my home that is already elevated 4-and-a-half feet. The entire first floor was destroyed: my living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom and all of its contents. My garage area had an 11-foot surge go through it and blow

out the doors. Everything in my garage and first floor was ruined, turned upside down, and all over my property.

Since Hurricane Sandy I have lost my business. I'm a State-certified daycare provider for the last 15 years. I lost everything for that business, including my clients because most of them are also displaced. I lost every toy, book, curriculum item, craft supplies, bikes, scooters, pool -- the list can go on and on. But the worst of it is losing my income and losing the stability of the children who I provide care for.

On top of all this, I'm one of those who didn't have flood insurance. Six years ago I cancelled it because of the expense of it and I haven't had water in the house in 13 years. I figured, if this happens we're going to be devastated -- and we surely were.

All we ask is that -- we just want to return to our homes, to get back to normal for our children. As a taxpayer, some of my other concerns are, what about how our taxes are going to be impacted by the homes that are already foreclosed on? The home next door to me -- the guy walked away two years ago. We barely get the lawn mowed. Now there's a health issue. This home hasn't been cleaned out. So I'm going to return to my home, put my hard earned dollars into it -- the little bit that FEMA did help us with -- to go there and live next to a home that I'm sure is full of mold. What are we going to do about that? No one has even addressed the issue of the homes that are now sitting with mold growing in them, with furniture in there, walls. This is going to be a major, major health issue.

Then, my taxes are going to go up because those homes are not worth anything -- especially now. So now I put all my eggs in one basket -- my husband is the Fire Chief here, Fire Marshall, Emergency Management

Coordinator. We raised our kids here. My daughter came home from college to start her life here -- for what? We're going to come home and all these homes-- Our taxes are going to go high getting these foreclosed homes done. Who's going to take care of them?

Then, the SBA loan. I was told I can apply for an SBA loan. I'm a small business. I'm the only employee. But I can't, already, take out a loan to replace what I lost on top of not making that much money and having to put everything back into my home.

I was denied unemployment because my second job, that I got in a local restaurant that has now been lost -- I was told that because I didn't make more than \$7,400 at my second job I was denied unemployment. So now both of my jobs are gone and I was denied.

And the last thing is: I was one of the ones working downtown who coordinated over 300 volunteers who came from all over the Northeast area to help our homeowners clean out their homes. The Red Cross didn't even stop; didn't give us a tool, a meal, blankets, gloves, goggles, masks -- nothing. They rode around town in their truck and didn't stop once. They got \$28 million in the first week -- nothing, nothing. I coordinated 300 volunteers to help our residents because it wasn't coming from anywhere else.

We had a group from Montclair, New Jersey, come down. They realized we were working and that we had no food and our local restaurants were feeding the shelter -- not Red Cross, our local restaurants and donations. They went door-to-door in Montclair and collected money to feed our volunteers who had also lost their homes. They were out

rescuing people as their home is being flooded -- still caring for the people of this town.

And you heard about the first aid, the fire department, the police department all losing their homes, too.

FEMA -- not a tool, not a care package, not assistance, not guidance. Just me, Patty Parker, 300 volunteers. We had people sign up through the church to say they needed help. And I said to them, "Okay, you get a crowbar, you get a pry bar, you get a sheetrock knife. Who has construction experience? Okay, good, go do what you can." And it was them and the residents dragging things out of their homes. Nothing from FEMA, nothing from Red Cross.

And I just want to say if it wasn't -- I'm going to be the first emotional speaker -- if it wasn't for the volunteers all over we would have nothing. I want you to remember that when it comes to this town. (applause) Our fire department, our first aid, our police department are living in basements, they're living in hotels with no microwaves, no refrigerators. They have to eat out every meal. And they're showing up to work and to volunteer every time. Every day the police department's there, every day a call goes over for the fire department. Those guys live what they're doing to help the residents.

So please, keep that in mind when we're ready to rebuild, because we want to. And I don't look strong right now, but I am. But please, just keep that in mind -- to get our Borough Hall. We're all in one building now; tensions are tight. They're mostly men, so that's good. (laughter) But please just keep Highlands. We want to rebuild. Please help us.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you.

MS. PARKER: Thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you for your testimony. (applause)

SENATOR BECK: Chairman, I just want to say on behalf of-- And I think the applause speaks volumes about your effort, but I know personally of your effort and you've been amazing in light of the challenge you have in your own life. And we're going to fight the fight. We're going to do everything we can to help Highlands rebuild, and Union Beach, and Port Monmouth, and Belford, and Sea Bright -- all the way down the line.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: What about Keansburg?

SENATOR BECK: We will -- and Keansburg. I'm happy to try to help you any way I can with the issues with FEMA. Trust me -- it's been-- The fight you're going through with them, we're going through, too. It's a very bureaucratic organization.

But thank you, Patty, for all your work.

SENATOR SARLO: Senator Weinberg.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes, first of all, you look pretty strong to me (laughter) so no need to apologize for that.

MS. PARKER: Thank you. I don't cry much; I really don't.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Through this Committee, through the Office of Legislative Services, I think we should make an inquiry of the Red Cross. We heard some pretty serious challenges here about the Red Cross. We all know the kinds of money that's collected, and particularly after huge devastation problems like this, the ads are all there to please donate. So I would like to get a response from them, with the testimony

that was just given to us -- to send that testimony to them and I'd like to hear their answer.

And secondly -- and I know we discussed this at our last meeting -- but I quickly went through a lot of the written testimony that's been submitted. And the other theme that runs through this is the insurance. And I'm not just talking about flood insurance or private insurance. So I really think, Mr. Chairman-- I know that you've devoted untold hours, you and the staff, to this, but we really do need another hearing with the Department of Banking and Insurance and with people representing the insurance industry.

SENATOR SARLO: Absolutely.

And to all the residents out there, we're in the Highlands today. And the members have been to a few other towns. This is not about the Highlands over Sea Bright, over Keansburg, over Sayreville, or over Belmar or over Little Ferry, over Moonachie, over Seaside Heights or Ortley Beach. Many towns -- massive devastation. We need to collectively find a way to fund this and rebuild it, collectively. No town will be treated any differently, in my eyes. I can't speak for everybody, but in my eyes, as Chairman of this Committee, no town will be treated any differently.

T H O M A S F O T E: My name is Tom Fote. I'm here representing the Jersey Coast Anglers Association, New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, and also New Jersey Outdoor Alliance.

You know, I find it difficult to sit here and talk about fish when people are talking about their homes. I mean, I look at my neighbors; I watch in the morning when I get up, I look out my window and watch everybody line up to go over the bridge. You've passed by my house

numerous times because I live behind Seaside Furniture; and that area was flooded back there. And I can tell you my horror stories-- Try to find out what-- Wind damage is basically 2 percent of your policy. I didn't know they changed that five years ago. So they told me I had \$3,700 worth of wind damage and my deductible is \$3,800. So I don't get any money.

You hear Grumpys talk -- that's one of the tackle stores I pass on the way to Island Beach State Park when we're able to go there. I'm not going to go through my written testimony; you have a copy of it -- talking about the budget and everything else.

The points I want to make are the same points the Mayor made in Bricktown, when you basically had the hearing in Toms River; and Maria Maruca, who is the Councilwoman representing the Mayor because he was down with the flu that day.

The number one question I'm getting asked from boaters -- and every place I walk people know who I am -- and they say, "Tom, are we going to have a boating season next year? Are we going to be able to put our boats safely in the water? And I'm looking at them and saying, "I can't answer you right now."

I mean, you heard the questions asked from the Mayor. I've been asking those questions: Who's going to clean up all that debris that's floating around? Before I came here today I was sitting through four hours of the Barnegat Bay Partnership, because I sat on the Policy Committee for 18 years, discussing what we're going to do with marine debris; where are we going to store it? Where are we going to store the dredge spoils?

I mean, I look at Island Beach State Park. I did get a tour of Island Beach State Park with the Superintendent about a week-and-a-half

after, because he wanted me to see how it was so I could explain to the Commissioner. I looked at the bayside -- Tices Shoal -- and it's no longer-- You don't need to walk to get to a sandy beach -- white sandy beach -- because on the beach it's dark. And in Tices Shoals now it's a white sandy beach because all the sand is over there.

As Senator Van Drew and Senator Kyrillos pointed out, the recreational fishing industry is worth about \$1.7 billion in New Jersey in the good economic times. In the last couple of years, our boating industry has taken a huge hit. We used to have 234,000 boats registered in New Jersey. About two years ago we were down to 180,000, and then it was 160,000 this year. We will be lucky to see 100,000 boats registered next year if we look at it. Because everyone I talk to, "How's your boat doing?" "It's on a jetty." "It's on the John Forsythe Refuge," or it's sitting up in the Highlands in some other swamp.

I was down in New Orleans after the BP disaster, meeting with the governor down there, because I sit on the Board of ASA -- the American Sportfishing Association. And what he did after the storm -- and after not only the storm but after the BP spill -- is he went out and fished. What it says is, "We're open for business." And I think that that's what is needed to be done. We need to prove that the fishing -- the tourism industry can be back here. We get 535,000 out-of-state anglers coming into New Jersey to supplement those 800,000 in a good year. That's where the money comes from. That supplies the restaurants. I mean, I sit at bars after we go fishing with John Rooney -- Assemblyman Rooney -- and the two of us argue politics and we argue everything else. But the six or seven fishing trips that we meet in the middle, from all the way up north where he lives

to where I live in Toms River -- we meet in the Highlands to go fishing. I don't even know if those captains have boats this year. I haven't been able to contact them.

I will cut it off there because I know a lot of people want to speak and I don't want to talk a lot. But you really need to look at it.

SENATOR SARLO: It's a big challenge of how-- Who is actually going to take responsibility for the bay -- the Barnegat Bay -- to clean the debris and open up some of the boating channels? And I'm not sure the DEP and the Army Corps of Engineers and the Coast Guard have gotten that far yet.

MR. FOTE: Right. The other thing I just want to point out, because the question was asked before -- and Senator Kyrillos and Senator Jeff Van Drew, basically, explained. When this first happened, Chris Zeman, who sits on the Mid-Atlantic Council, sent e-mails to all the fishing communities and said, "We need disaster money and what can you do for recreational fishing?" So we've all worked together to make sure.

I just saw a letter Senator Lautenberg sent out with Senator Menendez and 11 other senators talking about -- on this fisheries bill, how this could be part of the supplement -- the money that should be going to the fishery disaster. We need to basically spend that money; we need to look at it -- but both the recreational and commercial fishing community. If you look at what's hit here, a lot of the marinas, a lot of the boats, a lot of the tackle stores -- you heard from Grumpys -- that's how they're sitting there. They've lost a lot of money and it's going to take a long time recovering.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, sir.

After Mr. Tittel we'll be hearing from Michele Doerflein from Keansburg; we'll be hearing from Lisa Santangelo of Union Beach. Is Paul Schlaflin still here? And Paul Schlaflin from Morganville. Those will be the next three.

J E F F T I T T E L: Thank you. And I'm glad that you're having this hearing and all the hearings you've had. And I know you probably have some of the toughest jobs of anyone -- having to deal with the budget, and dealing with this crisis and the aftermath of this tragedy and disaster.

I'm here representing the Sierra Club, but not just the 20,000 New Jersey members, but our over 1 million-plus nationally. Because, unfortunately, we've been through it before in New Orleans and Mississippi and the Gulf Coast.

We are a volunteer-based organization and many of our members are very much involved and many of them have also been personally devastated by this. And so many of our members down the shore are actually staying with other members. We have members helping members and cleaning out their houses, giving them places to stay. We are also doing that and organizing, instead of hikes this time of year, we're organizing clean-ups in Liberty State Park, Union Beach, and many other places up and down the coast.

