ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION HELD BY
THE NEW YORK STATE SENATE
BIPARTISAN TASK FORCE FOR "HURRICANE SANDY" RECOVERY

Freeport Recreation Center
130 East Merrick Road
Freeport, New York 11520

January 3, 2013

PRESIDING:

Senator Malcolm A. Smith
Co-Chair

Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr.

SENATE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Philip M. Boyle

Senator David Carlucci

Senator Martin J. Golden

Senator Carl L. Marcellino

Senator Jack M. Martins

Senator Diane J. Savino

Senator Lee M. Zeldin

ALSO PRESENT:

Mike Duval
Representing Senator James Sanders, Jr.
10th Senatorial District

ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS:

Bill Biondi
Mayor
Village of Mastic Beach, New York

Peter Casserly
Deputy Mayor
Village of Amityville, New York

Randi Shubin Dresner
Executive Director
Island Harvest

Denise Ford
County Legislator
Nassau County, New York

Kevin Hannifan
Commissioner of Highway
Town of Oyster Bay, New York

Andrew Hardwick
Mayor
Incorporated village of Freeport, New York

Marc Herbst
Executive Director
Long Island Contractors Association

Kendall Lampkin
Executive Assistant to Supervisor Murray
Town of Hempstead, New York

Raymond Maguire
Executive Director, Freeport Fire Department
Freeport, New York

Hal Mayer
Representing Supervisor Venditto
Town of Oyster Bay, New York

ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS:

Justin McCaffery
Commissioner of Public Safety
Town of Oyster Bay, New York

Thomas McDonough
Director of Emergency Management
Town of North Hempstead, New York

John Miller
CEO
American Red Cross, Greater Long Island Region

Ed Moltzen
Assistant to County Executive Bellone
Suffolk County, New York

Frank Nocerino
Commissioner of Parks
Town of Oyster Bay, New York

Paule Pachter
Executive Director
Long Island Cares

James Ruzicka
Mayor
Incorporated village of Island Park, New York

Jack Schnirman
City Manager
City of Long Beach, New York

Warren Tackenberg
Executive Director
Nassau County Village Officials Association

Robert Walker
Chief Deputy County Executive
Nassau County, New York

Michael Watt
Executive Director
Long Island Gas and Retailers Association

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: And welcome to the village of Freeport.

Mayor Hardwick, thank you very much for allowing us to host it here.

My name is Senator Chuck Fuschillo, and I want to thank everybody who has attended today.

The members of the Task Force had gone on a tour for about two hours. We visited Island Park, Oceanside, and the village of Freeport, and saw the destruction that "Sandy" has caused.

Before we start with the Task Force, I'm going to ask everybody to introduce themselves.

To my left, is the co-chair of the Task Force, Senator Malcolm Smith.

Malcolm, welcome.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you.

Thank you very much, Senator Fuschillo. Thank you for providing the members of the Task Force with what I believe was extremely educational information.

To Mayor Ruzicka, and to Mayor Hardwick, thank you. We clearly got the message.

I can tell you that, Senator Fuschillo, along with his other colleagues in Long Island, have been extremely aggressive around the needs of the

response to "Sandy."

We are here; want to hear from you; want to make sure that you understand that your interest is our interest.

Obviously, what is occurring in Washington, as far as we're concerned, has nothing to do with regard to how we're going to perform in Albany, New York. You can be assured, we are not going to do that. We understand how important this is, and that's why Leader Skelos and Leader Klein put this task force together, so we can let you realize how significant this is.

So, again, let me thank you for being here. We're looking forward to hearing your comments.

Sorry that my colleague Senator Lanza came down with the flu; he is not here. And two other of my colleagues, Senator Addabbo was here, had to leave, and Senator Sanders had a rep also.

With that, I turn it over to you.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: If everybody can just go around and introduce themselves.

Diane?

SENATOR SAVINO: Thank you, Senator Fuschillo and Senator Smith.

I'm Senator Diane Savino. I represent the

north and east shores of Staten Island, as well as the communities of south Brooklyn, hit by "Sandy," Coney Island, Brighton Beach.

On behalf of Senator Lanza, my colleague from Staten Island, as Senator Smith said, he is home sick today, but many of you have seen the pictures of Staten Island. You know what it looks like; you know what the impact has been for us, as well as the impact on Coney Island. And we had the added tragedy of having twenty-four of our constituents die that night, or shortly thereafter.

So this storm is going be.

With us for a very long time.

And we're seeing, through this tour process, the opportunity to see how it's affected different parts of the state, and we're all coming across the same problems.

And, so, I think this Task Force is going to help us develop solutions, that will not only help people get back in their homes and get back on with their lives, but also prevent some of this kind of damage in the next storms.

So, thank you, Senator Fuschillo.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Thank you, Diane.

We have Senator Martins.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you.

Senator Martins, from northwest Nassau County; from the water, down to Elmont, out to Hicksville.

I'm looking forward to hearing from everyone.

A lot of familiar faces here around the room, but a lot of prospectives here; a lot of lessons to be learned from this storm, not only the impact on our local governments, but how well our local governments and first responders did respond to this storm, and how quickly they did, and how resilient we are as a county, and as a region.

We have a lot of work to do. A lot of lessons learned, and a lot of coordination.

And, so, people around the room today are going to be integral to allowing us to get on that proper course, getting this region back, and putting people's lives back together.

So, looking forward to hearing from you.

Thank you.

SENATOR GOLDEN: Senator Marty Golden, Brooklyn, New York; southwest, southeast, parts of Brooklyn, Garrison Beach, Sheepshead Bay, Manhattan Beach, and other waterfront areas.

Same concerns as you have; we want to hear

how we can come together, coordinate those efforts, and make it better for the people that live around our city.

And this Task Force, I believe, will give us some opportunities, going forward, that will help the residents and the businesses here in your community, as well as the communities across the city.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Thank you, Marty.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: I'm State Senator Carl Marcellino. I represent the Fifth Senate District on Long Island, which is the north shore, between the towns of Oyster Bay and Huntington, and the small city of Glen Cove.

I also chair the Committee on Government Operations and Investigations, and this Committee will be holding, on January 17th, in the Nassau County main building where the Legislature holds its meetings, we're going to be holding a hearing on what is in the future. What should we be doing to prevent, to protect against the ravages of a hurricane like this?

You're not going to stop the hurricanes, but, what can with do to harden the sites?

What can we do with the utilities?

What can we do with the services and placement of infrastructure?

How do we build?

What's the zoning?

Do we allow building in certain areas that constantly flood?

Do we change the materials that we use to construct homes in these areas?

Things like that.

We're going to be meeting with these -- with the local communities and local expertise, to see what can be done, moving forward.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Thank you, Senator.

And to my right is the Chief Deputy County Executive Rob Walker.

To his right is Senator Zeldin, Senator Carlucci, and Senator Boyle.

Thank you very much.

What we'd like to do now is --

And, Ray, we'll start with you.

-- just introduce yourself, your affiliation, and then we're going to go back and ask all of you to just give us a -- just in the essence of time, a two-to-five-minutes brief on what you're looking for from the State of New York.

So, Ray, if you could introduce yourself, and then we'll come back you to.

RAY MAGUIRE: Thank you, Senator.

I'm Ray Maguire. I'm the executive director of the Freeport Fire Department.

I also serve on the board of directors of the Vocational Education Extension Board, which is responsible for the training of the firefighters in Nassau County, both fire and EMS.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Thank you.

JOHN MILLER: Thank you, good morning.

John Miller, chief executive officer of the American Red Cross on Long Island.

ED MOLTZEN: I'm Ed Moltzen. I'm here on behalf of Suffolk County Executive Bellone, and Commissioner Joe Williams who is heading up our recovery effort.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Thank you.

PAULE PACHTER: I'm Paule Pachter. I'm the executive director of Long Island Cares [inaudible].

MAYOR JAMES RUZICKA: I'm Jim Ruzicka. I'm the mayor of the village of Island Park.

DENISE FORD: I'm Denise Ford. I'm a Nassau County legislator. I represent the Fourth District, which is the Long Beach barrier

island, which was completely flooded, the whole -- from west to east.

I also represent Island Park and Oceanside, which was severely impacted by "Hurricane Sandy" as well.

PETER CASSERLY: Peter Casserly, deputy mayor of the village of Amityville.

KENDAL LAMPKIN: I'm Kendall Lamkin. I'm the executive assistant to Supervisor Kate Murray in the town of Hempstead, for intergovernmental affairs.

TOM MCDONOUGH: My name is Tom McDonough. I'm director of emergency management for the town of North Hempstead.

Supervisor Kaiman will also be here shortly.

FRANK NOCERINO: Frank Nocerino, deputy commissioner of parks, town of Oyster Bay.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Would you pass the mic and speak into it.

KEVIN HANNIFAN: Kevin Hannifan, deputy commissioner of the highway department, town of Oyster Bay.

JUSTIN MCCAFFERY: Justin McCaffrey, commissioner of public safety, town of Oyster Bay.

MICHAEL WATT: Michael Watt, on behalf of the Long Island Gasoline Retailers Association.

MICHAEL DUVAL: Mike Duval, representing Senator James Sanders, Jr., Tenth Senatorial District, who was unable to be here today because of the transition team.

Thanks.

HAL MAYER: Hal Mayer, representing Supervisor Venditto from the town of Oyster Bay.

JACK SCHNIRMAN: Jack Schnirman. I'm the city manager in Long Beach.

RANDI SHUBIN DRESNER: Hi, Randy Dresner, president and CEO, Island Harvest.

WARREN TACKENBERG: Good morning, Warren Tackenberg, former mayor of the village of New Hyde Park, and currently the executive director of the Nassau County Village Officials Association.

MAYOR BILL BIONDI: Mayor Bill Biondi; one of the newest villages formed on Long Island.

MARC HERBST: Marc Herbst, executive director of the Long Island Contractors Association.

MAYOR ANDREW HARDWICK: Andrew Hardwick, mayor of the village of Freeport.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Good, thank you.

We're going the start with you, Mayor Hardwick. That mic does work.

We did have the pleasure of your company

today, and taking a tour of the village of Freeport, where we saw the massive destruction, and visited a homeowner that, like many homeowners, thousands in the village of Freeport, are facing right now.

So, if you could give the panel and Task Force a brief overview, we'd appreciate your comments.

MAYOR ANDREW HARDWICK: Certainly.

I'd like to start off with welcoming everyone to the village of Freeport. We are honored to have you here; and, certainly, we want to thank you, Senator, for choosing Freeport to host this meeting.

I said earlier today, during the tour, that "Sandy" has not left. She's still here.

In essence, I feel like I'm the mayor of a propaganda village, because you see something that isn't really what it appears to be; and that is, multiple homes that appear to be occupied, but yet they're empty.

We have thousands of them. I can tell you that we have more than 3,000 homes that are in need of moderate to major rehab.

We have 4 1/2 co-ops that are completely empty. We're talking about residents that are now living all over the country, all over the

metropolitan area; some in basements, some in attics, some in other's living rooms, are sharing bedrooms with family or friends.

We're still in trouble.

We need Washington to do the right thing.

We need our insurance companies to be brought to the table. They're still running our residents around in circles.

We still need help.

And last night, standing on the streets of Freeport in our southern tier, I felt like a foreigner, I felt like I was in a different country, because after watching, as so many of us have, the acts of our Congress letting us down.

We have people that don't like our country that get treated better than we have been.

And so, today, I'm sending out a loud cry to Washington: You've got to do better by us. We're yours.

And to my colleagues here today, our names will be all over this. This is our history.

"What will we leave our children to work with?" is my question that I leave with all of you folks today.

We are in trouble, folks. Many people need

a sense of promise that we're going to do the right thing by them. That we're going to do something about elevation.

To just simply put it back the way it was is not good enough.

"Sandy" has set the standard.

Will we meet "Sandy"? Will we defeat "Sandy"?

