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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 5, 2005

The Honorable George E. Pataki
Governor
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Pataki:

I write to respectfully urge you to formally ask the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the emergency assistance necessary to help the local governments of Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Genesee, Greene, Madison, Orange, Schenectady, Schoharie, Sullivan, Tioga and Ulster counties recover from the heavy storms of this past weekend. It is my understanding that you have not yet declared a State of Emergency in any of these counties, all of which have sustained serious damage to homes and infrastructure.

The heavy rain storms that poured through these counties this past weekend yielded many inches of rainfall in just two days. Because the brunt of the damage occurred yesterday, much of the water has not yet receded and many municipalities cannot yet begin to assess damage totals, however some have and the total are devastating. For example, a preliminary assessment $3.4 million in damage has been estimated for just Delaware County. When the flooding does subside, these counties are sure to face the repair and restoration of numerous roads, culverts, bridges, ditches and streams.

Large areas of the western Hudson Valley were hit by the heaviest flooding in decades as the Delaware, Esopus, Roundout and Walkill Rivers overflowed, some cresting substantially above flood stage, and many smaller streams flooded as well. The black dirt farming region in Orange County was inundated when the Walkill River overflowed its banks. While thousands of people have been evacuated from their homes, New York has sustained at least one fatality as a result of the rising water and swift currents. Many residents do not have flood insurance, and will suffer severe economic hardship as they attempt to rebuild their homes and lives.

In Broome County, the highest river levels were reached in almost 70 years which closed many roads and drove hundreds of residents from their homes. Properties all across the region have been impacted, one such place is the En-Joie Golf Club in Endicott, home of the renowned B.C Open. This event plays a vital role to the economy of the Greater Binghamton Area. The course is already in disrepair in the wake of the hurricanes that ravaged much of the country last September. This flooding will delay repairs and present new challenges as officials strive to keep the course in top PGA caliber condition to retain the B.C Open.

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING OFFICE:

☐ ALBANY: LEO O'BRIEN BUILDING ROOM 420 ALBANY, NY 12207 (518) 431-4070

☐ BINGHAMTON: FEDERAL OFFICE BUILDING 15 HENRY STREET ROOM B6 BINGHAMTON, NY 13901 (607) 772-8109

☐ BUFFALO: 111 WEST HURON ROOM 620 BUFFALO, NY 14202 (716) 846-4111

☐ HUDSON VALLEY: P.O. BOX A RED HOOK, NY 12571 (914) 285-9741 (845) 569-0923

☐ LONG ISLAND: TWO GREENWAY PLAZA 145 PINE LAWN ROAD ROOM 300N MELVILLE, NY 11747 (631) 753-0978

☐ NEW YORK CITY: 757 THIRD AVENUE SUITE 1702 NEW YORK, NY 10017 (212) 486-4430 TDD: (212) 486-7661

☐ ROCHESTER: 100 STATE STREET ROOM 3040 ROCHESTER, NY 14614 (716) 263-5866

☐ SYRACUSE: 100 SOUTH CLINTON ROOM 841 SYRACUSE, NY 13261 (315) 423-5471

☐ WASHINGTON: 313 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING WASHINGTON, DC 20510 (202) 224-6542 TDD: (202) 224-0420

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Residents and businesses recognize that springtime in Upstate New York often brings damaging storms; however, it appears that this spate was especially severe. Already strained by the burden of skyrocketing municipal budgets, these communities simply cannot bear the extra burden placed upon them by severe weather systems. As the storm clouds subside and the sun begins to break through today, I hope you will quickly declare a State of Emergency in these counties so that we can move forward together in seeking federal assistance for these communities. As you are aware, without FEMA's help, the ability of these local governments to deliver the essential services their citizens depend on could be greatly diminished.

Thank you for your consideration of my request. I look forward to working with you to ensure that FEMA will provide these areas with much needed aid and pledge my support once your office officially declares the counties as disaster areas. I am sure you will agree that given the multiple financial demands these comminutes face, they deserve to be reimbursed as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

Charles Schumer

Charles E. Schumer
United States Senate