But we're here also because, as you go through what happened, there are certain actions that government has made to make things better; certain actions government has done to make things worse. Nature may have brought the storm, but our policies have an impact.

And I think those are some of the things we need to get to the bottom of. We had more than a half-a-billion gallons a day of raw sewage

out this window from different sewer plants. We saw infrastructure fail throughout the state, 70 percent of the people losing power. And so as we rebuild we also need to learn why things happened and what we need to do to prevent it in the future.

We have to come back; we have to build better, but we have to build stronger as well. We also need to make sure that we can change some policies, or that we have some things that will help. And I will give you an example since people have been mentioning FEMA. FEMA will give you money to replace your furnace if your basement got flooded. But to elevate it you have to go to another program. I know somebody who lives along the Delaware River in my community who has had three new furnaces because it's easier to get the money to replace the furnace; then you have to go into another pot to elevate it -- to put it on the back of your house and build a little shed -- so it won't get flooded again, to elevate it above the flood level. But that's a separate program. But you have to wait six months for that, while you can get the money for your furnace right away. That needs to be changed.

We also-- Federal policy and State policy-- It allows you to rebuild in the same footprint. Well, that footprint may be fine in many places, but what if you want to move your house back from the water's edge and build, maybe, where your front yard is or where you park, and build higher and back? That you're not going to get money for. So for many people who live along barrier islands who are next to the dunes, they may want to be closer to the street but we have set-back regulations in towns; FEMA says in the same location. We may want to change that and let people be able to retreat a little bit on their own property so that they're

not put right into harm's way, and you can actually then build a double-dune instead of a single-dune which will do a lot better to protect.

As part of this, we need to look--

SENATOR SARLO: I don't mean to interrupt you, but in Toms River we spoke with the-- When we were down there we spoke with, actually, with some of the Council folks, the planning officials, and the Borough attorney. And that is one of the things they are looking at: What kind of zoning changes can they make, especially in Ortley Beach? What kind of zoning changes can they make? You can rebuild a home, but do it in a safer manner.

MR. TITTEL: But remember, FEMA will give you money to put it in the same exact footprint, and the State does, too, under the loophole in CAFRA. And maybe we want to change that so you can actually move back on that same site. That would be something you should really look into. And, by the way, my national boss, Michael Brune, grew up in Chadwick Beach and his father was Mayor of Toms River. So we know it firsthand -- his family house that his father built got destroyed.

But that's one of the examples. We need to come up with funding for Blue Acres so that we can buy out some of the most flood-prone areas. We need to also-- And one of the things they did in Louisiana is that they put in green building codes so that, when they rebuilt, their buildings were much more energy efficient. They used, in some cases, even recycled wood that came out of some of the homes that were destroyed as a way of helping to reduce the carbon footprint. So we need to look at a lot of those things.

One of the things that happened down there, that was of real concern here, is when towns were just massing the debris into one place, they were just putting it on fields, it created new toxic sites and it got into groundwater and impacted wells. So we need to rebuild and clean up as quick as we can, but we also want to make sure that we do it in a way that doesn't create more problems.

Unfortunately, because of this we now can, in some cases, do things better -- fix some of the problems of the past, help communities rebuild and rebound, and become the great communities that they've been. But we can also do it in a better way because we do not want to go through this again. We want to make sure that the next time there's a storm that more people and property are out of harm's way. To rebuild in the exact same way in the exact same place and expecting to have a different outcome -- you know, that's the old definition of insanity. We need to rebuild, but we have to make sure that we do it so the next time more people and property are protected. Because otherwise, I think it will be even more devastating to our coast and to our economy. You know, we have in some ways a way now to think clearly and to fix some of those mistakes. And we can do better coordination between governmental agencies at different levels. We can do better planning between -- at the different levels of government to ensure that when we rebuild that infrastructure is in the right place, that it serves a better purpose. Just like the Senate body has looked at trying to get communities to share services. We can now start sharing infrastructure and doing things in a way that we can actually help save money. Same thing when we're clearing up the debris by recycling --

you're saving on tipping fees and saving money at the same time as being a little green.

And so we have a lot of work ahead of us and there's a lot that needs to be done. But I think getting to those answers is what's important for this body -- that this could be the norm and we have to adjust to that world, whether it's sea level rise or more frequent storms. But we can be more resilient by fixing natural systems, having wetland areas that flood instead of people's homes. For instance, when Barnegat Bay opened up through Mantoloking, maybe we should have kept it open to have more water coming into the bay. We need to build, but we also need to look at those natural systems that can actually help protect us as well, whether it's dunes, or coastal wetlands, or inlets.

So I know you have a lot of work, and we'll be part of a continuing dialogue. And I will send more detailed information.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, Jeff. We'll look forward to your ideas, especially along the beach.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR SARLO: Senator Thompson.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Your comments about when we rebuild be smarter and so on, etc. -- reflected by the testimony of a couple of other witnesses earlier -- Ms. O'Connor, who spoke of the situation in Sayreville and Weber Avenue; how they have rebuilt, flooded, rebuilt, flooded. The gentleman who spoke earlier about the case where FEMA has paid this gentleman down in Texas; he had \$130,000 home, they paid him 15 claims for over \$1 million for the home. Just doesn't make sense to keep rebuilding the same thing and have it knocked down again in the same way.

SENATOR SARLO: Well, that goes to the Blue Acres money you talked about.

MR. TITTEL: Yes, and other things, too.

SENATOR SARLO: And Senator Bucco talked about that earlier.

MR. TITTEL: And other things, too. I mean, in some cases like that, you may want to transfer that development to another part of town. I mean, this may sound a little funny because it's New Jersey, but when they dealt with what happened in the Mississippi, whole towns got moved inland. They actually were next to the river and they flooded every spring. And they actually moved them a mile on the other side of the dikes. So we may have to, in some places like in Sayreville -- that community may have to become a park. That development can go somewhere else in that town. If we plan better--- Because you can increase densities in certain areas to help so that you're not depopulating your communities. And what you don't want to see in New Jersey, either, is what's happened to the Lower 9th Ward in New Orleans -- which is still empty. And it's seven years later. And I think that's what we have to think about as well.

SENATOR SARLO: Senator Bucco, you have a comment?

SENATOR THOMPSON: I would just like to add one more comment.

The *Asbury Park Press* sent me something last week asking that by Thursday we send them a 250-word piece about our three top legislative priorities for 2013. I think there's no question that the top legislative priority in 2013 is to pass the package of bills necessary to deal with the recovery and rebuilding of our state.

SENATOR BUCCO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Jeff, as you know, the devastation that was created with Irene up in my district and, specifically, Denville -- it was just announced yesterday -- it's always a year -- but they are in the process of buying out those homes that were continually flooded, prone for flooding, or they became uninhabitable. It took a year to put the program together, but it was a cooperation of the county, of the State, and of the Federal government in doing that -- putting the money together.

MR. TITTEL: And I think that's a really important role for the Legislature, not just on Blue Acres but throughout the whole rebuilding process -- that you look at that coordination. Because mistakes can happen if one agency has no oversight, or even in the executive branch -- that you need that cooperation of all levels of government and all parts including the Legislature, the executive branch, and the different agencies so that we can coordinate better and do things in a more timely and cost-effective manner.

SENATOR BUCCO: Well, after the Irene storm, sitting on JBOC with the Chairman and all is when we transferred money into Blue Acres--

SENATOR SARLO: Yes.

SENATOR BUCCO: --so they could accomplish those tasks.

SENATOR SARLO: We did that.

SENATOR BUCCO: We did that.

MR. TITTEL: Absolutely. And I just wanted to say that I had a lot of family who lives in this area. I always love coming down here and watching, as the sun goes down, the lights of Manhattan coming up.

SENATOR SARLO: It's beautiful. It's a beautiful view.

MR. TITTEL: And today it's a little cloudy, but this is a place that everybody should be coming back to, come the warmer weather, to help the local businesses because there's some great restaurants and wonderful views.

SENATOR BUCCO: And spend money.

SENATOR SARLO: Spend money.

Okay -- Michele Doerflein -- hopefully I pronounced your name correctly.

M I C H E L E D O E R F L E I N: (off mike) Doerflein (indicating pronunciation), like a door flying open.

SENATOR SARLO: Door fly -- okay (laughter) -- Keansburg, followed by Lisa Santangelo, followed by Paul Schlaflin.

MS. DOERFLEIN: Good evening, Senators; thank you for your time.

I have some things that I'd like to address, especially with your questions regarding FEMA. It started, basically-- I'm just going to give you a short story of how it -- basically my experience with it.

On November 2, I applied for FEMA after going into my home -- which was covered entirely in sewage, and there was about three-and-a-half feet of flood water that came in at the surge. But the line settled at, like, 22 inches, I believe.

They told me that I would get a phone call and there would be an appointment made for an inspector to come along. And I would be getting a packet.

On November 3, the day after, my husband and I were at Bolger School looking for food and clothes so he could go to work. We

heard that there were FEMA inspectors on our street, so we went up onto our street and, lo and behold, that was where we met the first FEMA inspector. And his name is Paul, and he said, "I am under contract to Alltech, Inc., a Parsons Brinckerhoff company, providing inspection services to the Federal Emergency Management Agency."

All right, that man -- okay-- On our application, our house was inaccessible. It was contaminated. My husband and I were in shock. He dragged us through our sewage-ridden home and told my husband that he should not buy expensive things and told me that the TV will work and "we will assume that it works until we plug it in." I'm like, "We don't have power." He said, "We'll assume it works."

Later on I found out that he left a lot of our personal items unaccounted for; and that this process is not a denial, you can appeal it -- that's what we're told. However, the appeal process usually goes under the carpet.

I went to Congressman Pallone's office to get help and spoke with Janet Ford to get an appeal -- to help me with an appeal letter, because I haven't been sleeping. I haven't seen my son since Thanksgiving. I'm in a hotel in Secaucus and have to drive down every day -- 50 miles to and 50 miles and back. And I don't know where we're going to have a place to stay tomorrow if TSA does not grant us another extension.

Well, I was promised by Janet Ford that it would be looked into and that they would call FEMA and help me write an appeal letter.

On December 5, I called back because I hadn't heard from her and she told me that Congressman Pallone has had many emergencies --

and I understand that; we all have many emergencies. But, basically, again, I was shoved underneath the table.

The Red Cross? The Red Cross was at Union Beach and drove by and asked for supplies that were donated by our locals -- our local businesses. Cleaning supplies, paper towels. They stopped at Union Beach Disaster Relief Center with a truck, and actually were almost demanding about it. Twenty-eight million dollars, you say? And their CEO is over six figures? Okay?

I can only speak of my experience, but we're not getting the help we need. And then when we go through the process, we're inundated with paperwork and forms. This is all FEMA, and I have six other agencies. Because we're tossed around. Our mental health is-- I am on the verge, and I was told I'm the most organized person that people have ever seen. And I say, "Well, I don't know who this new woman is, because I am definitely not organized. I'm an artist, okay? I don't work. My husband is now the only one who is supporting us, okay? He is a truck driver. And we were going through financial problems before because of the economy, because he was a union plumber and then was laid off for two-and-a-half years. And he acquired his CDL and now he is a truck driver. However, the difficulties that we have gone through have forced us into bankruptcy.

Now we can't rent a house because our credit score is not high enough. And we've rescued animals -- we have two dogs, two cats; and we need a two-bedroom apartment somewhere in a safe neighborhood because I'm not having my 15-year-old son put into an area where there's a high drug population, all right?

And when I call FEMA -- FEMA called me today -- I almost lost my mind -- and asked me how I was fixed with my rental assistance. I said, "How was I fixed? What kind of question is that? I don't even have a place to live."

And this is not just me. This man, Paul, did this to several people on our block. So they're getting denied or getting minimal assistance -- okay? -- because of one man, or another man, or somebody's opinion on what should be.