Because she's still here and she's still wreaking havoc.

She's throwing lefts, she's throwing rights; "Are we in the ring yet?" is my question.

Do we realize we've a fight on our hands?

And so, today, I got to tell you, I'm pleased to see so many of you, to take this tour with us, and to really understand that we are truly in this together. It's not over, and we've got a ways to go, and we've got too many people that are crying for help.

And, quite frankly, if we don't give them some sense of promise that we've got a handle on this, Why should they stay? Why should they fight?

Just a week ago, we were threatened with another tidal flood.

We were in a home today, and you've seen it

for yourself, Senator, along with all the other travelers with us, water came into this home again. They haven't put it back together yet.

And, just, can you imagine, if they had the money and they had done the right thing, and everything was done?

Here we are again, couple of weeks later, boom, all over again.

So we've got to handle this a different way.

I end this by saying: "Sandy" has set a new standard. Our names are on this history.

How will it be, folks?

How will it be?

Thank you for being here.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Thank you, Mayor. Appreciate your comments.

We're going to hear from the chief deputy county executive, Rob Walker.

ROBERT WALKER: Senator, thank you so much for allowing the County to be here.

And, Mayor, for hosting us here in lovely Freeport, which we're going to continue to make it even into a better and more beautiful Freeport.

But let me just say this, on behalf of County Executive Mangano; and, obviously, our great

legislator, Denise Ford, who saw the effects of this storm firsthand, right from her home, and continues to see it daily:

You know, the Mayor mentioned that Sandy's still here. And, really, that is true.

And the real work -- so much work has been already done, probably in the form of Nassau County, over, between all the municipalities, probably 300 to 400 million dollars have been already spent on recovering from the aftereffects of this storm, but the real work's going to begin now.

It is putting the people back into their homes, but it's also giving them the sense that we're going to do things right; to build bigger and build better, to build smarter, and stronger. To look at everything that we have suffered, and take that into, you know, putting it all together -- hopefully, the federal dollars will come down -- and figuring out how to build together as one.

So we welcome the State Senate delegation. We thank you for coming here today, because, obviously, the work is not going to be able to be done just by Nassau and our partners, with Suffolk, with County Executive Bellone, who, both, the County executives have worked so well together,

our town supervisors who are represented today, our city managers and village officials and village mayors -- everyone really has worked so well together up to this point.

And now it's putting everything together again, with the dollars that are necessary, with the legislation that will become necessary, from both the state and the federal government, on how we could move forward in the most smartest, the most, I should say, expedited, but at the same time, we do not want to rush to do something that we'll come back and regret, but, to move forward right, and to move forward smart, and to move forward together as one.

I think, you know, something that we have learned from this storm, and the County Executive has said it over and over again, is, sometimes, the miscommunication or the inaccurate information that is presented to people, that we only have maybe 1,000 homeowners that can't get back into the homes, when we really -- we really don't know that number yet. That may be 30,000, may be 5,000, may only be 500.

But we need to start assembling the right information so everybody could come forward and make

that plan, and develop that plan, together.

Businesses are affected differently than homeowners. We have so many of our communities that really do not have a problem with the homeowners, but they have no business to go into.

And in Freeport, where you seen, we don't know if businesses are gonna come back.

So, those are the type of things that we need to look at again, taking a very distinct program for each individual need; from residents, to infrastructure, to business, and figuring out the best ways that we can come together to improve on all of those type of situations.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention, you know, the problems with our sewer-treatment facilities. Suffolk, to a lesser extent, I know had some minor difficulties, but, with Nassau County, Bay Park, and Long Beach, we did see a tremendous problem. 540,000 residents would have been infected if it were not for getting those sewage-treatment plants, you know, back up and working again.

And I want to thank Marc Herbst, and so many of his contractors, that came to the rescue. Many of them still have not gotten paid, I know, but we're gonna make sure that they do, but they came --

[Laughter.]

ROBERT WALKER: You know, we tried to save money that way, without paying.

-- but, that came to the rescue of so many Nassau County residents that would have been highly impacted if not that sewage that were running, that would continue to run through our sewage-treatment plant.

You know, we think about all of what people see on a daily basis. You don't think about what you don't see. And 540,000 residents that could have had a sewage-treatment nightmare, literally, was prevented by the work of so many people: contractors, County employees, Senator Skelos, Mayor Bloomberg, Governor Cuomo.

We actually had pumps that came as far away as Virginia and Maryland, under police escort, within 12 hours were operational to diffuse the situation.

And that's what it is, rallying together.

So if there's one thing that can be said, it is now the most important time that us in Nassau County, Suffolk County, all the villages and townships and the state -- and that's why we are so grateful that all of you are here -- that we put our

minds together, the brightest minds together, and we make sure that we spend any dollar that we get wisely, for the betterment of Nassau County for a long time to come.

Stronger, smarter, bigger, better.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Rob.

One of the missions of the Task Force, and so we're all reminded is, what New York State can do.

And we need to know, as we proceed in the 2013 legislative session, which starts next week, is what we can do to help you, legislatively, obviously with money.

We're pleased with what we heard, that Congress is going back. They need to keep to their commitment. A lot of those funds will come directly through the State, but we really need to know what we as a task force can do to help you.

Senator?

SENATOR SMITH: Yeah, no, Mayor Ruzicka, if we could hear from him, and then we'll open up the roundtable.

MAYOR JAMES RUZICKA: Okay, thank you.

First of all, I'd like to thank this

Task Force, the State, for organizing it. It gives our residents a ray of hope for the future.

"What the State can do for us?" is the question.

First of all, the insurance companies have been holding up funds, trying to get our residents back. They're at a point right now where they have maybe put in some boilers, maybe put some insulation -- some sheetrock up, but they can't go any further because they don't have the money. The funds ain't coming in. We need the State to push that.

Flood mitigation:

In our village, we had 1,100 homes. Out of the 1,100 homes, 95 percent of them were under 3 foot of water on the first floors.

So, a lot of our residents are asking: Can we raise our homes?

We need the funding to do that.

They want to stay, but they're going to need some help.

Grant writing:

We're a small village. One of the problems we find, is that we don't have the talent in our

village to write these grants that have -- are filled with red tape, that are filled with different obstacles, to write.

We need some help from the State to progress that; to get us on the right track with these grants, and especially in the flood-mitigation areas.

So, that's what we're looking at in the village.

Again, I thank this Task Force for organizing, and we're going to see some hope in the future.

Thank you.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Mayor, and thank you for the time and effort you put forward with us today.

Can we hear from Jack Schnirman, from the -- city manager of Long Beach.

JACK SCHNIRMAN: Thank you, and thank you for having us here.

I'm going to get -- I'm going to get into the long-term recovery issues, I think for us.

You know, real briefly, I think, as most know, Long Beach had catastrophic impact. The ocean met the bay, the city was flooded, and many places,

including the legislator's street, had, you know, up to six feet of sand, several feet into the city -- I'm sorry, several blocks into the city.

So, really, it was -- it was, obviously, a very intense situation.

And thank you to so many who are here, who were so helpful in helping the emergency response and the immediate recovery phases go so well.

And thank you to the County, County Executive Mangano, and Deputy County Executive Walker, State Senator Skelos, to Legislator Ford, to the Governor, and the federal government -- everyone was so wonderful in pouring resources in, in the immediate aftermath.

And now, as we reflect back, and we go through a more longer-term piece, this is where it gets more difficult.

And, so, we're so happy to have the opportunity to make a few recommendations as to what we are seeing in terms of longer-term recovery.

And on the personal level, I would say that Mayor Hardwick really framed the issue that residents are facing, quite well, and we're seeing the same sort of things in Long Beach as I know that you're seeing as well.

So, thank you. I couldn't possibly put it more eloquently than that.

But there's -- there's six things that I identified as -- that we're looking at, that we think are major issues that the State Senate and the State can take up, and we've already begun to discuss them with State Senator Skelos, and we're so thankful for his help with them.

And the first is, really, you know, and it's obviously the big megillah, is the financing. We look at a potential match with FEMA.

To give you a sense of orientation, Long Beach is looking at over $200 million in damages from the storm. That's compared with about $2 million of damages from "Hurricane Irene."

So we're talking about 100 times larger.

And on an annual budget of, approximately, $85 million. So we're talking about significantly more than twice our annual budget.

If you look at the match, the 12 1/2 percent, that becomes extremely daunting. And we're going to need assistance with that.

You look at a 26 to, ultimately, 30 million dollar match, we need to have a longer conversation about what that looks like, you know, on the

financing side.

You know, obviously, our request is 100 percent, but that match has to be looked at as a crucial issue for municipalities like us, who are small municipalities, already facing difficult budgets, and looking at that enormity of coming up with that money. You know, that's -- that's a non-starter, really.

So that's Issue Number 1.

Issue Number 2 is, as it was said by the Deputy County Executive, rebuilding stronger, smarter, safer.

So what does that mean?

That means mitigation money, hardening infrastructure; working together, with other municipalities and with the County, to figure out how do we get to a place where our critical infrastructure is where it should be, physically located where it should be, elevated where it needs to be. We don't have -- you know, we don't have generators on the first floor.

So we'll need assistance with that, both technical assistance and financial assistance.

Third, I think all of us have learned the value of emergency response, and having a true

proper emergency-response capability.

Small cities need things like grants to have those equipment, to send and receive information in a time of crisis, and coordinate first responders in ways that we haven't been able to do before.

Fourth, coordination and planning with other levels of government, joint training and coordination, and really having -- making sure that everyone works together.

It worked well this time, it truly did, and -- but more preparation would be helpful in the future.

Fifth, community development block-grant funding for businesses who are affected by the storm, and facilities, to really pump adrenaline into municipalities right now, when the businesses need it, and the City needs it, especially before we go into our summer season. It's something that we're going to need to really increase that, going into the summer.

And then, finally, something that we haven't heard too much talk about, it's something that was quiet, and worked well, but probably needs to be expanded, is the 211 program, which is a -- you

know, to take a real regional approach to be able to deliver information and referral services to residents. Something that's important within our municipality, but within -- on a regional basis, that when something happens, there are people by the phone, who are going to answer that call, whose infrastructure and technology did not go out, but they'll be able to refer residents, always, to what they need, and take those requests.

And, so, those are things that are important to us, and recommendations that we would make to be considered by the Task Force, going forward.

Thank you.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you.

I think that Senator Fuschillo has a question for you, Jack.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Do you have a reverse 911 system?

JACK SCHNIRMAN: We do. We use a Swift911 system that we used after the storm, and it was really one of the only ways to get a message out in the immediate aftermath, after the storm.

However, you know, about a week in, it became the lifeblood -- or, four or five days in, it became the lifeblood.

Immediately, our technology was out as well, and we had a -- residents who couldn't receive -- who didn't have home phones to receive anything on, or cell phones to receive anything on.

So while it was crucial and really helpful before, and then after the storm, there was a gap there.

But it is -- we believe that it was one of the keys to success in maintaining public order and getting information out. It was so important.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: What are you experiencing now?

How many homeowners are out of their homes, homeless?

What is the residential toll, as it is -- as it stands today?

JACK SCHNIRMAN: Right now, it's almost impossible to really estimate, you know, accurately, the numbers on that. We're looking at, still, a significant percentage of the city that is not in their homes. Approximately 100 to 200 homes that were so substantially damaged that it's going to take some real time before they can move in.

And now there's a -- you know, through the FEMA process, there's that checking on the homes

of -- to determine, is a home, what's called, substantially damaged, over 50 percent, the ICC Program.

But the short answer is, it's impossible to estimate. It's still a significant number are going to be out of their homes for quite awhile.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: What's the -- what's your assessment on the infrastructure, transportation wise, your roads and bridges there? Walkways?

JACK SCHNIRMAN: The roads, obviously, you know, are taking a beating, and have taken a beating, and are going to need some -- an additional look.

