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Christie Administration Announces \$3 Million Grant To Help Local Zoning Officers Expedite Sandy Reconstruction

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Grant Will Help Storm-Damaged Municipalities Accelerate The Regulatory Process Associated With Rebuilding

Trenton, NJ – The Christie Administration today announced \$3 million in federal grant assistance for Sandy-impacted municipalities to help their zoning offices better handle the influx of rebuilding applications that are starting to arrive. The grants will help towns hire additional staff and rent larger space for their zoning offices to better meet the needs of homeowners, businesses, and rental property owners who need zoning permits to rebuild.

"These grants will help towns ease any backlog of applications or prevent it altogether by covering the cost of extra zoning officers and support staff," said New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Richard E. Constable, III, whose Department is administering many of the Sandy recovery programs for the state. "Smaller municipalities that employ only part-time zoning officers aren't used to heavy construction activity, so the state is stepping in to help."

The grant assistance for local zoning offices is funded through Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery monies provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Grants are available to municipalities located in the nine counties most impacted by Superstorm Sandy as determined by HUD (Atlantic, Bergen, Cape May, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean and Union).

In order to be eligible for a grant award, municipalities must establish their zoning office has a need for additional funding. Options that demonstrate need include towns where zoning applications have increased by at least 10% exclusively because of Sandy or towns that reduced the property assessments of 100 homes or more since the storm.

Municipalities awarded a grant can use the funds to hire technical and administrative support staff directly; procure staff from private firms on an as needed basis; and secure additional office space to accommodate more people.

The DCA's Office of Local Planning Services, which is administering the grant initiative, will contact every municipality in the relevant counties to inform them of the assistance and encourage them to apply if they meet eligibility requirements. Applications for grant assistance are being accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis until all funds are exhausted.

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Press Contact:
Michael Drenniak
Colin Reed
609-777-2600

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