SENATOR BECK: Chairman, could I ask a quick question?

SENATOR SARLO: Yes.

SENATOR BECK: So FEMA calls you today.

MS. DOERFLEIN: Yes.

SENATOR BECK: Asks you how you're doing and you say, "I don't have a place to live."

MS. DOERFLEIN: Yes.

SENATOR BECK: And what's their response?

MS. DOERFLEIN: Well, usually I'm very good, but I told them that as far as their personal property loss contribution -- whatever -- from my taxes -- really sucked. And I--

SENATOR BECK: What did they offer you? Did they offer you anything?

MS. DOERFLEIN: He said-- No. he said, "Well, I'm sorry you're disappointed with FEMA."

SENATOR BECK: So did they--

MS. DOERFLEIN: I said, "Don't take it personally."

SENATOR BECK: --suggest that you can extend your temporary shelter assistance?

MS. DOERFLEIN: No. We don't find that out until the day of. See, I'm scheduled to leave. This is the routine -- this is the third extension, okay? I'm scheduled to leave by the 13th, 11 o'clock, okay? So I start packing everything on the 12th, which will be tomorrow. And then either we're going to get a phone call that it is going to be extended -- which could be either given on the 12th or the 13th. So we don't know.

SENATOR BECK: So through the Chair, did you own your home in Keansburg?

MS. DOERFLEIN: No, we were renters and we--

SENATOR BECK: You were renting your home.

MS. DOERFLEIN: We were-- We are also the ones who have been targeted most as far as not receiving proper assistance, as well as-- Now, with me, I'm blessed; our landlord -- because we were actually going to buy the house before the recession hit; our landlord offered the house to us, okay? We have a very good relationship. But there's also-- What was happening now is that landlords are actually breaking leases with their tenants if they had mild damage. They're fixing the houses up and then they're jacking the rents up so high that people can't afford them.

SENATOR BECK: Okay. Through the Chair, do you have rental options that are local or are they -- or is there no such thing? Is there just nothing in this area available? You had to go to Secaucus?

MS. DOERFLEIN: Well, as far as the hotel, that was the only one that was available. We've been there since November 9.

SENATOR BECK: Okay.

MS. DOERFLEIN: That was the only one available at the time. As far as housing, it's horrible. There is none.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Thank you, Senator.

Thank you for your testimony. Thank you very much.

LISA SANTANGELO: Good evening, Senators. Thank you for your time.

My name is Lisa Santangelo. I am disabled and I am disassembled.

I lived in Union Beach for six years; and I say I *lived* because I have a house which I cannot inhabit because of Hurricane Sandy. I'm very upset.

I had FEMA come the first day and say that they assessed my house with damage of only \$227. My house is now sinking into the ground, I have a 6-foot hole in my foundation; and I have no funding anywhere. I have flood insurance. I have health insurance. I have homeowners insurance. I own my home. And I am not getting one dime of help.

I live with someone at the church; they took me in, okay? After that, I got no calls from FEMA. When they sent out an adjustor, my flood insurance -- which is Selective, which is a New Jersey company -- they sent out an adjustor from Florida who does not know our codes here in New Jersey and they said, "Hang on, don't worry. We'll give you money. And here, you can have this bible." Okay -- where do I go to live? I'm a single person. I'm not like everybody else who has a family and has kids and all that kind of stuff, unfortunately. This is the life I chose, okay? But I'm

responsible enough to pay my bills, to own a home, and I'm not getting a response at all.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Did they tell you why you were getting no response? What do they say when you ask them?

MS. SANTANGELO: Excuse me?

SENATOR VAN DREW: What do they say when you ask them?

MS. SANTANGELO: What do they say when I ask them?

SENATOR VAN DREW: Yes. What is their response?

MS. SANTANGELO: Because you're single and you're not-- Basically, I'm not top priority. You're not top on our list. There are other people out there who have children, who have more responsibilities -- things that are more responsible. They think that because I'm a single woman, I don't need help. I can find help elsewhere.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Did they actually say that, or did they say it was because you currently were residing -- you, at least, had shelter?

MS. SANTANGELO: Those were the words not exactly said, but they were said like that, okay?

So then I had to move in with somebody at the church. So I moved in with somebody at the church. I have not heard from FEMA; I have not heard from my flood insurance; I have not heard from my homeowners insurance. I had to hire a private adjustor. I've not heard anything about Union Beach, where the zoning codes -- what my building code is going to be. Right now, because I am disabled and I am in line for a double knee replacement -- which I was supposed to be getting a while ago

because of a car accident, okay? I can't find out what is going on. Nobody is giving me any help, okay? And I'm really tired of it. I'm very tired. I know you guys are just as tired as we are, and you're tired of hearing all these testimonies and all that kind of stuff, but we really need help here. We need help from you guys. There are people out here who are responsible and we're trying really hard. I'm volunteering and I don't even have two knees to stand on -- literally. And I volunteer. I cleaned out my house; I did what I was told to do. And then I heard nothing back from anybody.

Our town smells like sewage. And we were only put on the map-- Thank God to the Mennonites, the Amish people, and all the volunteers who came into our town, who rushed into our town to help us. Not once did the government come into our town.

Vice President Biden passed us by, okay? Menendez -- where is everybody? We have the State Police in our town because of looting. I'm a responsible citizen and I have people who want to loot my house. And we have the State Police because we don't have enough police officers because the same thing happened that happened to the other person here this afternoon -- about the police cars. I'm just-- I just don't understand; I don't understand what's going on. And I just want help.

SENATOR SARLO: Senator Bucco.

SENATOR BUCCO: Miss, I just have to respond to you.

You say you're looking for help. That's what we're here for. Through the initiative of Senator Sarlo, our Chairman, he has put these meetings together purposely to hear what the complaints are with the problems that you're having and with everyone else who has come up here

to tell us the different problems they're having -- whether it's with FEMA, whether it's private insurance, or whatever it may be. That's why we're here. We're gathering this information, as the Senator said earlier in his opening remarks, so we can put a package of bills together to try to address some of these problems so that it doesn't happen in the future; to help you in the present time.

And I know insurance companies-- We've heard this throughout our hearings, of insurance companies-- It seems if it isn't on the leap year -- damage -- you weren't covered. And I think that one of the problems that I've seen and heard about -- and as I think -- plain English language for insurance purchasers. Insurance companies should be able to give you plain English language of what you're covered for, and how you can collect and all.

MS. SANTANGELO: That's right.

SENATOR BUCCO: This is one of the problems that we have to address and do something about, because it is a problem. Because once you go out and hire a private adjustor, now you have to pay a percentage of the monies that he collects for you.

MS. SANTANGELO: That's correct. And that's not fair.

SENATOR BUCCO: And it's not right.

MS. SANTANGELO: And it's nor right, and it's not right that-- Unfortunately I was born and raised in Florida, I've been through many a hurricane, and I'm going to tell you right now this has been very poorly led, okay? You guys, I know you're trying your hardest, but let me tell you something. Learn from other states. I mean, that's why we're here,

right? We learn from other states, don't we? Do we or do we not? I mean, I don't know.

SENATOR BUCCO: And that's what we-- That's what the Administration has done -- is reaching out to others states, going to Katrina and going to Mississippi, to find out how they handled it and how they recovered.

MS. SANTANGELO: Okay, so my question-- Okay, so then how come I had somebody from Florida come up and decide how much I'm going to get; and then I never hear back from my insurance -- and give me a Bible and tell me just to wait? What am I waiting for? I need surgery. I need four surgeries -- I still need four surgeries, okay? And--

SENATOR SARLO: Miss, listen. We're taking a lot of testimony and the best we're going to do is -- we're not going to be able to solve all these problems. But when you have enough Senators here on both sides of the aisle pressing on the Administration, pressing on the Federal government to get relief-- I know, I know all the good will that many of us have had during these weeks -- aftermath -- is going to turn into a lot of frustration and a lot of anger. It's beginning to set in because people can't go home. We get that; we understand. We're not going to be able to answer all your questions, but we hear what you're talking about, and your complaints and concerns; are no different from many of the other folks who have testified here today.

MS. SANTANGELO: I understand, Senator -- Sarlo, is it?

SENATOR SARLO: Yes.

MS. SANTANGELO: I do understand. But I also want to make one more thing clear: The schools in my town are still not open.

These kids need education. I don't have any children, okay? But I am for the children.

SENATOR SARLO: Where are the kids going right now? Are they in other schools?

MS. SANTANGELO: They're in other schools.

SENATOR SARLO: Okay.

MS. SANTANGELO: But that's still not fair.

SENATOR SARLO: Well, I have-- We were in Moonachie up in Bergen County, and the Senators were there. And their children are in my school now.

MS. SANTANGELO: Okay.

SENATOR SARLO: I'm Mayor of the surrounding town. Their school is out -- they're not getting their school back until next October. There's nothing they can do; it was raw sewage -- four feet of raw sewage in the facility, so--

MS. SANTANGELO: And how come the DEP hasn't come to our town? I mean, there are so many things that have not come to our town, and we've had so much help--

SENATOR KYRILLOS: What town are you in, remind me? Are you Keansburg?

SENATOR SARLO: Union Beach.

MS. SANTANGELO: Union Beach, yes. We've had so much volunteer help, it's been so wonderful.

SENATOR SARLO: They're working-- The Commissioner of Education, though, is aware of the Union Beach school problem; they actually testified on that situation, so--

MS. SANTANGELO: Good, okay.

SENATOR SARLO: The Union Beach school situation is being-- I know it's being rectified at the Commissioner of Education's level. They are aware of the situation, and they didn't think they'd be out for the whole year. They thought they were going to be able to get their kids in sooner.

MS. SANTANGELO: Okay, so now do you understand? I'm not being selfish; I'm for my town and I'm for my State.

SENATOR SARLO: You're doing a great job of advocating for it.

MS. SANTANGELO: Okay. And I'm for my State, and I've lived here almost all my life, and I voted for almost every one of you guys. And let me tell you something.

SENATOR VAN DREW: You better not be voting for me down in Cape May. (laughter) You and I would be in trouble.

MS. SANTANGELO: Yes, right.

Just please help us, that's all I ask.

SENATOR SARLO: We will. Thank you, thank you.

MS. SANTANGELO: Thank you very much for your time.

SENATOR SARLO: Paul Schlaflin, Morganville, New Jersey.

If I could just get a rough idea, by a show of hands, who wants to testify and who hasn't? Okay.

Next up after Mr. Schlaflin -- is Donna O'Callaghan here? (no response)

Just bear with me one second.

Is Mary-Beth Thompson here? (no response) Mary-Beth from Normandy? Okay.

Is Mary-Margaret Kurta here? Okay, you two will be next.

DEACON JIM PARLA: (off mike) Senator, you called my name before, but you didn't call me back -- Jim Parla.

SENATOR SARLO: I left you out there, Mr. Parla?

MR. PARLA: (off mike) You called my name about 10 or 15 minutes ago.

SENATOR SARLO: Okay. You can come up with the next group, then. Or you can come up now, sir; come on up.

Go ahead, sir.

PAUL J. SCHLAFLIN: Paul Schlaflin, Morganville.

I'm probably one of the more fortunate ones in the room here because all I experienced was a power outage. However, after a tour of the area and going through an area that was devastated where I grew up, I came across a place that had coffee and food at a firehouse. There were a couple of tents set up at the time, and I went home and I collected some money and I went back with some staples, some coffee, and sugar, and whatnot and realized very quickly that wasn't very much. And I went back and I shook all my friends down; and I went back the next day feeling pretty good about myself with \$1,000 worth of food, and realized this isn't going to get through breakfast.

So I spent the next two, two-and-a-half weeks there, 12, 14 hours a day at the Firehouse Grill that was set up in Union Beach by a group of volunteers from the Rainbow Family. We were feeding 1,200 to 1,400 people a day on-site, and we had mobile kitchens out feeding up to

1,700 off-site each day. I don't know who would have fed those people if we didn't, because there was no other agency there.