You know, you had, obviously, a lot of sand. A lot of heavy equipment coming in and out of the city.

I think we won't know for some time, what the ultimate impact of the amount of heavy equipment coming in and out of the city will be on the roads.

I think, you know, it's a fair point to say, the bridges in and out of the city probably will need, you know, another look.

Our critical infrastructure is what we know is in dire need of attention: The sewer plant, the water plant, which went out during the storm, which

are up and running now, but that shouldn't fool us into thinking that they're in good working order.

It's, like, on a larger scale, they're like that car that was damaged by the storm, or that -- you know, or that boiler, that you're going to have a problem down the road. You're just buying yourself some time.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Jack, long range, you're rebuilding the boardwalk now. We've all heard that.

What's different about rebuilding it?

What precautionary measures are you taking, to plan better for the future?

JACK SCHNIRMAN: I'm glad you asked that question.

To be determined.

Right now, we've -- we're starting the demolition of the boardwalk, you know, and we've really expedited that, to tear it down, so we can rebuild it back.

We've asked, we've put an RFP out, to get recommendations, and best practices, as to how to rebuild it, stronger, smarter, safer.

But the answer is solely dependent on the amount of mitigation money that we'll be able to get with FEMA.

The way we look at it, you know, to boil it down to the easiest, is, we need to know how much we're pre-approved to spend at the boardwalk store. And once we know that answer, we'll be able to look over the options and determine what seems the most feasible, and go from there; and then, obviously, rebuild as fast as possible.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Jack.

I think Senator Golden has some questions for you.

SENATOR GOLDEN: Yes, Senator Fuschillo, Senator Smith, the -- there's a number of towns and villages here today that are going around with information that they believe would best help their communities.

If we could have a draft of that, somewhere over the next week or so, so that we can take a look at that.

The second portion of this, I believe there's a certain expectation from the towns and the villages when it comes to, not only infrastructure, but with the Army Corps of Engineers and with the waterfront.

And, is that being coordinated with Nassau County?

And, are the expectations being -- "Is everybody on the same page?" is my question, towns, villages and the county, so that we know, going forward, that your expectations are somewhat met and, obviously, understood?

ROBERT WALKER: Senator, just in with working with the Governor, the submittal that went to Congress, which really is the dollars that we're all talking about, mitigation dollars that we need, that went in as a -- as a, basically, as a Nassau County $6.6 billion request, that went to -- that went to the President, and then was part of the President's supplemental appropriation.

That included all -- basically, all the input from all the townships, the villages, as to what they needed to see, infrastructure wise, dollars and cents.

We, at that time, once those dollars come in, we've already started the process, and the City Manager said it pretty well, is: We're working in conjunction with both, FEMA, the State Office of Emergency Management. They're putting together the Army Corps of Engineers professionals, where they will start looking at what we consider the most critical infrastructure needs of the county, in

conjunction with all the townships, the villages, and the cities. And then they will assign staff to work on that immediately.

They're going to, obviously, take up what they believe is the most critical as well, and they will look to advance dollars to us so we can get moving in the process. They would then actually open up other coffers that they have available, dollars that they have available, in the federal government, should this supplemental not go as quickly as we would all like. And then, again, work together, looking at those needs, making sure that we build it, you know, bigger, better, smarter. You know, looking at all of those areas, by working in conjunction with those municipalities that are involved.

But the bridge -- I mean, I can give you a list. It's probably, critical infrastructure, over $2 billion in the county alone.

When I say "county alone," including the village roadways, city roadways, town roadways, parks.

We have bridges that cannot open. We actually had to manually open them in Senator Marcellino's district in Bayville, just to

get out our boats, from one side to the other. We can't open that again.

So we want to make sure it's opened, you know, for the season, so we don't lose another economic engine for those people that have jobs to do.

So, Long Beach Bridge, the same way.

Parks that, literally, are underwater. We don't know what they -- if they're going to be able to open or not.

You know, critical buildings, lights.

We, literally, have some county- and town-owned facilities that do not have power to date, and cannot, until we actually make some major investment in the dollars.

So, we are working together with all of them, and that's the way the supplemental appropriation went from the State, was vis-a-vis the County taking --

SENATOR GOLDEN: So if we could get a report to Senator Fuschillo and the co-chair --

ROBERT WALKER: We'll be glad to do that.

SENATOR GOLDEN: -- Malcolm Smith, not only from the individual towns and villages, but from the County as well, so that we can be helpful, and

wherever we can be helpful, in getting assistance to you in the future.

Your health-care system, any of your hospitals go down, or any of your --

ROBERT WALKER: Yes. I mean, Long Beach -- Long Beach still is facing critical issues.

We've also had them around the county.

Part of that request to the President is about, I think, $60 million for critical needs in our health-care facilities. Many of them, you know, have some infrastructure issues. Some of them look to have some hardening and some mitigation needs to be made.

We also, obviously, have a need, and, you know, the work that the Red Cross has done, and Paule Pachter and Randi Dresner are here.

I mean, outside the realm of, also, just the hospitals and our health-care providers, is what they have provided; the critical needs, to our county residents, from, you know, just providing social work; and, you know, in many cases, that, you know, mental-health advisers, that they've been in the field; food.

I mean, you can go on and on, the work that our not-for-profits have provided.

I mean, it's -- we sheltered over 1,600 people at various times throughout the storm.

And, obviously, as it gets colder, people who still do not have power, that are living there now, are looking for shelters again. And all of these agencies have provided for it.

So there's also dollars that we've requested on their behalf as well, to get them either replenished, more importantly, but also be able to keep delivering the service.

So both the hospitals and our health and human-service providers have some massive undertaking.

SENATOR GOLDEN: My last question, and I'll move on:

The towns and villages, do you have an expectation when your homes will be up and running with the electricity, those that don't have it, those with boilers and hot-water heating systems, and not only the residential buildings, but your small businesses?

Do you have a number on that?

Do you have an estimated date that you believe, or an expectation, that this will be back

up and running?

If you could put that into your memo, we'd appreciate it.

MAYOR ANDREW HARDWICK: [Inaudible.]

SENATOR SMITH: He just -- you want to respond?

Because we want to try to get everybody, there are a few people on the list.

Just, quickly, give him a response, if you want to talk to him, that would be helpful.

MAYOR ANDREW HARDWICK: Okay, I just want to remind everyone that, you know, if we're not able to mitigate through community block-grant funding, much of our needs will not be answered by FEMA.

You know, we just got to remember that, because we were told so many times -- for example: We have a waterfront park. Its bulkheading is shot.

FEMA will not answer the call with mitigation for that bulkheading. We cannot afford it. It's well over a million dollars now, because when it was just a half a mil, we couldn't afford it, and now it's wrecked completely.

So, just remember, without community block-grant funding, this will not work, in terms of mitigation.

SENATOR SMITH: Okay, I think, Senator Marcellino, you had a question?

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Yeah, Rob, you mentioned the north shore and the Bayville, and your closing that bridge.

That road which crosses that bridge, Shore Road, has been undercut, and a good portion of it sunk, and has not been useable since.

Do we have an updated time frame on that?

ROBERT WALKER: Thankfully, the weather has assisted in the endeavor of having that road open, but, you know, we're so -- everybody is so concentrated on the south shore, because of, you know, the -- I guess, the lack of damage, in people's minds, that the north shore have faced.

But, you know, the Senator has seen in his district, the north shore, you know, Bayville, Oyster Bay, have suffered tremendously.

We actually -- as you mentioned, it suffered a breach in two spots of West Shore Road, really, the main access point into Bayville.

That -- the project is currently underway. The County Executive issued an emergency contract. They are moving forward in the -- the plan, by the latest, is to have July -- July 4th weekend, that

that road will be opened both ways.

What we're looking at right now, is to actually figure out the way to start opening up quicker, during weekends and other prime times for the community.

Obviously, both Oyster Bay, east Norwich businesses, and Bayville bridges, from people going both directions have suffered tremendously.

I'm sure you hear it as much as we do, if not more.

But, the contractor, thankfully, with the weather, has made tremendous strides already.

We're already opening up, I believe, a portion within the next two weeks, I think up to Cleft, I believe, if I have it right. And, you know, we will continue on that process.

But right now, the outside target which we gave to the residents was 4th of July, because we also didn't want to say Memorial Day, and then know that that's not going to be the case.

But our goal is, we're going to hit it much quicker.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: And just a quick reminder, because you mentioned the north shore.

The north shore, the devastation was wind, a

lot of tree damage, lines down, power down; house, where a tree landed on it. You had much of that.

But we also had areas like Asharoken, which is in my district, which has been -- the road that goes through there has been overrun and breached on a number of occasions.

That roadway is the sole access to 2,000 residents in Eaton's Neck, and the only way in and out.

Bayville at least has another alternative to go through it.

But areas like Asharoken, is the only road that can go into Eaton's Neck, which is, as I said, has 2,000 residents up there.

So, the north shore should not be forgotten with respect to damage.

While we didn't suffer the flooding and the -- the major flooding damage as you see on the south shore, we do have serious damage up on the north shore, and a lot of infrastructure repair has to be done up there and taken care of.

So, this is a concern of everybody's.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you very much, Senator Golden, Senator Marcellino.

And, Senator Marcellino, know that the Task Force will not allow any part of the state or anybody's district to be forgotten.

And [inaudible] we'll hear from Mayor Bill Biondi, and then we'll hear from Nassau County Legislator Denise Ford.

MAYOR BILL BIONDI: Good afternoon, and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to come down and speak, and on behalf of the 5,800 residents, homeowners, in Mastic Beach.

We went through two major storms already: "Hurricane Irene," and "Hurricane/Superstorm Sandy," in the village that was established 2 1/2 years ago.

So, we're trying our best to do what's right for the people.

A couple of main issues we had, I guess, before the storm, we set up our evacuations, we set up everything right, but once the storm hit, one of the major problems was dealing with the lighting company.

From one storm to the next, we had no problem with the lighting company during "Irene," but something happened with -- when "Sandy" came ashore.

I don't know if their systems changed, or

maybe they were just overwhelmed with the work, but, it was a lot of headaches for, especially Mastic Beach, because there was constant fighting back and forth: Don't turn power on when they turned power on. And then, when we wanted the power on, they didn't turn the power on.

The other thing is, the STEP program. It's worked in a few houses.

We have a major problem with two floodings in the last three weeks. The outer breach, the outer beach of Smith Point, there's nothing left of the sand there. That's our barrier wall that prevents us from flooding out.

So people actually are trying to fix their houses back up, and they've got flooded out again, two or three more times.

During the storm, we have -- we don't have sewer-treatment plants; we have sesspools.

So during the storm, we've picked up -- DEC picked up over 6,000 gallon of fuel oil -- No. 2 fuel oil -- along with the sewage that rised from the sesspools.

So, we have a major problem with, every time this flooding occurs, we have the same problem with the flooding, with the sewer damage, and the

oil is still in the grounds.

DEC told us that it will dissipate within two weeks.

It's 2 1/2 months, and you can still go on people's property, the oil is still there.

Insurance companies, they've been going to people's houses and telling them that their house was not built properly; but, yet, the local municipality that was in charge at the time signed off on the house.

Insurance companies are giving us a hard time.

FEMA, in the beginning, we've gotten -- I kind of say, that the people that came in the beginning were the -- not -- not the group that was familiarized with how to deal with FEMA.

Perfect example: My deputy mayor, he lost his business and his house. He had five different FEMA inspectors there; gave him five different stories. And he's still looking for the right story today.

The -- one thing that I think we all need to work on, communications is the biggest thing.

Most of the cell towers, we deal with Sprint. Most of the fire and EMS is back to the

"Direct Connect" days.

They don't have a generator for backup. They use battery backup, which lasts, on a normal day, 8 hours of backup.

We need to tell the cell-tower people that they -- they need to put a generator in, because once we lose communications, we're in big trouble.

Communications is a key to everything.