Many of these were Rainbow Family members who had done relief after Katrina, after the Joplin tornadoes. And one thing that was a common theme everywhere is that after a natural disaster the poorest people are displaced and there is a land grab; and where they were once working communities there are now high-rise condominiums.

In a state like ours, where affordable housing is at such a shortage and such a critical issue -- and it's an issue that I've been involved with personally for 12 years, okay? I've been an official objector to my town Marlboro's COAH plan years ago. So I understand the affordable housing shortage in this state. So many of these communities that have been adversely affected are, in fact, working poor and low- and moderate-income families. And I want to protect them. Now, there are several ways that we can do it, and I can hear a bunch of reasons why we can't. But the bottom line is, we have to have determination to do it. Number one, when grandma's house is destroyed, you have to change the rules so grandma can place a mobile home on that property and deed restrict it to her lifetime (applause) so that that woman can finish out her life on her piece of property. That's something that can be done.

Number two, this nonsense with FEMA coming in and telling people they have to raise their house to rebuild. I had a guy who was in tears because he had had his house gutted out, he did the mold remediation, the sanitation. He had it insulated, he was ready to sheetrock it and get his family back in. And they told him no -- you have to raise the house before you go any further with it. He doesn't have the money to do

that. They are, in essence, making that man's family homeless under the guise of being concerned about his well being, when seven weeks ago they didn't care what level his house was at.

We have to change that; you have to step in and fight for those people and let FEMA accept that no, this guy's going to rebuild his house, and go ahead and deed restrict it so that if he sells it or tries to change title on it, then it has to be raised. But don't put this onerous demand on him that he can't possibly fulfill. It's wrong.

And another thing that I wanted to see-- Because the developers, they're just salivating. They're like sharks in the water circling. The view here of New York at night is gorgeous -- it's a million dollar view. We've always said that. You want to know how you prevent people from getting raked over the coals for something like this? You turn around and you impose a restriction that, in order to combine lots for a large-scale project, you have to demonstrate that you paid these people 75 percent of the pre-Sandy assessed value. Now, that's fair, because these developers that have been and continue to buy these houses at market value and knock them down for their projects -- we should not be allowing ruthless developers to come in and take advantage of people who were destroyed by a storm; it's just not right. We have to really be concerned with this because you're going to lose affordable housing. And that's going to affect every town in this state because their COAH requirements are going to end up pushed up, and nobody wants that.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, sir.

MR. SCHLAFLIN: Now, I just want to tell you--

SENATOR SARLO: I just have to-- Please, I have to-- I've given everybody a lot of liberties, and we said we were going to go to 7 o'clock and people are here; I don't want to cut anybody off, but-- So--

MR. SCHLAFLIN: Well, I understand that, sir. But with all due respect--

SENATOR SARLO: Once the yellow light comes on, we're going to start cut--

MR. SCHLAFLIN: With all due respect, I went to a hearing here that was going to be just solely for members of the public. And I've sat through a bunch of politicians and the Sierra Club here that has plenty of opportunities to lobby all of you in person.

SENATOR SARLO: That's true.

MR. SCHLAFLIN: Now, you asked about Red Cross. At my time over there at that kitchen -- because we'd be going out and trying to get donations and volunteers, my name got associated to the point that if you googled the Union Beach Firehouse Kitchen, my name came up. So I had people calling. Two days before Thanksgiving, the Red Cross contacted me and asked me what I needed at that facility. I said, "Well, at this point, we have a very good donation chain going; we have plenty of food coming in. However, I've got 30 volunteers from all over the country living in tents on this site. They get up at the break of dawn and cook food until 8 o'clock at night. It's getting very cold." I said, "I'd like to get 30 blankets for them." I was denied, although the Red Cross showed up almost every day and ate the food that was meant for the people who had been devastated by the storm. And I have pictures of FEMA lining up at one of the mobile kitchens for a free meal.

So I have to tell you that neither Red Cross nor FEMA has served the victims of this storm in this state.

Thank you for your time.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, sir. Thank you for your patience today. (applause)

MR. PARLA: Good evening, and thank you for coming to Highlands to meet with all of us today.

My name is Jim Parla; I am a Deacon at New Life Christian Church, which was devastated to the point of ruin by Hurricane Sandy. I have been asked to read this statement on behalf of our pastor, Reverend Martin D. McGrail Jr., who is out of town and could not be with us today.

“We were told the storm was coming, but like most we truly prayed and believed it would take a turn and go out to sea. It didn’t. On October 29, 2012, Hurricane Sandy moved closer and closer to our little fishing village of about 5,000 people and 2,300 dwellings. No one could ever imagine what was about to happen to our little community. Most of the people heeded the warnings and evacuated, but many also stayed, believing they could ride out the storm. That never happened.

“On October 29, 2012, I was one of the first responders, in the position of Police Chaplain, working with our local police, the Mayor, and the Office of Emergency Management Services. Even after serving two tours in Vietnam in the United States Navy, and going through more than two years of metastatic cancer, I was never afraid. But this night was different. I truly believed I was going to die at one point.

“In the middle of the night, the darkest night I have ever seen and pray I never see again, we had to evacuate the emergency command

center which housed all emergency services because the waters came in so fast, with such a surge, that it was terrifying. We took refuge in an elementary school located on higher ground and set up the command station there with limited auxiliary power.

“I remember out of nowhere an elderly man appeared and said he was stranded on the highway. In an effort to help him I foolishly put him in my vehicle and headed towards the shelter we had established earlier in the high school, about a half mile away on higher ground. It was treacherous driving up the mountain road with incredible winds and torrential rain. Trees were coming down and it was darker than I had ever seen in my life. I just don’t know how I ever made it to that building. I’ve never prayed so hard in my entire life.

“After arriving at the shelter I did my best with a handful of volunteers to comfort the sick, the elderly, the fearful, and the children who had been brought in earlier that evening.

“As the morning light came, what we found was hard to believe and devastating. Our little town looked like the villages I remembered in Vietnam so long ago. It looked as though the town was bombed over and over again. Over 1,100 homes and businesses were totally destroyed beyond recognition.

“I made my way to our church only to find the outside destroyed and more than 10 feet of water in the sanctuary. I never dreamed I’d ever see anything like it. Inside and out it looked as though a monster ravaged the entire facility. It looked like the scene of violence.

“We didn’t have enough flood insurance because the premiums were much too high, and who knew such a storm would ever affect us like this? The church we built with our own hands was now in ruins.

“When the water finally receded I stood in the middle of what was once our sanctuary and I cried harder than I can ever remember. Everything was gone, smashed, ripped apart, and twisted. All I worked so hard so for, mortgaged our home for, prayed for, and dreamed of was finished. We supported the 30 to 50 families of our church with my Navy pension and now, for a moment, I felt defeated.

“After my cry I went back into the community shelter and worked 16 to 18 hours a day helping the others who had lost everything. We set up a medical clinic and counseled the devastated and tried to give hope to the brokenhearted. Finally, after several days, the Red Cross arrived and I went back to the streets helping the emergency personnel in every way I could: transporting the sick and injured to Jersey Shore Medical Center; getting much-needed funds, medical supplies, clothes, milk, and food, generators, equipment, etc. shipped in from contacts all over the country.

“After several days had passed and my wife returned, she convinced me I had to go back to our church and evaluate the damages. The insurance adjustors came and informed us the cause of the damage was flood and we only had \$71,000 coverage, which would take until March to collect. The damage above the water mark, which was well over my head, was caused by the incredible wind and torrential rain, but the insurance company said, ‘No, the damage was caused by the flood,’ and they would not cover the damage which was estimated to be over \$750,000.

“Today our church property and building still stands devastated and in ruins. It’s so difficult for my wife to look at. Our dream has been ripped into pieces. FEMA will not help us. The bills are the same, and yet I have a sense of hope and peace. We have a vision to rebuild better than ever before, and by the grace of God we will continue serving the needs of the people in our little fishing village.

“We believe we will all learn from this historical event and that together, with the help of God, one another, and the resources you can provide, we will build a better Highlands, safer and better than ever before in our history, for ourselves and for the generations to come.

“Thank you for receiving my testimony today, and may God bless each and every one of you.”

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, Deacon.

Mary-Beth Thompson; Jean-Marie Donohue.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF COMMITTEE: Not here.

SENATOR SARLO: Not here? Okay. Mary-Margaret Kurta, come up. They’ll be followed by Richard Marcolus and Beverly Shimada.

Go ahead.

M A R Y - B E T H T H O M P S O N: I will shorten and try to paraphrase.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. I’m Mary-Beth Thompson, a life-long coastal resident of the Jersey Shore -- initially from Ocean County, now from Monmouth County.

Coastal living means everything to my immediate family, as well as to my parents who started our entire family on this coastal track

when they first discovered the wonderful little town of Normandy Beach on the Barnegat Bay in 1956.

I learned to swim, sail, and surf, and was the first lady lifeguard in town -- oh, I meant to leave that part out in public. And I developed my general love of the marine environment there in Normandy Beach. I met my husband of 31 years at the coastal college of Monmouth University and we raised our three sons here locally, in Rumson.

My husband and sons are all year-round surfers, and with them spending so much time in the water I'm concerned for their health. My parents are aging and stand to lose their legacy of the Normandy Beach home and all the history they've built over the 55 years of Ocean County home ownership.

Regarding the big picture impacts of Sandy: I feel New Jersey must rebuild sustainably and be protective of the environment, as well as protective of the economic engine that the coastal communities provide for the State.

Rebuilding codes should be protective; washout walls, I understand some of the homes that had them -- those homes were fine, but the homes behind them were wrecked with the debris of those homes, so that has to be -- things like that have to be considered.

Infrastructure must be protective of human health and must be improved, including water, sewage, stormwater management. The water in the lagoons and Barnegat Bay is disgusting; it can't even flow in and out of the bay because there's so much debris there. It's polluted and disgusting. I don't know what's going to happen there or how it's going to be cleaned

up. The ocean is polluted. The surfers are contracting skin rashes, respiratory and digestive illnesses.

In addition, and kind of on another note, I think the utility companies must be held accountable for their lack of updating their systems and for the lack of their emergency response for natural gas, electric, telephone, and cell phones.

Regarding my family's personal impacts -- in Normandy Beach we've had some difficulties. Our houses in the Brick Township section of Ocean County we weren't allowed to access for two weeks. By then the mold had grown extensively, food was rotten in the refrigerator, sewage from the water had settled in the house, smells and bacteria were nauseating. Access is a little better now, but we're only allowed one registered car; any contractors have to be certified, registered; there is a barricade -- as another gentleman from Normandy mentioned -- down the center of the town. It's insane. I mean, you have to go an hour to go one minute -- from one side of the street to the other. It's the only town on the barrier island that's like that.

SENATOR SARLO: What town do you live in, again, ma'am? You mentioned a couple of towns. What town?

MS. THOMPSON: Normandy Beach.

SENATOR SARLO: Normandy Beach.

MS. THOMPSON: It's the middle of Normandy Beach.

SENATOR SARLO: Because there's a Normandy--

MS. THOMPSON: Because it's half Brick and half Dover.

SENATOR SARLO: They split. There are two associations, right?

MS. THOMPSON: Well, it's-- It is-- No, the whole town is the Normandy Beach Improvement Association, but for tax purposes, and residential purposes, and homeownership--

SENATOR SARLO: Yes.

MS. THOMPSON: --it's Dover and Bricktown.

SENATOR SARLO: Okay.

MS. THOMPSON: Bricktown is picking up debris until December 21; that's only 10 days from now. After that, it's up to the homeowners to pay for that -- to get a Dumpster and tractors and all that. That deadline is ridiculously too soon. We haven't been able to have access to the home. We had to close the islands because of natural gas -- which is understandable -- but then they've got to understand that homeowners can't get the job done, either.

I mentioned utilities. Our house is now stripped of everything: furniture, walls, floors, appliances. It's a shell of the fun-loving and family-fostering home that it was. We have no idea what the future holds for rebuilding. The financial, insurance, and rebuilding maze is overwhelming and unclear, with numerous unknowns. Although we opted to have flood insurance it will not be close to covering the expenses. Any help the State can give homeowners who have paid their taxes and insurances, served their country, and been engaged citizens in the public process all their lives is appropriate and appreciated.

Again, on behalf of my parents, sisters -- three generations of my family -- thank you for your time and please ensure that information is forthcoming. And let's rebuild the Jersey Shore together to be greener and better.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you; good testimony. (applause)

MARY - MARGARET KURTA: Hi. I've decided that I'm not going to read my letter; I figure that I'll give it to you and you can read it on your own, because it does repeat a lot of the information. But I would ask you to please read it, because it does talk about my four siblings, because we were all impacted by the storm and we have all been displaced and lost businesses.

But the one thing about FEMA that I did notice -- I was lucky enough to have Verizon. Thank God for Verizon at that time, because we were the only connection to the world. But I can tell you that was one thing that was very disappointing about FEMA -- was if they knew the storm was coming they should have had a plan to have at least some portable phones in the area for those people who did not have access. Because there were people crying in the streets a week and a half, two weeks after the storm because they still didn't have any contact. And it was devastating for them because every time we had a flyer for help it was "go online" -- which nobody had computers -- or "call this number for FEMA." So they really were -- I felt for them, and I was in a bad situation myself. But that phone really helped us; it would have been helpful to people, and they just felt totally deflated.

So I'm going to just give you my letter.

The other thing is that, sitting here tonight, I have to thank you all for being here because I actually feel like you were listening. And I'm feeling hopeful as I leave here today, as opposed to you sitting there but not listening. I really feel like you've really listened, you've asked appropriate

questions, and I really do feel like we can ask you and tell you what our real concerns are. So I thank you for that.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you.

And I've said it repeatedly today: We're taking as much of this information and we're going to do the best we can to open up as many conduits as possible to get relief. We know the frustrations here; we know anger is here. We get it. It's going to take some time. But we will get on FEMA, we will get on the Red Cross and others, and do the best we can. But we need to also make sure we find the dollars to do this correctly.

Richard -- I believe I called -- Richard Marcolus.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: (off mike) He had to leave; he was here since 3 o'clock. He had to leave at 6:30.

SENATOR SARLO: Okay, he had to leave? Okay.

Beverly Shimada. (no response)

Candace Douglas; Eileen Scanlon.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: (off mike): I didn't know that I had to register. I would like to speak. So if somebody didn't show up, at the end--

SENATOR SARLO: Yes, if you could just go over there and give your name -- provide your name to the--

Is Jolene Huelsenbeck here? Is Robert Ford here?

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: (off mike)
(Indiscernible).

SENATOR SARLO: Okay.

Let me ask you this: After Jolene and Robert Ford -- Jolene Huelsenbeck -- are there any other residents who wanted to speak? We don't have your names. Did you--

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: (off mike) I signed in as--

SENATOR SARLO: Oh, okay, okay. We'll get it. (laughter)

Okay, go ahead.

C A N D A C E D O U G L A S: Okay. Hi, my name is Candace Douglas, and I am a homeowner in Highlands. My home is elevated 5 to 7 feet. We have never had water in our home before Sandy.

My family and I are left without a livable home, as are so many in our town. We have approximately \$140,000 worth of demo repairs that need to be done to our home. Now the height requirement is 15 to 17 feet. This would cost an additional \$40,000 to \$60,000.

I have also not received a dollar amount from my flood insurance, and I am covered. They offered \$7,000 to start.

What are my options? How much is my flood (*sic*) going to actually rise to? I pay \$2,800 presently to be covered for \$250,000 with no contents. My tax assessment can rise as well. It seems I will not be able to afford my home. How can I afford to stay in my home if we rebuild? There needs to be discussion on these topics.

Thank you for your time and allowing me to speak.

SENATOR BECK: Chairman, can I just do a quick question?

SENATOR SARLO: Sure.

SENATOR BECK: Is more than 50 percent of your home destroyed?

MS. DOUGLAS: Yes.

SENATOR BECK: More than 50 percent? So you are then eligible for up to \$30,000 to help elevate -- which doesn't cover the full cost. And an SBA loan in tandem-- And on the flood insurance, if you only got that low amount, is that their final offer, or the final settlement, or that's a preliminary number they've given you now?

MS. DOUGLAS: That was the only advancement they would give us with no--

SENATOR BECK: Right. So they give you the advance, and then they make you call them a million times to get the rest of it? Okay.

Okay, thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you.

MS. DOUGLAS: Thank you.

EILEEN SCANLON: Good evening. My name is Eileen Scanlon. I'm a Highlands resident. I actually would like-- I'm not going to read my whole prepared statement. I've had seven generations of my family involved in the Highlands from, like, early campers over 100 years ago. I currently am speaking-- I would like to speak on behalf of people who own property and rent it out to people, and also summer residents.

The summer residents -- summer rentals, rental property, and the summer residents -- are not very wealthy people here in Highlands. We are very working, middle class people. Many of the homes have been handed down from generation to generation. And there appears to be very little help for anyone with a summer home or who is renting out property on a commercial basis. And we, just like many of the small business people, do not have the funds to be able to bring this back. And like many people

have pointed out, the fishing industry, the tourist industry -- it's the rental properties, it's the summer visitors that vitalize this town and bring in great deal of income, etc.

So as I said, I had the whole written, prepared statement, but I know you're running very short on time and patience.

I would also reiterate what many people have said: Insurance is incredibly difficult -- insultingly difficult for the amount of money that is paid out to them all the time. The New Jersey Banking and Insurance Commission, when I called them to make a complaint, told me to go on the website and get behind I don't know how many other people. But I found them to be particularly unhelpful. And I would certainly like to see hearings where these insurance regulators have to explain what they're regulating and what they're doing.

So speaking extemporaneously now, just what is going to happen with people who have affordable rental units? My units are year-round. The cost of raising them, the cost of then being able to rent them out at reasonable rates is just gone.

And my second-- An additional concern that I have is rental property that is being abandoned because it was badly damaged and the owners are just walking away. And I know that is a concern for many people. The other concerns, of course, are when these properties are abandoned it's going to be the health considerations for the nearby people.

Thank you for your time.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you.

J O L E N E H U E L S E N B E C K: Hello, my name is Jolene Huelsenbeck. I didn't prepare a speech or anything. I was just notified by

Mayor Nolan the other day to come here and share with you what I've been through -- and that's all I'm here to do.

I used to reside in Highlands -- I say that because our home is uninhabitable -- with my grandfather who is a double amputee veteran and my 6-year-old son. Our house was built in 1897 and has never had water inside. It is almost 5 feet off the ground, and after Hurricane Sandy, we had 3 feet of water within our home, which destroyed our home and made it uninhabitable.

I applied for FEMA on October 31. Two-and-a-half weeks went by with me calling every day asking where the inspector was, until finally the inspector had enough sense to go to our town and start asking around. And that's when he found out that he was given the wrong area code. So two-and-a-half weeks after I filed our inspector finally came. The inspector was wonderful -- he was great. He came to the house, went through everything, told us, "You know what? You're definitely going to get assistance. Your home is uninhabitable, you can't live here."

So a couple of more weeks go by. I keep calling, I keep calling. They tell me, "Well, you're denied for personal property." That's fine. We didn't have flood insurance. My grandmother used to handle all that, and when I moved in to take care of my grandfather, he took care of all his bills. He thought he had it; we didn't find out until Irene last year that he had let the policy lapse. By that time he was going in for his second amputation and we couldn't afford it.

When I finally, on Sunday the 25th -- I spent three-and-a-half hours on the phone with FEMA where they told me, "Your application is still being processed. Don't worry, everything's okay. It's just still being

processed.” I had provided every piece of documentation that they had asked for.

Monday the 26th -- I finally had had enough. I went to the Disaster Recovery Center again for the 13 millionth time, and that’s when they told me that we were denied because our flood zone was changed after Irene last year to be mandatory insurance, and that we would have been notified by either the mortgage company or the tax assessor. Well, my grandfather hasn’t had a mortgage since 1985; and he doesn’t pay taxes because he’s a 100 percent service-connected disabled veteran. So I asked them how would we know this? And they said, “Well, that was your job to find out.” I don’t know how you’re supposed to inquire about something that you don’t know exists.

So basically it came down to, we are not eligible for any assistance from FEMA because we didn’t know that we were to inquire about something that was invisible to us. And because we were not compliant under FEMA standards, we’re not eligible to apply for an SBA loan -- they automatically denied us.

Then, that Thursday, I called in New Jersey News 12 and spoke to Bill Vogel directly regarding our situation. He called me back on Friday and said that he was sorry but his hands were tied by Federal law and State law, and there was nothing that anybody could do for us. So on a personal level he would try to get other people within FEMA to help. I still haven’t heard anything back.

Because of the storm I was forced to put my grandfather into a nursing home, just for his safety and so that he could get the care that I normally provide him at home. So far, that’s \$300 a day that we’re

responsible for. The bill right now is up to \$7,800 as of midnight tonight -- that me and my grandfather are held responsible to pay. On top of that, after I found out about our denial, I wrote e-mails to Channel 7 news, Channel 4 news, Channel 2 news, the President, the Vice President, the Administrative Office of the White House, Senator Menendez, Senator Lautenberg, Representative Holt, and numerous other Congressmen; along with the Governor's Office and the *Asbury Park Press*. The following day, I called the Governor's Office and the aide to Governor Christie, her exact quote was, "There is nothing the State can, nor will we do, to help you. You were denied by FEMA. You were noncompliant." I said, "Well, what am I supposed to do? What am I supposed to do with my grandfather? This is his home. It's the only thing he has left. He worked his entire life for it." She told me, "Well, you can contact Social Services, and then he become a ward of the State and the State will take his home," which I find appalling. Because he wouldn't be in the physical and medical condition he was in if he didn't go and fight for Vietnam -- for this country.

Then, luckily, the *Asbury Park Press* -- there was one reporter who had heard of everything that I've been going through and all the red tape that I've been cutting through. And he did an article that was on the front page of the local section on Sunday, December 2, two weeks ago. And the follow-up story was actually in this Sunday's paper. And since then, because the media finally paid attention to what I'm going through, and I'm sure a million other people in this State are going through, people finally started coming forward to help. And I just find it appalling that I had to scream and shout and fight just to have people pay attention, to get help that should have been given to us immediately after the storm.

And I just wanted to let all of you know what I have been going through, because I know that there are other people, especially elderly people and veterans, going through this same, exact thing. And I just think that more funding should be available, more grants should be available, there should be things available for people who are-- Especially people like my grandfather who didn't know until a hurricane hit last year that he didn't have the flood insurance; who financially couldn't afford it because of medical injuries as a result of his duty to the army -- his service.

I just wanted to let you guys know. So thank you for listening.

SENATOR SARLO: You did a good job. (applause)

MS. HUELSENBECK: Thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: Mr. Tom Morford from Baker Marine Group -- who has been waiting patiently.

Is Janet Tauro still here? Okay, Janet, you'll be next.

Is Marilyn Jaccard--? You'll be next.

Any other residents who wanted to speak? The gentleman in the back, you'll be next. And the young lady in the blue.

Mr. Morford.

T H O M A S M O R F O R D: Yes, sir, thank you for coming here today. I appreciate it very much. My wife and I are also residents in town and we have two businesses -- one is Sasha's Boutique and the other business is Marina on the Bay. Her store -- which is kind of similar to when Danny was up speaking about the lack of business in town -- her store wasn't flooded. It wasn't harmed at all, but she's got no business. So again, it's a serious problem for the few businesses that were able to reopen.