Again, the biggest thing is, again, we have, maybe just a little under 100 house that have to come down. About 350 that are unlivable.

We'd like to get some word to the residents there, that the money is coming, the insurance company is paying, FEMA's got some money for us; because, right now, they're living in a house with no heat, no electricity. They refuse to leave their houses. It's their livelihood, they raised their families there, and they just will not leave.

And, really, we can't force them to leave either, so we try to do our best to make them as comfortable as possible.

SENATOR ZELDIN: Mayor Biondi, thank you for being here.

Now, part of -- part of what this Task Force is discussing today, is dealing with recovering from

"Sandy," but I think there are some very valuable lessons from the hours and days right after the storm, which I saw firsthand in Mastic Beach.

Mayor Biondi called me up, maybe about 10:00 the evening the storm was hitting, and, you know, dozens of calls were coming for people who wanted to get rescued, but there was, literally, one or two water-rescue vehicles that would be able to respond to these calls from dozens of people who need to get evacuated.

There was only one heavy vehicle, provided by the National Guard, that was big enough and strong enough to travel into flooded waters for these rescues.

So, for hours, over the course of the night, there was no way to get to dozens of people who we knew about, because they still had a phone or a cell phone in order to make the connection.

So, I think, coordinating resources in the hours leading up to, and after, the storm hits is important, because Mastic Beach, unfortunately, did not have enough of what it needed.

Secondly, in the days afterwards, a lot of resources -- Mayor Biondi mentions LIPA -- a lot of the resources were given to the towns, which was

different than "Irene." And the villages had to ask the -- lobby the towns, to get the -- like the heavy-debris-removing equipment. It was a huge problem for a place like the village of Mastic Beach, because the towns were prioritizing other assets outside of the village, even though the village of Mastic Beach was the strongest in need.

I just want to highlight one point, if you don't mind, and Senator Smith and Senator Lanza, when you develop the report for the Task Force, one of the -- and for all of the -- all my Senate colleagues, to please keep in mind in the -- in, literally, the days and weeks and months ahead, there is a very urgent need in a place like Mastic Beach, where, in the last two weeks, you have homes that were flooded out during the storm, that have been flooded out multiple times again.

You know, Senator Savino, when we were on the tour, we were at one house in Freeport, and she said: Well, you know, this house rebuilds, what happens the next time the storm hits? Now we're going to have to rebuild the home again.

But, right now, we have people in Mastic Beach, where every time there's a flood, the

homes are going to be destroyed again, and again, and again, because Fire Island is turning into a sandbar.

So, our federal representatives, the Army Corps of Engineers, working with the State and towns and the villages, we have a very urgent problem because of that flooding which is taking place every time we get hit, which has happened twice in the last week and a half.

SENATOR GOLDEN: I just want to add to that, Senator Zeldin, what he's just pointed out, it's the inventory that the towns, the villages, and the counties have, and where that inventory is.

You know, sanitation trucks, deuce-and-a-halfs, they can go in and do the support that they need, but nobody had those trucks available in a lot of the townships and a lot of the counties.

That should be made available in the future. It should be an inventory, where, you know, your police department, your fire trucks, so that they're not subject to any type of damage, or severe damage, and where you can put equipment in, I believe is something that you'd have to study here at the towns, the villages, and, of course, at the

county level, for future emergency and future responses.

But very -- thank you for pointing that out.

SENATOR SMITH: Senator Savino?

MAYOR BILL BIONDI: If I could also add, we do have 2 1/2-ton military vehicles, but when the water is 5 to 6 feet high on your main roads, it's -- it doesn't really matter, the equipment will not get down there.

Many years ago, our local town, they had what they called "a duck," and they're not around anymore, so we're basically dealing with today's technology, which is a 2 1/2-ton Army vehicle or a 5-ton vehicle.

We even have a hovercraft in Mastic Beach, that was -- we couldn't use it because, the wind, instead of you going straight, it was just blowing you all over the place.

We have the resources, but we can't control the flooding.

Once we get, five, six feet of water, it's impossible to do anything.

SENATOR SMITH: Senator Savino?

SENATOR SAVINO: Thank you.

Those -- by the way, those "ducks" are now

tourist --

MAYOR BILL BIONDI: In Baltimore, yes.

SENATOR SAVINO: -- and in Albany too. "Amphibious vehicles," they call them.

It's interesting that many of the communities that we're all describing here have just barely recovered from "Irene," and now they're hit again.

And then, last week, in the -- in the -- I don't know, we didn't have name for this storm, as Mayor Hardwick called it, it was just rain, but almost two inches of rain.

A lot of the people who had flooded in "Irene" and didn't recover, then were damaged tremendously in "Sandy," and have not even begun to have this discussion about recovery, we're again flooded last week.

A lot of our barrier -- storm barriers have been washed away in "Sandy."

What we're seeing in Staten Island is a rising cry for the government to come in and buy out some of these homeowners. To just, basically, buy them out. That they're done, that they can't do it again. They can't rebuild one more time.

And a lot of these communities are probably in areas where we never should have allowed them

to build to begin. They're up against coastal wetlands.

And so, I'm wondering, are you seeing the same things in your towns?

Are people coming in, saying, "Buy me out, I'm done. I can't do this again"?

MAYOR BILL BIONDI: Not that many.

There are a couple that would like to go.

We have a 92-year-old gentleman, his house was wiped out, and he can't wait to rebuild. He loves Mastic Beach. He lived there all his life.

You know, it's a tough situation; you live there all your life.

I mean, I -- I'm not an expert, but I think if you fix the barrier beach, we probably wouldn't suffer the consequences we're having now, with just a normal storm.

I have some pictures here that I'd like to share with yous at the end, showing you there's, literally, nothing left of the barrier beach. It's as flat as this table. And every time you get two- to three-foot waves in the ocean, they're coming right across, I called it "a breach." I've been politically corrected. It's called a "wash-over."

SENATOR SAVINO: Uh-huh?

MAYOR BILL BIONDI: Whatever it is, Mastic Beach gets flooded every time the ocean --

SENATOR SAVINO: But that begs the bigger question then, Mayor, as Lee and I were talking in that house there: How many times do we rebuild?

How many times do we pay the cost for people to rebuild their home, when, quite frankly, the risk is not theirs; the risk is ours.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: [Inaudible.]

SENATOR SAVINO: Yes.

MAYOR BILL BIONDI: It's a tough discussion decision. I mean, you know, it's -- I'm hoping to get the answers today, or in the near future.

It's -- I don't know what to tell you.

SENATOR SMITH: County Legislator Ford, please.

Thank you, Senator Savino, and Senator Zeldin.

DENISE FORD: Thank you very much, Senator Fuschillo and Senator Smith, for putting this task force together. It's very, very important, and I thank you.

And I also want to extend a thank you, publicly, to County Executive Ed Mangano, because I

have to say that, immediately after the storm, the County did come in and provide us with a great number of resources, whether or not through the County itself or through New York State. You know, sharing, I guess, ownership with them, with a lot of the assistance that they gave.

For me, I'm going to be very, very brief.

You know, I know that we were all disappointed with the fact that there was a delay in getting the much-needed $60 billion, but, according to FEMA, they do have -- they say they have money that can fund us right through February.

And I'm urging the State lawmakers to take a look at that money and immediately try to secure that, bring it down into our communities.

I represent an area of over 60,000 residents. I would say 90 percent of them were hit by "Hurricane Sandy." Many are still not in their homes, they're probably hundreds of families.

The impact on the family life in my whole area has been severely impacted, especially, not only for the parents, but most especially for our children, that are going through undue stress.

So I urge you to ask FEMA, but let's release

that money, let's not wait. We don't have to wait for the $60 billion. Let's get money that's right here. That's something that's easily accessible.

We need that funding. You know, not loans. We need funding, not only for our residents, many who are on fixed incomes, but we also need it for our small businesses. Many of our small businesses are residents as well. These people have lost their source of income. They cannot -- their houses were impacted. Their businesses were impacted.

They don't have the money, they're not earning money, to be able to restore their homes, to restore their businesses. They can't afford anymore debt.

We're looking -- we're asking you to help them out; to try to come up with some sort of a funding source, some sort of a grant source, so that they can at least start putting something back together and to get their lives.

We need these small businesses to come back, we need them to make sure that they open as soon as possible.

What's even hurting them is that, even with unemployment that the State has graciously offered to many of the employees of these small businesses,

those owners are not entitled to unemployment.

The only recourse they have is to borrow more money, to pay themselves, and to pay for any repairs.

This is something that must be stopped. We have to -- I urge the State, please, come together, and take a look at the needs of these small businesses. They need all the help that we can give them.

We also need, and I agree with Mayor Ruzicka, the insurance companies have been a roadblock. They're hurting, they're keeping much-needed money. And what's happening now is, that because FEMA is giving money to those who opted not to be insured, I find that a lot of people are getting upset, wondering, Why is it that people who don't have insurance are getting money? How come we, who have been responsible and paying insurance, are not getting anything?

This is something that the State, I urge you also, this is a very, very important issue.

And I also ask that you look at the banks, because many people are fearful that the banks are going to start holding up the insurance payments. That, even a lot of people who have even gotten

advances have not been able to secure that money to do the necessary repairs. The banks are holding this.

This falls under your jurisdiction. I'm asking you for help on this.

We also need, with FEMA, we need an extension of the housing subsidies. As I said, too many people are still relocated. The fact that they're -- you know, they're going to confirm that, they'll agree till January 12th, is not acceptable.

This is something that has to be open-ended. We have to make sure there's no -- unnecessary stress for those who have been relocated, who don't have homes, that have to worry now, that in about two more weeks, where are they going to be? Are they going to join the homeless?

I'm asking you to, please, use your power to go after FEMA on this.

We also need, with communications, you know, right after the storm, we had no cell phone service, we had no Internet. We didn't even have mail delivered for ten days in our city. That, we had no papers being delivered.

We were totally cut off from the outside world.

There has to be a better system in place.

You know, Jack Schnirman, our city manager, was correct. And, originally, when we did the Swift911 calls, it worked, but only to a limited few.

There were too many people who had no idea, who did not know what the resources.

Very oddly, we had somebody who came to a City Council meeting, and one of the recommendations was, that, why can't we, in the center of certain areas, put up like 100-inch TV set, streaming public service messages, as well as news, so that even people would know that there is a place that they can go to, to be able -- to just be able to get broadcast to them, news, and what is happening in their communities, and maybe telephone numbers, or places where they can go for help.

We also need, we still have a problem with debris removal. You know, whether or not it's in the city, or even in -- I don't know if it's in the Island Park, but I know it's in Atlantic Beach, and in certain other areas as well.

I'm asking that we take a look at this, and maybe set up a date, two weeks from now, to say, that by the end of that date, everybody must have

their debris. And, to ask FEMA, or whoever it is that can give us additional funding, to be able to then, come out, without adding the cost to the taxpayers as well, by having them to have to pay for a private person to remove their debris.

We need to make sure -- and I'm asking, once again, the State, I'm also asking that you help us with rebuilding. That, when we take a look at either residential or businesses trying to rebuild, that you help them expedite the process, that they're not mired down.

I know that any licensed contractor can work throughout New York State, or down in the areas that were affected by "Sandy."

I'm asking, also, that if anybody meets with any roadblocks, that you step in on their behalf.

And the last thing is, also, that, like, we need a concise message on guidance. We need to have, like, basically, a one-stop shop, so that people will know that, you know, whether or not it's with flood damage, or if they need something with FEMA, instead of five different messages from FEMA, one message from FEMA. That they know whether or not, if there is any place where they could go for assistance, whether or not it's -- even for

emotional support, you know, to be able to reach out and to find other people that they could go with, as a family, maybe to go for counseling.

I that we really need to start getting this message, and just show that we are joined together, we are unified, whether or not in the work that we do, but also in the message, and everything that we can give to our residents.

And I thank you very much.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you for that exhaustive list.