The Marina on the Bay, it's kind of like what Tom Fote was speaking about. We have some serious issues with the stuff floating around -- the debris and such.

SENATOR SARLO: Is your marina-- Is it right down the hill-- Like, before I go over 36 where that restaurant is on the top of there -- Off the Hook? Is it right down the bottom there, or no?

MR. MORFORD: Well, no. We're about in the middle of town.

SENATOR SARLO: Oh, okay.

MR. MORFORD: And we're right next to the Clam Hut.

SENATOR SARLO: Oh, okay.

MR. MORFORD: And the Clam Hut--

SENATOR SARLO: I got a tour of the town today -- that's why.

MR. MORFORD: --the whole Clam Hut-- Yes, if you were down by the Clam Hut you would have seen there's a big, yellow awning they used to have for their tiki bar. Their whole tiki bar and their whole restaurant is in our marina.

And then we've also had a problem from the onset of the storm, where we had a 45-foot sailboat sink at the entrance to the marina. And that was finally removed last Friday. So we were able to get some boats in and out now for winter storage -- which ones are left. But the damage to the docks and the bulkheads and such is probably over \$1 million. And I don't see us having the wherewithal to try to do that all on our own. So I'm kind of hoping that they do come through with some kind of grant money to support the fisheries like they were discussing.

SENATOR SARLO: Just to the members of the Committee: We're hearing from this gentleman, we heard from another gentleman before. I know I've spoken with the Ocean Beach Marina folks, on Kittiwake. We know the folks on Long Beach Island-- It appears -- and that's something we need to consider -- most of the marinas are not covered under any Federal FEMA policy.

SENATOR BUCCO: Because it's a business.

SENATOR SARLO: Yes. Nothing is covered. There are no provisions for them at all. You can't even get flood insurance, I don't believe -- can you?

MR. MORFORD: We have a flood policy on our building.

SENATOR SARLO: On the building; but not on the docks.

MR. MORFORD: And I called about that policy, and they sent someone out right away. And I called and I said, "That's the only place where we had any satisfaction was with the flood guy who came right out." And she said, "Well, you must have some really serious damage." And I said, "Well, no, not really -- hot water heaters, some electric, and different things." And then she said, "Well, your policy is for \$60,000, but you have a \$50,000 deductible." (laughter) I'm like-- "We pay \$3,600, \$3,700 a year," and she said "plus, we do depreciation. The most you can collect would be like \$17,500."

SENATOR SARLO: Senator Kyrillos.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: To your point: At the next hearing we need to get somebody to testify who is knowledgeable on the emergency fisheries money, which I'm told will apply to recreational fishermen and presumably, at least to a degree, to marinas as well.

SENATOR SARLO: I'm going to ask the Office of Legislative Services to research the statute on that fund to see if there is any money.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: I think the DEP is the point on that.

SENATOR SARLO: Yes, if there are monies that are available to marinas that serve as a conduit for these recreational fishermen.

MR. MORFORD: Yes, absolutely. And it's a big part of the tourism and all the other related services that go along with them.

SENATOR SARLO: You live in Highlands as well, sir?

MR. MORFORD: Yes, but we happened to build up on the hill, so--

SENATOR SARLO: So your house, thank God, is okay.

MR. MORFORD: --we're dry. We were dry. We were able to take quite a few people in during the few weeks after the storm.

SENATOR VAN DREW: And you could have gotten a higher interest loan from SBA than you would have locally; I guess that would have been your other option.

SENATOR SARLO: We're going to-- We have your e-mail, sir. We're going to-- They're going to do some research. I'll speak with Senator Kyrillos and we'll see what we can do. You're one in a series, statewide, that we've heard from.

SENATOR VAN DREW: And that pertains to my district, too, Senator.

SENATOR SARLO: Yes -- Cape May County, LBI. I know a couple of people in LBI, too, also lost their marinas.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Cumberland County -- we have marinas.

SENATOR SARLO: Yes, that have been destroyed, and there's no way for them to-- They just don't have the money to rebuild it.

MR. MORFORD: It's big money; big, big money.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you.

MR. MORFORD: I appreciate it very much; thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you.

JANET TAURO: My name is Janet Tauro. Thank you very much for letting me speak.

I live in Brick Township. I'm with a citizens' group, also, called the Grandmothers, Mothers, and More for Energy Safety.

Our neighborhood was similarly damaged as you heard from other people tonight. We're bordered by Barnegat Bay and the Metedeconk River. And we also had a huge swamping of what the clean-up crews have characterized as *black water* -- *Category 3* -- which is a combination of kerosene, gasoline, and raw sewage. And about 80 percent of our neighborhood is empty of people not being able to live in their homes. And all that water-- We're cleaning up from our homes, but it has settled also into all the yards and the driveways. So it's not a good situation.

But actually I didn't come here to speak specifically about that. I wanted to speak about a related safety issue that emerged during Hurricane Sandy. And I'll try to be just as brief as possible.

As bad as things are, they actually could have been much worse because we could have had-- We came close to having a Fukushima-type event at the Jersey Shore, with the events that happened at Oyster Creek. Just like we lost power, Oyster Creek also lost power -- outside power. And

even though the plant was offline at the time for routine repairs, you still have to keep the reactor cool and you still have to keep the fuel pool cool. And the fuel pool has 750 metric tons of radioactive waste in it.

While they lost power, a level 2 emergency was declared, and that is because the intake canals -- I'll try not to be too techie and nerdy -- the intake canals flooded. And they came within inches of losing the service pumps -- the service pumps that keep the backup generators going. Now, the backup generators keep the reactor -- keep the cooling systems going. So had we lost the generators, then we have four hours of battery backup. So you can see that that situation really could have turned catastrophic very easily. While the intake canal was flooding, the emergency sirens became inoperable -- 36 of 43 emergency sirens. So had there been an accident those sirens wouldn't have worked and the people living in the evacuation area would have had no way of knowing because they didn't have radio, they didn't have TV, they didn't have Internet, they didn't have cell phones.

So at the same time-- Okay, so we came very close there. We have had subsequent inspections at the plant that have occurred, and it has been reported that there have been leaks and cracks that have been found in the cooling system.

As citizens we have filed -- and I won't go into detail -- legal proceedings to keep the reactor offline until those cracks and until those leaks have been fully evaluated through ultrasonic testing to make sure there weren't any other leaks and cracks. Also, that petition called for, maybe, redesigning the flood plan so that those pumps would not become endangered again.

Basically, what we would ask this Committee -- because in the past we have depended on the State to be advocates for us. Oyster Creek went back online. We need the State -- we need you to find out whether or not they have had thorough UT testing of the pipes and the cracks, and we need the analysis released. The plant restarted, and without that analysis being released.

SENATOR SARLO: We did hear-- I just want to interrupt you for a moment, because the Oyster Creek situation-- Commissioner Martin did address that at our hearing up in the Meadowlands; that they were aware of the situation, and then they actually began to shut it down to avoid any problems.

MS. TAURO: Oh, yes, totally aware of the situation -- and I acknowledge that completely. However, there's not been any analysis done or any analysis released that shows whether or not there are other cracks or other leaks.

SENATOR SARLO: Oh, okay.

MS. TAURO: And also you have an evacuation plan that is now very much compromised because there are construction vehicles, there's debris in roadways. There are displaced emergency personnel. What we're asking is that those -- that this situation really needs to be thoroughly addressed. And just as an aside, the State must insist that the sirens have battery backup. It's a very simple thing to do. And citizens have been requesting that for years.

And the other thing that would be great to insist upon is that those service pumps be upgraded to what's most technically advanced -- and

that is submersible pumps that would work if they were flooded and if they were submerged under water.

SENATOR VAN DREW: What happens--

SENATOR SARLO: Okay, question. We just need to wrap this up and move on.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Through the Chair, what happens when you ask those questions? I think they are worthy questions to ask next time we're interacting. But the service pumps being more elevated -- I remember reading about that as well -- but also about the warning system having battery backup.

MS. TAURO: Yes.

SENATOR VAN DREW: What happens when you--

MS. TAURO: It was totally--

SENATOR VAN DREW: Is it for expense -- cost? It costs too much?

MS. TAURO: Oh, yes. In the past, that was the reason that was given, is that it would be too costly. And in terms of the service pumps and the analysis, we have asked this through a formal, legal petition to the NRC, and actually citizens will be given a hearing before their review board on January 3.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Through the Chair, do we know if we have any regulatory authority over those issues?

SENATOR SARLO: They're DEP. The DEP does have regulatory oversight.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Then can we require, if need be, and we would have to evaluate -- can we require some of that?

MS. TAURO: If you asked for battery backup to the emergency sirens--

SENATOR SARLO: We can ask for that.

MS. TAURO: --it would mean a lot if the Senators asked for that for public safety.

SENATOR SARLO: I think we're going to do a whole comprehensive look at the Barnegat.

Okay, thank you.

MS. TAURO: Well, thank you very much for letting me talk to you.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you for-- Okay.

All right, the final three witnesses--

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: Oh, there's one more. Don't forget me.

SENATOR SARLO: Yes, you're going now, ma'am.

MARILYN JACCARD: Okay.

SENATOR SARLO: Okay, ma'am.

MS. JACCARD: Okay, I'm sorry. Are you talking to me?

SENATOR SARLO: You're up.

MS. JACCARD: Are you talking to me? Okay. (laughter)

My name is Marilyn Jaccard. I live in the Fountains. I mean -- I'm sorry -- I live in the Highlands. I have my notes because I have to keep this compartmentalized.

First off, the woman who talked about her father (*sic*) who has to go into the nursing home -- there's a lot of pain and suffering out there right now. It's not in the news anymore. I think they have the shore

confused; they see it as a bunch of rich people living there and “Look at this. They don’t deserve to live on the ocean.” It’s hardworking, blue-collar, middle class, upper middle class, who deserve this.

I started my own company and I’ve run it for 24 years. I sell medical equipment. And everybody’s asking, “How did this affect you -- just the storm?” And the storm goes way back before this pain and suffering has been -- I’m sorry -- the pain and suffering has been happening long before the storm. And now the storm has really impacted. So this is what’s happening right now.

A friend of mine is living-- I’ve been through disasters; I was in the Fountains fire five years ago. So I know what these people are going through, I know it’s large scale and I’m very concerned.

First of all, Mary is living with me. Her husband died two months ago. He survived cancer; he went to the hospital, and he got sepsis, and he died. She’s not getting help there. This storm hits, she loses her house, she’s in total shock. She doesn’t know what to do. She goes to FEMA. And I want everyone to be aware of this -- is the media still here, because you need to get this in the paper, okay? FEMA asked if she had insurance. She’s in foreclosure because she’s ill. She doesn’t know, and she says, “I don’t think so. I know the bank probably did.” And they said, “Denied.” Because the bank had coverage. So they denied her. This woman lost everything. And if it wasn’t for this angel -- and their name is Coutras and Associates; they made her aware of that. And this is what you need to make people aware: If you’re in foreclosure, you’re entitled to insurance. And I did not know that. So thank God, he’s helping here. Because the same thing: the bank just went to her and just tried to give her

\$7,000 and toss her aside. She lost everything she owns. This is unacceptable. So then when they tried to give her housing, they want to put her somewhere else. She works at bars; she could walk there. I live up the hill; I live up on the hill. She she's staying with me. I'm being devastated, I can't get help and that's fine. I'm not charging her anything, but yet I'm not getting any help, she's not getting any help. But, thank God, this gentleman is helping her.

Okay. Now, that being said, that's happening to so many people. So we need to get that in there because it's just not right.