To much of your dismay around the table, once we finish with County Legislator Ford, we have no money left. So --

[Laughter.]

SENATOR SMITH: -- sorry, guys.

DENISE FORD: It's all right with me.

SENATOR SMITH: Sorry, guys.

But, we have one of our new senators, good to you have here, Senator Boyle. Congratulations on your election as well.

Senator Philip Boyle.

SENATOR BOYLE: Thank you, Senator, and thank you for your leadership.

[Inaudible], where you have -- we have banks

that are -- insurance companies that are sending checks. We saw today, a lot of this is completely inadequate in the policy.

However, for those that are getting checks that are good enough, they're being written to the homeowner and to the bank, and they can't use them.

They're laying out tens of thousands of dollars, and what the bank and some of the insurance companies are saying: Well, you need a general contractor.

Meanwhile, the homeowner says: Well, I want to fix my floor, and I want to fix the bedroom, and I want to fix the kitchen.

"But, no, no, you need a general contractor."

Who knows a general contractor, and -- that you can get on three days' notice and get going?

What's one thing the Task Force really needs to look at, how we can make sure that these monies are available to the homeowners so they can get going. They may know someone that can fix their floor and fix their kitchen, and they can work as the general contractor.

But, if we're waiting for general contractors for all of these thousand of homes that need to be fixed, it's going to be a very long

time before anything gets done.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Senator.

Deputy Mayor Peter Casselli [sic] [ph.].

PETER CASSERLY: Yes, that's "Casserly," and I do appreciate the --

SENATOR SMITH: Casserly.

PETER CASSERLY: Casserly.

-- and I do appreciate --

SENATOR SMITH: [Inaudible] how much money you're going get to.

Next.

[Laughter.]

PETER CASSERLY: Thank you.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Not necessarily. You are from my Senate district, Amityville.

PETER CASSERLY: Thanks, John.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Let me remind you where you're from.

PETER CASSERLY: I didn't really know what to expect when we came today, but this has been extremely helpful, getting everybody in the same room together.

A lot of what I'm going to say has been said already, but I think it's important enough to mention it.

The insurance companies, I know Governor Cuomo, who did an outstanding job from day one of the storm, had said he was going intercede on behalf of the State Insurance Department.

And, again, I think everybody is experiencing the same thing, depending on who your insurance company is.

I have -- I had a good insurance company and I was very well taken care of, and I can't complain, but, a lot of complaints from my constituents, that they're being harassed, being asked for all kinds of documentation, bills.

And, again, this is delaying them getting back in their homes.

Also, FEMA; FEMA was very good with most of the residents I talked to about initial funds going out, checks to the residents, but, the settlements have not been there, and there's -- a lot of these people do not have the money to fund these, you know, $100,000, $150,000 repairs themselves. So, that has created a little bit of a roadblock in terms of them returning to their homes.

If you drive around Amityville at night, there's still a lot of dark homes. There's a lot

of people that have not been able to return.

And it's not a question of, you know, lack of electricity. They just don't have the funding to be able to go back into their homes.

Raising of homes:

A lot of misinformation about homes, depending on you who talk to, how much it costs, in terms of FEMA.

There should be some kind of a packet that we can mail to residents, that lets them knows: This is what you have to do. These are the requirements.

Some people, they call FEMA, and FEMA says: You have to have been flooded two times, and documentation of two floods, in order for them to consider funding.

Somebody else called, and they said they got -- that somebody told them they had to be flooded five times.

I don't know what the answer is to that, but we need to be able to get -- because, again, somebody had mention: How many times do you rebuild the homes in their present condition?

And people will, you know, I think they've gotten the message, some of these homes have to be raised. They have to be.

And, you know, people are seriously considering that, but they need the information about it.

On a Village level, you know, we need to get some determination from FEMA as to what the level of reimbursement of funding is going to be from FEMA, in order for us to take action to rebuild our infrastructure, the parks, our beaches, so that, you know, you have to provide some kind of a semblance of sanity back to the residents again.

You know, I think most people need some encouragement too.

I mean, everybody's been great; the Red Cross, Island Harvest. I mean, there's been so many things that have been going on that have been very positive.

We got help from the Town of Babylon. We got help from the Town of Huntington, that sent, you know, 30 garbage trucks down on a Saturday to help us out. I mean, it was great.

And, so, we can't complain. The intermunicipal help has been outstanding. But, we just need, you know, some help with FEMA, some help with the insurance companies. And then, on a municipal level, just to find out what -- what we're

going to get funded for, so we can take action and begin to rebuild our infrastructure.

Thank you.

SENATOR SAVINO: I just --

SENATOR SMITH: Senator Savino has a question for you, Peter.

SENATOR SAVINO: Are you seeing in your area some of the same things we're seeing; people who were given FEMA assistance last year, in "Irene," and they didn't have flood insurance, told, that as a condition of future assistance, that they would have to secure flood insurance --

I see you're shaking your head.

-- and a lot of them didn't get it?

PETER CASSERLY: Yeah.

SENATOR SAVINO: Yeah, that is -- that is going to be a critical problem, because FEMA is not going provide assistance to them now, and they didn't have insurance. We're going have to figure out what to do with these families who are going to wind up in all of our offices.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: The challenges [inaudible], faced, even last week, with the rainstorm, I couldn't even get down some of your blocks down south. I mean, even the residents

couldn't get down there. It's just the challenges they're facing. With every storm, every change in tide, change in moon, it's becoming a serious problem.

PETER CASSERLY: Yeah, I think everybody thought that this was a 100-year storm, and they had another 99 years to go. And couple of weeks later [inaudible] again.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Talking about -- in dealing with your mayor, Peter Emberg, just talk about the issues you faced with the garbage also.

You had a temporary site at the old Brunswick hospital, and I know that became a problem, because the residents in the new development there.

Where are you at with that, in moving the garbage?

PETER CASSERLY: That's -- we've completely cleaned it up. It's been clean for a couple of weeks now.

The DEC was very helpful. They allowed you to set up these temporary sites all over the island, with little or no paperwork. And, we did have some complaints from residents; but, again, there was no MSW in there. There was nothing that, you know -- and it was cleaned up in a matter of

weeks, so, that's all been returned to normal.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: And I appreciate you saying that, but that's something I wanted, just to bring to the Task Force here, in most municipalities, you had no place to put the garbage, because the resource recovery took a limited amount of tons each day, and the amount of garbage that was being produced.

I know the town of Hempstead, they set up in the parks areas, Long Beach.

And, Peter, you had temporary places in a construction site at a former hospital.

Freeport, was doing the same thing.

It was a major issue that the Task Force should be aware of.

Municipalities on Long Island had no place to put their garbage.

And I know, in the town of Oyster Bay, we saw many parks in the back of John Burns, where they became dumping sites. And, obviously, you run into issues with the DEC and environmental issues.

But, it's something that the Task Force has to think about as we prepare the report now, from going forward, you and Senator Lanza, because it is a major issue that many municipalities had faced.

SENATOR SMITH: Okay, thank you.

Let me ask you, just a question to the mayors, and the county executives, reps, here.

For instance, the $200 million that you talked about earlier, in your budget, is that included in the 6 billion that they're asking for?

And I don't know if anyone is here from Suffolk. I know somebody from Steve Bellone's office.

And I think your numbers are somewhere around 1.6 billion?

Is that a compilation of villages and towns, or is this, you guys have separate -- your 200 million is within there?

Mayor Hardwick as well, Mayor Biondi, all you guys are all in one?

MAYOR BILL BIONDI: [Inaudible.]

SENATOR SMITH: I don't know. Mayor Biondi is, like, "Well, I don't know. I'm not sure."

MAYOR ANDREW HARDWICK: We're at half a billion.

SENATOR SMITH: See, I'm getting the sense that there's still some separate battles.

So it's all in there? Okay.

Let me turn the dialogue over.

Marc, from your perspective, as a contractor, I mean, everybody here is talking about, we know what the needs and challenges are, but, there's a big challenge out there, from your perspective; not only from availability, but also payment.

And I think we need to hear that because, as Chuck said earlier, I think this is important for all of us.

The Governor will be submitting his report to us within days. They're probably finalizing it today as we speak.

And then we had hoped that you guys would go online, read it, see if you agree with some of those recommendations. Make sure Senator Fuschillo and the other colleagues that are here, that represent your area, you put that information to us, because, from his report, we're all going to then take this information that you give us, put together a final, not only to the legislative initiatives, and also determining how the appropriations side of what we're going to be doing from the money from Washington, is as directed.

So, Marc, if you could just --

MARC HERBST: Well, thank you, Senator.

Thank you all, all Senators, for putting this

event together. We truly appreciate it.

As far as the infrastructure industry is concerned, the immediate response was very successful.

The interrelationship between the governments and our private-sector companies, in responding, seemed to work very well.

We had advanced planning, and, conversation, lines of communications were open. And I think everyone was up to the task and handled it well for the immediate response.

Our concern now is the long-term recovery.

Before the storm hits, the infrastructure, on Long Island particularly, has been in a series of deferment because of the budgetary crisis that each and every level of government has been facing for quite some time; so, the necessary repairs were not taking place.

Now the storm hits, the immediate response, essentially, what we're concerned with, villages, like Freeport, the city of Long Beach, they spent everything they had. And if they get the recovery for the money, just what was already expended, where do they go after the fact?

So a lot of the repairs that are necessary,

that were being deferred, they're going to be deferred even longer, because the money will not be there. When you try to get back to normal, getting back to normal was not being done in the first place, because you weren't taking care of the necessary repairs.

So now we've had the storm.

Now, what's the most important thing as far as infrastructure repairs?

And I've heard repeatedly, the theme of "build bigger, better, stronger," which we wholeheartedly agree, but I would also like to add that, what we should do is, also look at setting priorities.

What type of infrastructure is the first thing we should address?

And by what we saw by the response and the needs of the storm, is the sanitary system and the water systems should be priority number one.

So if you're going to build them better, stronger, what you have to do is, ensure that the operational needs are taking place, the elevations are proper. The money must be spent there.

We need water and sewer systems first. That's paramount.

Next would be telecommunications and utilities, other utilities. But, we have communication needs that we've also heard the concern. That should be in the next.

Finally would be the roads and bridges.

Overall, we've had some damages of the -- we've heard some of the bridges and the washouts of the roads; but, overall, most of them maintained and were operational, that we could get in and out for emergency response, other than flooded areas.

Now you're talking about bulkheads and raising/elevating roadways.

And most of significant flooding that we've seen in Mastic Beach and other communities, that has taken place before, not at that level, but we knew where those problems were. The money has not been available to raise those roads and improve the drainage systems of those highway systems. That must be done.

And, finally, I would say housing would be an area that is -- we've heard a lot about, that we should look at.

So those are the needs.

As far as funding going, of course, I always want to get paid, my members want to get paid, and

that's obvious. But the allocation of money, when it's coming to the federal government, we've to find a way, a mechanism, to make sure it flows as quickly as possible, so it doesn't get hung up in departments.

If you have money that's coming from the federal government, please, do everything possible to make sure it doesn't get stuck in some pocket for DEC or DOT before it gets down to the municipal level.

The municipal level, the villages and towns, want to get the work done, they want to get it done as fast as possible. They have to have the stream of funding go directly to them, or as fast as possible.

And I think that's what's probably most important as far as the funding stream.

SENATOR SMITH: Marc, could you do me a favor, personally? I mean, we've got a good relationship, but I've known your intellect, and what the Island contractors have been doing.

Could you provide us with a one-pager, or a document, of that nature?

MARC HERBST: I can get it to your office before you get there.

SENATOR SAVINO: Good.

SENATOR SMITH: Okay, very good. Thank you.

Senator Carlucci?

SENATOR CARLUCCI: Yes, Senator Carlucci, from Rockland and Westchester Counties, and this is just to piggyback of what Marc was talking about.