So now I was misled, because I'm in foreclosure in a property that I had in Sea Bright. And that burned in the fire, like I said. And it's a little crazy which is what I need to talk to you afterwards, so I'm not going to go into it much. But Countrywide was my mortgage; they went belly up, put me in a workout, said I didn't pay my mortgage. I did pay my mortgage. It's a nightmare.

And then the fire happened. It's another nightmare with the association and condominium laws. And there are too many powers and laws in New Jersey, and it's really destroying this country. And the corruption is getting away with it because the corruption that they do is legal because it's all done by lawyers. And what I'm watching is lawyers, banks, and insurance companies are destroying us again.

Now, what really concerns me is when I started researching, because the bank told me again -- and they lied to me -- that I had ownership to the property. But I don't. I almost got myself arrested. I've been told different stories from the banks all over the place.

SENATOR SARLO: Ma'am, are you talking about a property that was damaged in the hurricane?

MS. JACCARD: Yes, so this is where I'm getting to.

So I'm trying to see--

SENATOR SARLO: Yes, I just want to-- It seems like you have gone through a lot in the last couple of--

MS. JACCARD: I know, it gets-- I'm going to get right to the point. I know it's very confusing.

SENATOR SARLO: I want to deal with hurricane related.

MS. JACCARD: So I decide to find out what's going on. I look up public law, because they're not going to give-- They're not going to give SBA loans to businesses that are in the coastal barrier. So I looked up what that is, and basically it's written by the public board of directors and the representatives. It's not written by the government or FEMA. And they can change at any time. It was changed one time in 2000; and it was just changed August 13, 2012 -- this past August. And then right after the storm -- and I addressed this at a meeting, and I was in the paper -- a week after the storm there was a two-page article in the *Wall Street Journal* talking about how they're going to flatten out Sea Bright and they told how they're going to section it out. People are going to be bought out -- \$250,000 a house -- blah, blah, blah. The law, when it was changed on August 13, states exactly that: It states what that barrier coastal act is and, basically, it explains Sea Bright to a *T*. There's nothing on the beaches; you can develop it -- and boom, boom, boom.

So now I'm finding out that people in Highlands are getting money, but like with Mary, now -- she's supposedly getting insurance. She

got an insurance check today and it was made out to the insurance company and her. She can't cash it because it's been made out to her and the other insurance company, and her husband. But her husband is dead. So now she has to prove that her husband is dead. And then she has to send it back to the insurance company, to send it back to her, to get it endorsed, to send it back here. This is nuts. I'm concerned that this law -- and what's happening is kind of combined, because they're making it almost impossible for people to come back there. And what this law states is that if businesses can't raise them up 10 feet -- and that's in Sea Bright also -- they can't get insurance. Now, after the fire I know for a fact, when I bought my house, I couldn't get insurance, and I had to get Lloyd's of London -- which was very expensive, but I got it. Following -- and this Coutras and Associates who help people; that's what they are. They're adjustors and they're wonderful people, and if you want their number I'd be happy to give it to you.

SENATOR SARLO: Ma'am, I need you to begin to wrap up, please.

MS. JACCARD: I am -- I'm wrapping it up now.

SENATOR SARLO: I just need to--

MS. JACCARD: Well, then I went and I followed it, because -- the reason I'm saying that is because, to find out what you are due and what you are owed, it takes an army of people; and nobody can do that.

So that law-- They're not going to be able to get loans. So if you can't get loans, that means you're not going to be able-- That law, basically, is kind of like shutting everybody down. You can't get help, but you can get help. And it seems like they're not helping the Highlands

recover. And what I'm concerned about is that they're kind of like letting things fall apart. And I'm concerned about eminent domain in a Trojan horse. That's exactly what I'm concerned about.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you. Thank you for your concerns.

MS. JACCARD: Okay. And I hope that was coherent.

And actually, one more thing: If Governor Christie hears this, I really personally ask him to please meet with me because there is more to this. And I think he really needs to understand what's really, really going down. Because one person speaks for 500. And this is the entire coast of New Jersey, okay? This is bigger than Katrina and we're not in the news anymore. People are forgetting about us, and I just find it a little too convenient, and I'm very, very scared for the shore; I really am.

So thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: Michael Golub and Kathy Ruprecht.

And I believe that's all we will hear from today.

Oh, I'm sorry. The last person we'll hear from today will be Ann Goldman from the Family Services Organization.

MICHAEL S. GOLUB: Good evening. I'm going to give you remarks, and you can make copies and pass them out. You've been here a long time, and I know that because I was the first person in the room, and I'm still here.

I represent an organization that's loosely knit right now of about eight, what I consider to be, medium- and large-sized developers who, in the wake of the storm-- They're good guys, they're honest, they're sincere, they've got a lot of integrity; but they grew a conscience together, as a group. And they wanted to sit down and develop some sort of a coalition,

work with some of the lending institutions, and take on some projects that had gone into foreclosure or just had been in bankruptcy, or whatever, to provide some temporary housing and rotate people back into their own homes. They've got some creative ideas. They asked me as a common friend of all of them -- we're in an investment group together -- if I wouldn't mind calling FEMA. And I spent two weeks, basically, saying volley-for-serve. I was calling FEMA and they were telling me to go talk to local municipal officials and construction officials; and then they were telling me to go back and speak to FEMA. Three days ago I went to a meeting with these gentlemen, which 8 of the 12 of them were here; they've since left because they had a meeting tonight. And I said, you know, it's like you could get your hair cut waiting for somebody to pick up the phone. So I did; I walked across the street to Pat's Barber Shop in Belmar and sat there and got a haircut, on hold with the phone sitting -- my BlackBerry sitting on the counter right at the barber's chair. And then the three additional people after me got their hair cut. We were going to do a pool, but we decided to say, "No, that's okay." And that was just one day.

Today, one of those municipalities unsealed bids to repair their boardwalk. Those bids came in between \$2.7 million and \$13 million for the same project -- for the same project. So there are a lot of issues that we can work out, as we should be responsible enough to work out as business people, making sure that we're proposing similar things with similar specs and things like that. And it was spec'ed out.

But my concern is that maybe the State can provide some leadership; nothing underhanded, obviously, nothing inappropriate or undue influence. Maybe you can provide some sort of an incubator for

people who are similar to our organization to sit down with local officials and hash out some ideas. There are some big companies out there that are already moving in, some of which are from out of state. I know there's one company, AshBritt, that's doing a tremendous amount of work in the area, and that's fine. There's a place and a need for everything and everyone. These companies that I'm speaking of -- which again I can offer their names at a separate time, subsequent to me giving you my remarks -- employ a lot of people who own these homes. They employ the guys with the pickup trucks and the toolboxes. So I think there's a way here of the community fixing itself, repairing itself, and becoming financially vibrant. Some of these guys have entertained the idea and had discussion with their banks and lending institutions about doing low interest and no-interest loans. And they go the gamut from: one of our partners is a guy who distributes modular pre-fab construction -- 10 lines of 12 -- he's the largest distributor in this part of the country; and other folks do industrial and commercial development.

So I'll leave it at that. I apologize for the red light going on, but these guys are really passionate about it. We have a tremendous opportunity here to do right by the people of New Jersey, do right by ourselves, and do right by the environment. I was listening to Mr. Tittel from the Sierra Club, and I agree. And I would reverberate everything that he said, that we're inclined and we're comfortable and we're familiar with incorporating a bunch of different types of clean, green, reusable and renewable energy in some of these projects.

Thank you very much, and I appreciate it. Have a nice holiday.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR SARLO: Yes, sir.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: If I could just chime in.

This is an excellent suggestion, an excellent offer. I have some impression that the New Jersey Builders Association may have met with the Commissioner of Community Affairs. I don't know if you're a member of that group; you ought to communicate with them

MR. GOLUB: These are the Jersey Shore Builders.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Okay. Well, I'll just say on behalf of the affected communities in my district, I'm sure every Senator would feel the same way. If I can help liaison with the right people in the right affected towns so that your guys can come in and bring efficiencies and economies of scale, and do things for less to get people up and running and give them a home, we all want to help.

So there may be a way to do it more en masse. We're all trying to find our way through with these issues.

MR. GOLUB: Agreed.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: But if we have to do it in a more surgical way, reach out to us so we can get to the right people. And you can go in and master plan a whole chunk of a community and get it done faster and better.

MR. GOLUB: Thank you, Senator.

The whole thing actually came up by accident because my partners were very concerned. We have an investment group of about almost 800 people here in the Northeast; about 450 in New Jersey. So we actually contracted two tractor trailer loads of generators to come up during the storm and sold them for exactly what we paid for them. And when

people came to buy, they were like, “What’s wrong with these?” There’s nothing wrong with them. It says Homelite, Husky from Home Depot; we just happened to get it in Coral Springs and Parkland, Florida, and brought it up here; and we actually took up a load from Richmond, Virginia, as well. And people were totally shocked that we weren’t taking up residency on a highway and selling generators that we had bought for \$600, \$700 for \$1,200 and \$1,500. We didn’t want to do that, but when people found out what these guys were doing, they said, “Well, why don’t you work on my house?”

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Yes.

MR. GOLUB: And they would offer their expertise to do things like planning and things like that.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Real quick, Chair, because I know we’re late.

But you’re right, and we want to keep the work local. And people are so worried that the people who they’re hiring are going to be reputable and really do the job right. Because if it’s not done right, people are going to get sick in their homes.

MR. GOLUB: And this is their backyard. These are their people. My last sentence here says, “This is the way of New Jersey. We are, by nature, proud, much more inclined to offer help to our fellow citizens and far less likely to turn our backs on each other, especially when we have the means and tools in place to deliver needed results that are mutually beneficial.”

The adults are supposed to be in charge; that’s what I heard. So I’m hoping that we can somehow get in charge.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, sir.

Thank you, sir. Thank you for your patience today.

MR. GOLUB: Thank you. God bless all of you. Have a nice holiday.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, sir.

After Kathy speaks, the final two people are going to give testimony, and then we're going to close the hearing today and hopefully we will back.

It will be Diane Keaveny, Highlands Business Partnership; and Ann Goldman, FSO -- Family Services organization of Monmouth County.

KATHLEEN RUPRECHT: Thank you.

My name is Kathy Ruprecht. For the last 15 years I've been a teacher at Hugh J. Boyd School in Seaside Heights. I'm here to let you know what has happened to us.

When Sandy hit we had never imagined the destruction that would happen to our school, to our community, and to our school family. Every single family of our 220 students was left homeless within a matter of minutes; a third of our staff lost their homes. And still, in the days that followed, many of our teachers and support personnel members went to the shelters to make sure that our students and their families were safe -- many of the families left with minimal belongings.

Our members who lost everything have helped our families get clothing, connect with each other, and meet their immediate needs. Many of our families are Hispanic and were hesitant to seek help. Our ESL teacher -- our English as a Second Language teacher -- was invaluable in helping assist these families.

Our school was flooded when the bay met the ocean in Seaside, but we were graciously welcomed into Central Regional High School. Our two districts had just signed a shared service agreement, but I'm sure they had no idea what they were getting into.

Our school opened at the Central Regional High School on Monday, November 12; our students and families began arriving at 7 a.m. We had no idea what to expect two weeks after the storm: where many of our families were, what shape they were in, if they were even still local.

When we opened up at, like I said, 7 o'clock in the morning our families started to come. There were a lot of tears that day from the staff and the families when they started to see us again. That first day we had almost 90 students come to our school.

We were housed in one big room in the school for almost two weeks and we had nothing -- no supplies, nothing for the students; no books, nothing. But we had an incredible determination and we moved forward. We've done it by working together in an awful situation.

Some things that you should know: We had some of our families paying taxis -- \$40 one-way -- to get to school before transportation was arranged, because they valued their education and wanted their kids to continue back to some normalcy, since they were displaced and were no longer in their homes. One month later, we still have some minimal supplies, but help is starting to come in. We've had extensive water damage throughout the building and we're going to be at Central Regional High School for the next school year. We probably won't be back in our own school until September.

Even our staff has been greatly affected. We had a teacher who was living with 15 other adults in a house with one bathroom and didn't have room for her children -- they had to go somewhere else to live. we've had parents who have said, "My child, when I said I'd get to go back to the house, what do you want?" she said, 'You have to get my trumpet. The music teacher is going to want my trumpet. Bring back my trumpet.'

We've had students say to their family, "Get my Wii system when you go because we're going to need money and we can sell it because we have nothing now." It's just be an incredible situation hearing the stories from the students.

Our school is pre-K to 6th grade; our 6th graders are now starting to write stories about what they experienced during the storm. We're hoping to put the book together and keep it in our school library for the students as they come up, to see what we survived, to learn about perseverance and all the valuable lessons that can be learned from it.

It's just been incredible, but the families know the importance of education. The school is just the building, but it's the students, the families, and the teachers who are really the heart and soul of that community.

Thank you.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Thank you very much for your testimony, and you're right.

Next we have Diane Keaveny from the Highlands Business Partnership. (no response)

I guess we don't.

And then, finally, we have Ann Goldman, the Executive Director of the FSO -- Family Service Organization.

A N N G O L D M A N: We represent Family-Based Services, which is the FSO in Monmouth County. The FSOs are the peer support groups for families with mental illness. We're a small nonprofit funded through the Department of Children and Families.

You have our testimony, so we're not going to read through that. We just want to give you a quick snapshot of what it was like for families that had mentally ill children home, who were already traumatized families that were in a further trauma situation because of poor coordination of resources and supports in the county.

So we just have two quick snapshots, and then we can close it for you.

C I N A I D A A N T H O N Y: Yes, I just wanted to share, especially in a Spanish speaking community -- I mean, it's always difficult for families.

The Spanish-speaking families that we work with in a community already have a difficult time assessing services in the community. But now with dealing with FEMA and dealing with all these social services, there isn't anybody, really, to interpret for them. All of the applications are in English. So we've been working really hard with the families who don't speak English, or who don't understand how the system works. And it's been really disheartening to see them struggle, especially with their children, with the mental illness, and with everything that's going on in their community. It's just been very difficult.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Thank you for your work. Thank you for your time.

B A R B A R A H A R R I S: One of my responsibilities is connecting the families to the community resources. So when we came back from the storm, we had to, really, start pounding the pavement to try to find out where distribution sites were where they could get food or clothing -- anything. And we found that it was mainly-- The areas we found, we found one in Hazlet, Union Beach, and in Sea Bright. We have a lot of families-- We cover families all over Monmouth County, and those are the only areas where we were able to try to send families to, but then we found out they didn't want us to send families. So we would have to go to those sites and get as much stuff as we could to take it back to our offices and distribute it to our families. So we had a problem finding the resources to connect our families to.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Thank you for your testimony.

MS. GOLDMAN: Thank you.

SENATOR VAN DREW: And yes, Senator Pou.

SENATOR POU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You just mentioned that certain of the facilities that you wanted to go to and obtain some of the supplies and materials for some of your families -- they didn't want the families to go there. Why was that?

MS. HARRIS: Because they were saying that there were too many people coming and it was mainly for people in that area. Because when we explained to them that we were a family support organization, then they were more free to let us take stuff to take it back and distribute to our families.

They were telling us that the reason that the distribution was in those areas was because those were the areas that they were hearing about on the news that got affected badly. But Long Branch was hit pretty badly.

SENATOR POU: Right.

MS. HARRIS: And they didn't have a site there.

SENATOR POU: So there was no site in Long Branch.

MS. HARRIS: Not in the beginning.

MS. GOLDMAN: (off mike) Not-- There is a site now.

MS. HARRIS: Yes, there is now, but not in the beginning. Because we met some of the people who were bringing in truckloads of stuff, and that's how we were able to get stuff.

MS. ANTHONY: Yes, the services--

MS. GOLDMAN: In Long Branch there was such confusion because nobody really understood where the shelter was going to be -- whether it was going to be at the university or at the middle school. So it was unclear, when people needed to get to the shelter, about where they were going to go. And we actually sent some people up to Monmouth University, but by then they had shut the shelter and moved people back to the middle school in Long Branch.

So this is an issue of coordination that even if we could-- The websites, once we had electricity -- a good website where all the shelters were, where all the food pantries were, where all-- Somebody at the top level, just to coordinate it, so if somebody calls us-- Because all of our families are incredibly stressed to begin with; they're all in the mental health system. So if they call and they say, "I live in Asbury Park. Can you tell me where I can get food? Where I can get the FEMA office? Where I

can get this and this?" It would have been really great if we didn't have to call the Salvation Army, if we didn't have to call the Red Cross, if we didn't have to call the towns separately. And that's what wound up happening.

SENATOR BECK: Chairman, would you mind if I just--

SENATOR VAN DREW: Yes, Senator Beck.

SENATOR BECK: So if I could just make one quick suggestion, which is, of course, after every disaster, particularly this one, we learn something. And we know there's room for improvement. And one of the things the Monmouth Office of Emergency Management is going to do is make sure that their list of social service organizations is complete. So maybe you're not on their list, but you clearly should be, so that as they're disseminating information-- Because they did disseminate a lot of information, but I don't know if, maybe, you weren't on their list of folks who they were communicating with.

MS. GOLDMAN: No, actually we were on the list. But what happened is that we got information from them, information from United Way, information from the Salvation Army, information from -- separately, like nobody seemed to know what the right hand and the left hand were doing.

SENATOR BECK: Right. The county tries to coordinate that as best as they can, but you always do have some independent efforts. So I'm not surprised.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Thank you, Senator Beck.

I'm sure the Senator will take that back as well. And actually it's required by law, legislation that we passed in the past -- you're supposed to be notified of that because of the type of organization that you are.

So thank you for being here.

Was there anybody else? I think we got everybody -- going once, twice, three times-- We are--

Oh, we have one more. I don't know that we're going to have anybody (indiscernible), but we have a gentleman in a plaid shirt in the back.

DAVID DELUCIA: (off mike) I just -- real quick, then I'm on my way out the door.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Well, this gentleman didn't speak at all, so we're going to allow him to go first.

CORY WINGERTER: (off mike) Sir, sir, I'm sorry. I was on the list, but I'm not (indiscernible).

SENATOR VAN DREW: Okay, come on forward.

MR. WINGERTER: How you doing?

SENATOR VAN DREW: Why don't you sit right next to this gentleman here.

MR. DELUCIA: Yes, I'm from Keansburg--

SENATOR VAN DREW: We're going to have this gentleman, we're going to have you, and I believe that's it for everybody who has not spoken at all; and this gentleman very briefly wants to speak one more time.

MR. DELUCIA: Yes, I came in--

SENATOR VAN DREW: Please tell us your name.

MR. DELUCIA: Dave. My name's Dave Delucia. I'm from Keansburg, okay?

I did fine during the storm. But the town would've made it through the storm if we didn't have the two breaches on the beach -- we

had two breaks as you know. The Army Corps of Engineers could have fixed it, or the State or somebody. We could have been high and dry and in good shape if we just didn't have those two breaks.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Is it a cut created so people can access the beach?

MR. DELUCIA: Yes, people do go across it, yes. And the flood system worked for the most part -- except for the two breaks. The creek was pumped out, the flood gate works.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Thank you. Very briefly, I know one of the issues that they're thinking about is keeping dunes in protected areas contiguous. And rather than have a break so you could access a beach, you would have a stairway where you can climb over. So I know that's one of the areas they're discussing.

MR. DELUCIA: They're going to have to fortify it more or something. They have to do something -- tweak it. But we would have been through with flying colors. That's it.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Thank you.

Sir, give me your name.

MR. WINGERTER: Hi, Cory Wingerter. I know it's late. I appreciate the time.

SENATOR VAN DREW: And where are you from, Cory

MR. WINGERTER: Millstone Township. A lifelong resident of Monmouth County. Millstone Township -- 32 square miles. Been out of power for 11 days. We had 12 inches of snow the last day during that nor'easter. And Millstone is 10,000 residents in 32 square miles -- the only town in Monmouth County totally septic, well, and State Police. Because

we're a rural community, we're probably one of the last towns in Monmouth County to be energized by JCP&L. But our township committee did a good job, our DPW did a good job.

Our family also has a summer home down in Lavallette -- 86 years there, my mom's been down there. Lavallette did a great job. I think the dunes definitely helped Lavallette. We're on the beach side in an original beach house, no insulation, tongue-and-groove on the inside.

We had a very good experience with FEMA. My heart breaks for everybody up here, but it was definitely-- They've done a good job down in Lavallette. Access has been tough, but it's been good.

I'm also in the restaurant business; I'm on the Executive Board of New Jersey Restaurant Association. We have a restaurant up in Montgomery. The residents out there wanted to help. We were here twice in Highlands with two truckloads. We were in Union Beach, Keansburg, Red Bank, and Neptune with Montgomery and Princeton residents, dropping off goods at our restaurant for the communities. And they were great here. All the volunteers here were great.

We were down for six days and our restaurant out in Montgomery-- I just have some quick statistics here. I called our vendors yesterday. Point Pleasant Distributors, a major beer distributor in Monmouth and Ocean County. After the storm they had 166 accounts closed. They estimate by December 31, 135 of those accounts will still be closed; by April 31 (*sic*) they expect 120 of those accounts to still be closed; and by the end of the season -- or the start of the season -- they expect 52 of their accounts to be closed.

Excellent Meats, who I use in Toms River -- 10 of his 150 accounts are closed and he expects 5 of them not to open up.

Johnson Restaurant Supply in Neptune, one of the biggest restaurant suppliers, he has 35 still closed and he does not expect 5 of them to reopen.

Once again, down the Crab's Claw-- I said we had a home down in Lavallette; they hope to open by St. Patrick's Day. To give you an idea, a restaurant that does \$30,000 a week in business -- 65 percent of that, \$20,000 a week, goes to meat, fish, paper -- all those different entities that we support. And those restaurants up and down the shore are not opening. They're not opening and the trickle effect is going to be huge -- a \$30,000 a week restaurant is about \$2,500 a week in sales tax. So there is a study that Atlantic City did that 41 percent of the Jersey Shore, Atlantic City -- they don't think exists anymore, when Atlantic City commissioned the study. There's basically 40,000 hourly employees right now out of work along the shore. I was at Danny's restaurant on Sunday. I brought my 85-year-old mother who likes his martinis there. And I have to hand it to him - - he had a great ad in the paper: Go East. He had a really good, very effective ad -- go east to eat; go east to dine. And we really need the travel and industry people of New Jersey to promote the shore.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Thank you for your testimony and your help.

I have one question for you.

MR. WINGERTER: Yes.

SENATOR VAN DREW: I want to live to be 85. What kind of martini is she drinking? (laughter)

MR. WINGERTER: Well, I buy her Kettle One. She doesn't like that, though.

SENATOR VAN DREW: There you go.

MR. WINGERTER: I mean, she doesn't appreciate that I buy her Kettle One.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Thank you for being here.

MR. WINGERTER: Splash of water.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Okay, and I think we have one more person, and you spoke once before so we're going to limit you here -- very quickly.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: Two seconds.

This is not actually my idea; this is something that came up in a discussion with my Mayor in Marlboro, John Hornik.

While I fought against these and I supported the end of them, I think it might be time to maybe revisit an RCA-type of arrangement for the funding for some of these really low- and middle-income families who are going to lose their homes. There's millions and millions of dollars that is sitting in affordable housing trust funds right now and it might be the practical thing to do to get some of these people back into their homes.

Thank you.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Thank you. Good point; I appreciate your input.

Everyone, that's it. Thank you for being here. The meeting is adjourned.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)