Marc, could you address some of the issues that we saw when we were just out touring earlier this morning, the problem of just mold, and what we can do, when we talking about housing, some of the things that we can make sure that mold mitigation is taken into effect when we are rebuilding?

MARC HERBST: The mold mitigation is a major problem. And I think that, you know, a lot of the contractor -- we've had some contractors from Long Island actually went down to "Katrina" and did work, and they had extensive education.

And one of the things we talk about, particularly the Long Island Builders Institute, has been involved in training.

And so what we need is to train a lot of our workers, the general contractors, who are doing that type of work, of how to mitigate it.

And a lot of the companies that have been here, I think, have done an excellent job. I don't

want to mention particular firms, but what we've seen is, a lot of the people who are doing this type of work really have done a professional job.

But what we've seen is a lot of the homeowners have decided to do it themselves, and they don't understand the issues that are involved, and they try to rebuild, and then it's going be a problem down the road. And that should be a concern.

So, as far as on the town level and the villages, when you're issuing permits, that's something, as part of the process, that we probably should want to ask, and make sure that's taken care of, to address the potential health concerns down the road.

SENATOR CARLUCCI: Right, so maybe as a task force, we can work together to develop best practices, so when with there is rebuilding, that we make sure that that is addressed, so we're not paying the consequences of health effects down the road.

MARC HERBST: Okay, sure. Okay.

SENATOR CARLUCCI: Great.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: You want to speak on behalf of -- yeah, why don't we hear from

Suffolk County.

ED MOLTZEN: Senator, thank you, and thank you to all the members of the Task Force, for taking the time today to gather this information.

We've heard a lot of good detail and information already, so far, and I don't want to go back over a lot of things that have been covered.

On the -- I do want to say that, on the flood-insurance issue, we met very early on in the recovery. I met also with -- some of my colleagues from Nassau County were in the same meeting, with the director of NFIP, who told us that the initial claims process was slowed down incredibly because insurance adjustors were having difficulty getting hotel rooms in affected areas.

And we looked into it further, and they couldn't get hotel rooms because there were displaced residents in the hotel rooms, waiting for adjustors to come, so they could get the claims process started.

You know, on the issue of Fire Island, and, you know, we've been working in Suffolk County to facilitate a joint effort.

"Sandy" did not observe jurisdictional boundaries, and it's been very heartening, in light

of all of the damage, and all -- everything that was done during the storm, to see, on Fire Island, how communities have come together.

And I know Senator Zeldin must be aware of this as well.

The towns of Brookhaven and Islip, the villages of Ocean Beach and Salt-Air, and even the Fire Island Association, you know, private homeowners, are joining on the Fire Island Debris Removal Task Force, with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, with FEMA, with New York State, various departments, and with, you know, recovery personnel in Suffolk County.

So we're working on that, and, you know, it's so vital, that we address the issues of wash-overs, that we address the issue of cleaning up Fire Island and rebuilding it.

Because, it's not just the fact that Fire Island is so incredibly important to Suffolk County and the region, in its own right, but Fire Island is a barrier island; it does protect tens of thousands of homes on the mainland.

So, we continue to work on that. We're very close to beginning the first stage of the recovery, which is the debris cleanup, which is going to be

led by the Army Corps of Engineers.

We're hoping that this cleanup will be done well in advance of the Memorial Day kickoff to the season.

And I do think that -- and I would echo what Chief Deputy County Executive Walker said about communities and villages and municipalities coming together and working. And maybe this is an area where the Task Force can take a look, and that is, finding ways to assist communities, town, villages, to work together.

There has been absolute collaboration and cooperation on Fire Island, with the Fire Island Debris Removal Task Force. And this was sort of a design that County Executive Bellone and Governor Cuomo, I guess, set out, when we first began to examine how to fix Fire Island.

And, to the extent that the legislature can work to maybe reduce barriers, however small they are, whether it's making it easier for villages and towns to enter into intermunicipal agreements, you know, every minute that's spent on legal mechanics is one minute not spent on recovery mechanics.

So, if you can -- you know, if you can take a

look at that, that would be -- that could possibly be a tremendous help down the road.

Talking about some other issues, mold remediation. Senator Carlucci brought it up.

We're continuing to look at that. That is not an easy issue for anyone to get their arms around, but we're working on it.

I think the Department of Health -- the New York State Department of Health, on December 5th, put out an advisory to health-care providers and local health departments on mold remediation, and the public-health impact of mold.

You know, they suggested, and we -- you know, I'll leave it to the other professionals to talk about it -- they suggested that, where there's severe flooding, that professionals come in and take a look at mold remediation.

And we're working to address that. It's not an easy process to get our arms around, and I'm not sure whether they're having any more success in Nassau County on this issue, but it's been difficult for us, but we're working on it. We're working on it with the towns and villages and communities.

And, you know, I just -- I would leave it at that for now.

I think that "Sandy" was an event, the recovery is a process.

County Executive Bellone has stated that we're going to be working with the communities, working with the villages, like Mastic Beach, and try to move this train forward.

And, you know, we thank you for any work that you can do to help us down the road.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Thank you very much.

Ray, we're going to go back and start with you.

We all are very aware of the integral part that the volunteer fire services in Nassau County and throughout Suffolk County played in recovery efforts, as well as Freeport.

So thank you so much for being here.

RAY MAGUIRE: Well, thank you for inviting me to join you today; and thank you, Senator Smith also.

It's a very unique dynamic in New York State, with the fact that the overwhelming majority of the households and businesses are protected by volunteer fire departments.

And the -- I could tell you, in the 35 years I've involved in the volunteer fire service, I was

never more proud than after this storm.

You had situations, you take my own department in Freeport, we had 80 firefighters whose houses were severely damaged by the storm.

You take Mayor Ruzicka, who's the former chief of Island Park, his whole entire town, every member of his department, had impact.

Mayor Bill Biondi, he's an ex-chief of Mastic Beach. Every single firefighter's house in his town.

Yet these guys and girls still stayed steadfast, stayed the course, and still went out and took care of their residents, as they were sworn to do, which is an unbelievable thing.

Mayor Hardwick, acting member of the Freeport Fire Department, 80 of his members have had devastation.

And I also have to say, Senator Boyle, who's also a member of the volunteer fire service, too.

All of these folks stepped up to the plate and did not turn back at all. You had an unprecedented situation that took place here.

Senator Zeldin pointed out about the fact that the proper equipment wasn't there.

I don't think that, even nationally, people

can wrap their arms around the fact, and I'll just talk about Nassau County alone, we have 1.3 million people here. That is larger than 16 states in the nation that the volunteer firefighters in Nassau County have to protect.

And, because of the dense population, because of industry, and everything else that goes along with it, we have all the same problems that entire states have, in the county of Nassau.

One of the things that we're very blessed with, is that we have a very, very dedicated force of volunteers who are there.

They're -- they -- I will tell you that, you know, Senator Smith protects his district as the FDNY. The New York City Fire Department is the only career fire department -- "the only career fire department" -- in the country that has proper manning.

And I know that I'm not getting into a union issue; they, of course, would like more firefighters. But, for the most part, you look at most career fire departments, they're driving around with two or three firefighters on an apparatus.

If we had career firefighters on Long Island,

the devastation would have been far more worse than it was.

We were able to put out hundreds and hundreds of volunteer firefighters at the snap of a finger, to go out and get into these communities, and go out and be able to rescue, and do what they had to do.

If it was career on Long Island, we would have had a problem, because two or three firefighters in a fire truck were not going to cut it.

The thing that we have, and the thing we need to do, we saw it in "Tropical Storm Irene," we had firefighters that responded up to Upstate New York after they were hit with the devastating storm.

"Tropical Storm Irene" came through here, and as Senator Savino mentioned, the number of constituents were hit with damages from that storm, but nowhere near the dramatic impact that they had with "Sandy." But, Upstate New York, they got hit a lot worse.

In fact, ironically enough, there were folks that evacuated Long Island, went upstate, and wound up getting in more peril upstate than they were if they had stayed here for "Tropical Storm Irene."

But what we saw in the volunteer fire services, that there was a lot of unique challenges that were put forth.

I know that we have Deputy County Executive Walker here. Through him, and especially County Executive Mangano, we put initiatives in place in Nassau County, to start using large venues, so that we could get a significant amount of training out to the firefighters.

But that's where the problem is.

We do need funding from the State, through the Department of Homeland Security Emergency Services, to push money down to the fire academies on Long Island and the fire academies in Westchester, and otherwhere, locally, so we're able to do this training.

We don't need to pay personnel to go to these classes, because any volunteer firefighter that goes is on their own time.

We need to have instructors, though, so that we can get this important training out there.

The other thing we need to do is seriously consider pre-positioning assets here.

To have stuff coming down from the National Guard, from up in Albany, or even on the

other side of the bridges, is just not working.

If we pre-positioned equipment here, even partner with the volunteer fire departments on Long Island, to maintain that equipment, and utilize it, so that it doesn't run dormant, I think will be a very significant help.

Even Senator Golden, you know, you have volunteer fire departments in your area also, who are in dire need.

I think the training aspect, though, is the biggest thing, because we are -- we're taking these firefighters and we're putting them in peril, ultimately, in a lot of these cases.

You know, just simply going down the street in a flooded area, somebody might say: Well, it's three feet of water, it's not that big a deal.

But if manhole cover is missing, that's a very, very big deal.

You know, you've got a lot of debris, you've got a lot of things that are happening, and it's not things that our firefighters face every single day.

And I think that we could partner with the fire academies, and try to get that training out there as much as we possibly can, and as quickly as we can. And, obviously, you know, funding is the

key for that.

Ultimately, like I said before, I am extremely proud to serve as a volunteer firefighter in this county, and on Long Island. And I know that I speak for all of the firefighters.

The Senate delegation from Long Island, and throughout the whole state, is very, very supportive, but, I think we need to fine tune it a little bit, and try to get some funding into these training initiatives, because, as I mentioned before, the county -- County Executive Mangano worked very closely with the fire academy in getting us the venue at the Morelle Center, where we're able to put 150 firefighters in a room, to do training. So rather than paying an instructor to teach 20 firefighters, we're using didactic training, and we're able to put 150 firefighters in a room, to better use -- to make better use of that money.

However, we need to do that more. We need to do that more with Suffolk, we need to partner more that way, and throughout the state, so that all the firefighters are trained to that same level.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Ray.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Senator Zeldin?

SENATOR SMITH: I think Senator Zeldin has a

question, and then we'll go to Senator Savino.

SENATOR ZELDIN: One additional request for Senator Smith and Senator Lanza to include into their report, we hear a lot of discussions today with regards to communications in the hours leading up to, and after, while doing all of these rescues.

Once, again, in Mastic Beach what we saw, I know it was a problem on Fire Island, big time, is that people are not getting -- they're not heeding the order to evacuate.

And then as soon as the storm hits, they decided that, the last storm they were okay. "Well, I'm not leaving my home."

And then they call at the height of the storm, and it's the volunteer firefighters and other first responders -- I mean, in terms of lives being lost, it's really the first responders who are at the most risk, because of those idiots that don't leave when they should.

And in many cases, what we saw in Mastic Beach, were, the first responders would get to their house, and then they changed their mind and decide, "I'm not leaving."

So they didn't call -- they didn't heed the

first warning to evacuate. Then they call for an evacuation, and they don't really leave.

And that puts first responders' lives in danger.

And I just feel compelled to add, that the work that John Miller, at the Red Cross, with your shelters; Paule Pachter, Randi Dresner, with Long Island Cares, Island Harvest; I mean, really, the silver lining of what was good about what happened, was watching the leadership within Long Island, from civilians stepping up. And that's the real strength of New Yorkers, the way we come together in times of need.

So, I just want to give you -- I feel compelled to a give shout-out to you three, because you did so much to help us to recover.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Senator Zeldin.

Senator Savino?

SENATOR SAVINO: Yeah, thank you for sharing with us.

I'm curious; of the volunteer firefighters on Long Island, how many of them are professional firefighters in the city of New York in their regular job?

RAY MAGUIRE: Well, every firefighter on

Long Island is a professional.

You're asking if they're a career --

SENATOR SAVINO: Oh, I'm sorry.

A career firefighter.

[Laughter.]

RAY MAGUIRE: I just want to make sure we get that clear.

[Laughter.]

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: You clarified that.

SENATOR SAVINO: [Unintelligible], as opposed to, you know.

RAY MAGUIRE: The career firefighter --

SENATOR SAVINO: The career.

RAY MAGUIRE: -- yeah, there are a number of them, the number of firefighters from the FDNY, NYPD, you know, Nassau County Police, police organizations, that make up the volunteer firefighters in their home communities.

SENATOR SAVINO: So I'm wondering if, perhaps, one of the things we can also request of the New York City Fire Department and the NYPD, is that they incorporate some of this training in their own training, which will then benefit the volunteer companies on Long Island.

Would that something that would be helpful?

RAY MAGUIRE: Yeah, it would be, but we do -- we do work in concert with the FDNY with a lot of our training.

Our firefighter do -- they have firefighters come to our academy, and we go to their.

It's, just, we have to kick it up to a notch, to be able to make sure that we push out as much as -- especially, the special ops training, which is what they were faced with through this event.

SENATOR SAVINO: Right. And one of things we found on the night of the storm, especially in Breezy Point, which was a volunteer company --

RAY MAGUIRE: Yep.

SENATOR SAVINO: -- there was this concern about the rigs; that they could not go through a certain level of water, and they had to wait until later, when some other trucks came from somewhere else.

Should there be different types of rigs, depending on whether you're in a coastal community or not?

Like, the kind of truck you need for, you know, 110th Street in Manhattan may not be what you need in Mastic Beach.

RAY MAGUIRE: Right, well, in a perfect

world -- that goes to what Senator Zeldin said before.

In a perfect world, we would have as much of this equipment as we possibly can. Everybody would have it.

But that's not realistic. It's just not even financially possible.

I think that if we look at what we actually need, and that's what I mean by partnering with the -- you know, all of the fire departments on Long Island are municipalities, in one respect or another -- whether it be a fire district, incorporated village fire department -- is partnering with them to get these rigs on Long Island, and let the fire department utilize them in training, so that they here, they're serviced.

But the problem is, a lot of the departments -- take Island Park, Mayor Ruzicka's department; they're not going to be able to afford to buy one of these big pieces of equipment. But I would be rest assured, that if Mayor Ruzicka and Chief Russio [ph.] were told, that, "Here, we're going to put one of these rigs in your district. You're going to take care of it, you're going to

drill on it, you're going to maintain it," I don't -- so I'm not speaking for Chief -- for Mayor Ruzicka, but I would venture to say that they would definitely be interested in an arrangement like that, as would other departments, so that they -- you know, the thing is, you can't put a piece of apparatus or an equipment and store it in a garage, and then wait five years to use it.

When you think about it, the last major storm event we had in Nassau County was December 11th of 1992. It was 20 years ago. That was the last time we had very severe flooding which impacted the north shore as badly as it impacted the south shore.

Senator Marcellino's area in Bayville was devastated because the water crested the roadway and filled up what they called "the bowl" in Bayville, and those houses had eight feet of water in them. That was December 11th of '92.

So, you know, when we're telling people they have to evacuate, the problem is, it's the little boy that cried wolf, because "Tropical Storm Irene," they hung out, everything was cool, no problem.

I can tell you, that in speaking to a lot of constituents, not one of them has said to me: That if I'm told to evacuate again, that I'm

staying.

Most of the people are absolutely going to heed that warning, and go.

So, I think if we can get this equipment, and partner with the fire departments, to make sure that it's maintained and available, that would help Breezy Point, because, waiting for equipment to come across the bridges, to get to Breezy Point, is an impossibility.

SENATOR SAVINO: Right.

RAY MAGUIRE: But if we had something in Nassau County that was pre-positioned, we could go through the Rockaways and get into Breezy Point to be able to render that aid.

SENATOR SAVINO: Did you lose any firehouses in Nassau or Suffolk County, that were literally lost?

RAY MAGUIRE: Yeah, there was a significant damage.

You know, the firehouses are pretty robust, but there's a significant amount of damage in a number of firehouses, I know, in Nassau.

I'm not sure about Suffolk, what they lost.

SENATOR SAVINO: And what about their equipment?

Because we had two firehouses in Coney Island that went out. The guys lost everything. They had their one pair of pants. I mean, three police precincts, but they had their one pair of pants.

RAY MAGUIRE: Right, right.

SENATOR SAVINO: And then, afterwards, as Con Ed was trying to reconnect people, people who hadn't shut off their breakers, they were sparking.

RAY MAGUIRE: Yeah.

SENATOR SAVINO: And they were asking for the firefighters to go in and disconnect. And they were, like: We can't, we only have the one pair of pants.

So, personal equipment for individual firefighters may be something that we need to consider as well.

RAY MAGUIRE: That was a big problem.

SENATOR SAVINO: It's very expensive.

RAY MAGUIRE: Yes, yes, very.

And the trouble is, that we're not talking about, you know, fresh lake water here. We're talking about salt water; there's sewage, there's oil mixed in it.

When you think about what happened out here, two weeks before this event took place, every oil

company on Long Island went and filled up 275 gallons worth of oil in everybody's tanks in anticipation of the winter coming. So all of these tanks became buoyant, flipped over, and we have oil all over place.

I mean, that's another significant problem that's impacting us out there.

SENATOR SAVINO: Who provides equipment for your firefighters?

RAY MAGUIRE: The taxpayers.

SENATOR SAVINO: So they don't have to pay for it themselves? Replacements?

RAY MAGUIRE: No.

SENATOR SAVINO: Okay.

RAY MAGUIRE: Nope, the taxpayers do.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Thank you.

RAY MAGUIRE: I mean -- if I just -- one more thing.

Lieutenant Mike Chiapperilli [sic], from West Webster, who was tragically killed on Christmas Eve in that shooting, he was here, operating as a volunteer firefighter in Mastic Beach with Mayor Biondi's folks.

So, you know -- and we had folks that went upstate. We had a lot of them come down here.

That's just what it is. We're very -- that's where you folks really can -- you have a grasp of the whole state. That's what we need, to get everybody on the same page, and training is really the ultimate key there.

SENATOR SAVINO: Thank you.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Thank you very much, Ray.

SENATOR GOLDEN: Thank you, I'll be brief.

The -- we're areas that, in my community, where we were in a Level B zone, when we should have been in a Level A zone, so the evacuation never came.

So we lost the volunteer fire trucks, we lost a whole host of equipment.

But what did become essential, were deuce-and-a-halfs and 5-ton trucks, because, on the ground, the water came in at 3 feet, went to 7 feet, subsided with the high tide two hours later, and you were able to go in and get those people out. They were floating their children out on mattresses.

It was pretty -- it was one of the worse scenes I've ever witnessed, and I was a police officer for ten years. So it was sad.

We have to find a way, with these new maps

that are coming out, to make sure that the designations are correct in the places, especially along the waterfront. And they're out now, so we're going to be looking at them, and taking a close look to make sure that they're correct.

But, it was a harrowing evening.

And I want to thank all of your guys for the outstanding job that night. All the fire departments, the police departments, all the emergency service units, and, of course, all of the volunteers that came out that night, and subsequently since, and helped to assist us in getting this under control.

But we do have a long way to go, and I think this Committee is going to go a long way in trying to help these different towns and villages, and counties.

But I would like to, if you have an idea, does anybody know how many people in each one of your villages are still without electricity, and how many are still without boilers?

If you can just throw a number out, not a long dissertation, but, if you just go around and give us what you believe is still, no electricity in those homes, no boilers in those homes.

Why don't we start with you, Mayor Hardwick.

SENATOR SMITH: A number.

MAYOR ANDREW HARDWICK: I won't give you the sermon.

I would say close to 2,000.

SENATOR GOLDEN: 2,000 without electricity, or 2,000 --

MAYOR ANDREW HARDWICK: Without electricity, without heating systems.

SENATOR SMITH: Mayor Biondi?

MAYOR BILL BIONDI: I would say, between 100 and 150 homes.

SENATOR GOLDEN: Without electricity?

MAYOR BILL BIONDI: Without electricity.

SENATOR GOLDEN: And what about boilers?

MAYOR BILL BIONDI: Have no heat also.

SENATOR GOLDEN: Is that, 200?

MAYOR BILL BIONDI: Yes.

SENATOR SMITH: City Manager Schnirman?

JACK SCHNIRMAN: I would say, approximately, 200 homes.

SENATOR SMITH: Mayor Ruzicka?

MAYOR JAMES RUZICKA: I would say, we're looking at, probably, about 30 percent of our village that does not have heating.

Electric, we're probably all capable of having electric, but some of the homes still have to be wired up, so it will be on an individual basis, maybe 10 percent --

SENATOR GOLDEN: And what's that 30 percent --

MAYOR JAMES RUZICKA: -- out of about 1,000 homes.

SENATOR GOLDEN: How many?

MAYOR JAMES RUZICKA: Out of, about, 1,000 homes.

SENATOR SMITH: Nassau County?

WARREN TACKENBERG: We represent 64 buildings, 495,000 -- 450,000 people, but we don't have that information [inaudible].

But, we are representing these villages here, and you're -- it's going to be the same story.

Probably most of the villages in the central part of the island were not damaged that badly, but the ones in the flood zones were just -- they're all in the same boat.

That's -- that's a bad excuse, but that's what it's called. It's the wrong place right now.

But, I can't give you numbers today.

SENATOR GOLDEN: And out of all those towns

and villages, on the remediation of the mold, where are you in that?

And how many how many homes are still have to be remediated with mold?

MAYOR ANDREW HARDWICK: I would say [inaudible].

SENATOR GOLDEN: So the other homes that have been repaired, the mold has been remediated --

MAYOR ANDREW HARDWICK: I would say, out of about 3,000 homes, those 3,000 homes are in need of moderate to major rehab. And, 4 1/2 co-ops are empty. There's no one living in them.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Marty, let me say just say: In my Senate district, when you drive from Baldwin Harbor to the village of Lyndonhurst, and I'm in Massapequa, I spend a lot of time in the village of Amityville, when you drive down south, you know, you saw today, during the day, front doors are open, and there's no half walls. They've cut all the sheet rock, you know, from four feet, down.

And so you see, from front to back, in most of these houses. Those are the ones that were able to afford or have some kind of expedited FEMA or insurance payments.

What we saw today here in the village and

Island Park, is -- and many other areas are experiencing, where they don't have those expedited payments, where they're not -- they haven't cut the four-foot, and that's where the mold is really being experienced, heavily.

SENATOR GOLDEN: Well, I'm just trying to get handle on, how much do you believe the remediation on the mold is still out there, and how are we handling it?

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: I would say it's expensive and pretty significant.

And, you know, a lot of these homeowners, as you saw today, of a woman in Freeport, that her low estimate was $89,000 to repair her home. All the other estimates were well over $100,000. And she has received, or got word from her insurance company, that she would get $29,000 to repair the home we were in.

And this is the problem, many homeowners on the south shore, where the flooding devastation took effect, is experiencing right now.

And then there's another problem, Senator, that we experienced also.

That, homeowners are receiving checks from their insurance companies, but then they have to

send them to their banks to get endorsed, and most of these banks, because they're federally chartered, are in other states. And by the time it comes back here, you're looking at a three-, four-week period, and it's only a portion of that, maybe a third. And they got to go through this entire process to get payments.

And Marc is shaking his head, because it's most of his contractors out there that are doing the work.

One of the things that, you know, we've talked about here in the Task Force, and brought this to the Governor's Office as well, we need certification centers. You know, in regions throughout Long Island and New York City, where, when somebody gets a check from their insurance company, rather have to send it to their bank where they're federally chartered, maybe in South Dakota, or somewhere, because the interest rates are different, have a certification center, regionally, where they can go and get the check certified, and then they can start the process of rebuilding, rather than wait three to four weeks.

And that three- to four-week period is for every third of a payment that the bank or the

insurance company will release.

This -- this delays everything.

And when you have these homeowners that you're talking about, in the municipalities, in the metropolitan area, they have to wait for this, the mold builds up, because they're not doing the reconstruction, obviously, on their own.

I mean, we saw that house today. In the crawlspace, there's still water there. Foundation's cracked, the foundation's wet. How they ever rebuild -- how she ever rebuilds that house, I don't know.

I mean, some of the colleagues were saying: Maybe this house should have been -- should be leveled.

But you have, you know, 12 blocks of that, from canal to canal to the water then, that's all surrounded. And just in that --

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: [Inaudible] --

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: -- just in that one particular zone of housing here.

SENATOR GOLDEN: Well, here's our problem --

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: It just gets multiplied, so it's not just, you know, how are we dealing the mold issue? how do we deal with getting them money?

how do we deal with the banks? how do we deal with insurance companies, you know, to get these homeowners the money in an expedited manner?

It's happening for some, the majority it's not.

SENATOR GOLDEN: Well, I think that's the reason, we're trying to move, obviously, is to get a prioritization, I believe, and how we can help.

Just in the handful of villages that we have here right now, we have over 3,000 that are without electricity. Then that's just a handful of the villages.

So if we have that number of people in Nassau County, and, in Brooklyn, has the similar, and so does Queens and Staten Island, we have a major problem.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Let me quantify this for you.

SENATOR GOLDEN: Okay.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: From Rob Walker, the bulk of the $6 billion they've requested, 4 billion of that is for housing: rebuild, raising, repair.

Rob, do you want to talking about that briefly?

SENATOR GOLDEN: And if you could have it,

how would that be distributed, if you could?

ROBERT WALKER: Yeah, the bulk -- and I know the Mayor mentioned $500 million.

You know, the bulk of the problems that we're facing in the county now are infrastructure, housing, and business.

Business, there's about $400 million they've requested for business relief.

You know, the businesses right now, you know, do not want to take advantage of any of the SBA loans. Some of them won't qualify if they're even in the flood zone.

So, how are they going to reopen when they don't even qualify for a loan program by which they have to repay, they don't qualify?

There's no grants really available to them.

So, a major portion of it was asked, about $400 million, goes directly to businesses in the form of some grant subsidies by which we can get these businesses back open.

At the same time, the $4 billion that is requested of Congress, in the supplemental, is for -- specifically, for housing needs.

And in some areas, as all of you mentioned today, and some of the mayors have mentioned,

maybe there's some areas we don't rebuild those homes there, but we look to go build them somewhere else.

Maybe there is -- in many of the regards, we visited homeowners, the County Executive visited, that, literally, just got approved, after "Hurricane Irene," to have their house raised.

The great $30,000 they were going to get to have the house raised, only to have it flooded ten times worse under this storm.

Now they're questioning it: Do I even want to spend the $30,000, or do I want to move, relocate, or possibly raise it double of what I was going to raise it later?

And then, obviously, the building codes, and things of that nature, gets brought in.

So, we also have, in certain parts of the community, where we have condo complexes that have 100 to 200 people that can't get in because they're boilers and all their switch gear are downstairs in the basement.

Obviously, that needs to be raised.

So, the bulk of the money is looking at how do we put -- we want people to go back into the homes they live. I think that's what everybody's

desire is. That's community they lived in.

SENATOR GOLDEN: Sure.

ROBERT WALKER: I think all of us here share that belief, but let's do it, if we can, let's make sure we do it right. Right?

Without these dollars, I think, let's -- we have to be blunt about it.

Without the dollars from both, you know, the State, the feds, the County, all of the villages and towns, without the dollars, and the brains behind it, we're living a pipe dream.

We need to have the money, and then to go in and really look at these people, and say: What do you do? How do you plan right?

And one of this things that we've done with FEMA, just yesterday, with the County Executive, I know, then, he met with Long Beach, and we're going to put these programs together throughout Nassau County into each hamlet in the town, and the townships, is, he says: Look, we can go in, bring in planners. Let the planners look at what happened, let them look at what caused these problems, and how do they better plan for the future? And what is their goals? What would they do? What would they recommend?

We brought people in from Galveston. You know, Texas, had a major problem with the storms. We brought people in from "Katrina," Louisiana, that have a lot of experience in dealing with this; and how could we plan for a better tomorrow, without wasting money?

Because the last thing we want to do is, have this money, with no exaggeration, you know, just float away a year from now.

Let's do it right, let's spend it right, and, you know, use the right people to do it.

And that's where, you know, the bulk of these resources will, in fact, go.

MAYOR ANDREW HARDWICK: I might add, because no one has brought it up, Senator, a third of the folks that have been affected this time, this is their first time.

This is their first time, so they don't know what to do, many of them. I mean, they've never had to deal with this before.

So, we got to be mindful of that.

We have more than 400 properties, no one's turned the key. These properties are still growing with mold, as we speak.

SENATOR GOLDEN: Well, that's one of the

reasons we're having this meeting, is to come up with some answers and, hopefully, help the towns and villages and the counties that are in trouble.

But I got to tell you, we're going into sub-degree weather. We have these people living in this mold. It's going to get worse.

We have to find a way of getting the people out of these homes, if, in fact, we can't get them up and running, so we get them into safe conditions.

That's a priority of this Committee, and a priority, obviously, of the counties, to make sure that we do what's right in those areas. And that's why we're asking some of these questions.

But, you pointed it out, Mayor, how, you know, it's freezing out there, and people still have water in their pipes. Those pipes are going to start to break, that the people are no longer living in. They have no boilers, and you're going to see far more damage than that's already there.

I think the last time I seen water in the districts in Garrison Beach was in "Donna." That was in 1960. So -- and that was only six inches of water.

So, just to give you an idea of some of the

communities around the city of New York, and around the state, that have been impacted by this storm.

So, we're there, and we're going to continue to be here, until we get the answers and, hopefully, the dollars to make this happen.

SENATOR SAVINO: One question.

You mentioned about, there were 400 houses in your incorporated village that no one's turned the key.

Do you have any idea how many foreclosed, bank-owned properties are in your town?

Or, does anybody?

Because we -- we enacted legislation a few year ago, it's the law in the state of New York, if a property is taken over by a bank pursuant to a foreclosure, they are obligated to maintain that property.

Well, they seem to think they can ignore that law.

So I'm wondering --

Yeah, you're shaking your head.

-- how many of these homes; because, the experience we've had is, where a bank owns the property, or a real estate company, an REO, has the property, they're not pumping out the basement,

contributing to, you know, an even bigger problem.

Are you seeing that in your towns and villages out here?

MAYOR ANDREW HARDWICK: Absolutely. I can tell you that --

SENATOR SAVINO: We need to get on top of that.

MAYOR ANDREW HARDWICK: -- we're in an area between 200 and 300 homes that are in foreclosure now.

I've been working diligently to reverse that number. We've saved more than 200 homes in the last 2 1/2 years.

We've been working on, in fact, Senator Fuschillo and I, have a program in effect, where I actually held the banks hostage with government funding.

"You don't work for us with our money the right way, we take our money out and we move our money."

And I got to tell you, when you tell banks that you're going to go to Albany to a conference of mayors, or you're going to go to Washington to a conference of mayors, and tell them, that, "Maybe we should join forces, because the banks are not

working for us," the banks want to work all of a sudden, in the right way.

We've had -- we have to turn it around.

In many cases, the modification wasn't hard for them at all. It wasn't as if the residents didn't have the means to pay their mortgages. They just needed to pay less, by a few hundred dollars, which would change their worlds.

They could actually pay for their utilities.

They could not be threatened to make a choice between prescription drugs and a meal.

So, there's so much that we're going to have to do because of "Sandy," because there's so many people that are going to take advantage.

And with that, we're going to have to have some controls in place, because the gouging is here, with "Sandy."

SENATOR SMITH: Okay, let me -- first, let me thank Senator Fuschillo and his staff for putting together what I believe is a very good roundtable.

To our other staff, Dana and Meredith and others that are here, I thank them as well; all of my Senate colleagues.

I'll let Senator Fuschillo have the last word, but, for all of you that are around this

table, let me just say, thank you, on behalf of the Senate.

I'm quite sure, not knowing anything you did during the "Sandy" crisis, each and every one of you did something very special for someone in a very voluntary capacity, and we want you to know that we noticed that, we know it, and we appreciate it.

We're going to work expeditiously. This is not a task force that's going to be working on this for the next three years. We expect to work on it over the next month or two.

We really want you to take a look at the Governor's report that he will be issuing, probably in the next day or so. Let us know how you feel about that.

We have to respond with some legislation, and also deal with the appropriations side of what comes from Washington.

Your input today is very important, specifically from the mayors, around some of the costs that you have.

But know that this is a significant task force that has a very significant charge. We don't believe it's too big for us to handle. We think we have the mindset, the capacity, and the will to get

something done.

We like to look at ourselves, similar to our first responders, who we know put their lives on the line, and we appreciate that.

And we're going to do the same, as we heard you, loud and clear, Mayor Hardwick, Mayor Biondi, Mayor Ruzicka. We know that your people are suffering, and we plan on moving, and moving quickly.

So, with that, I want to thank all of you again.

Thank the staff that is here. Thank you, you have been helpful.

We thank the Recreation Center staff as well.

And, I would like to have Senator Fuschillo just close us out.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Thank you, Senator Smith.

Let me thank Mayor Hardwick for your leadership, and for allowing us to be here today.

I thought it was critically important to bring this Task Force to Long Island, to hear all of your concerns.

So I want to thank all of the leaders we have here today. You have played such an integral part in getting people's lives back, to the extent that

they can be back.

I also wanted to recognize:

Randi, from Island Harvest;

And, Paule, from Long Island Cares;

And, John, from the American Red Cross;

The three of you, your efforts have been just outstanding.

To those of you on the Task Force that aren't from Long Island, without them, individuals wouldn't have food.

You're from Brooklyn.

SENATOR GOLDEN: Long Island.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: You're not from Long Island.

[Laughter.]

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: You may want to move to Long Island, but you're not from Long Island [unintelligible].

You know, everybody says, once in our lifetime, some way back, we're all from Brooklyn, Marty; so, I thank you for being here.

SENATOR GOLDEN: [Inaudible] married a girl from there [unintelligible].

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Right.

But, John, Paule, and Randi, thank you so

much for all of your of efforts. There isn't a place in Nassau or Suffolk County where the American Red Cross, Long Island Cares, or Island Harvest has not been, handing out food.

I spent a lot of time with Paule Pachter. Thank you very much for your leadership.

You think I'm on your staff now, but, we do spend a lot of time.

[Laughter.]

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: You know, one of the reporters during the -- when we had an availability before this, had asked the question, what we thought of Washington.

If Speaker Boehner was here right now, they would have never played the politics with the lives of the people who need the recovery efforts so much. His actions were disgraceful and deplorable.

Fortunately for us, we have a very strong congressional delegation in New York and New Jersey.

I started off by complimenting our own Congressman, Peter King, for his efforts. He's a true fighter.

And it's a shame that he had to embarrass the Speaker to bring Congress back this Friday and next

Friday.

But all of your concerns are critically important to this Task Force.

And, the money coming from Washington is key. It's key to the rebuilding efforts, it's key to the success of Nassau and Suffolk County, and the municipalities within that.

So your input, it was greatly appreciated. I thank you so much for the time that you've given us today.

Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

(Whereupon, the Roundtable held before the New York State Senate Bipartisan Task Force for "Hurricane Sandy" Recovery, concluded.)

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