

July 2, 2015

**RE: Update on South Jersey Weather Disaster Damages**

Dear Mayor:

As you know, severe weather conditions on June 23 devastated communities throughout the southern parts of our State. Responding to the needs of residents and businesses, municipalities in the region have dedicated all available resources to assist in the recovery. Their efforts began with the earliest forecast of the potential for problems. They will continue until all outstanding needs are addressed.

**If your municipality has incurred, and if it will incur, any costs in responding to weatherrelated damage, please ask your local Emergency Management Coordinator to contact your county Office of Emergency Management, immediately.**

**Also, all municipalities that were affected by the storm should document (and photograph if possible) any damage to public facilities (buildings, road, bridges, equipment) and all debris removal activities.**

Damage costs for emergency protective measures and debris removal, Statewide, must exceed the FEMA-mandated threshold of \$12.4 million, in order for any New Jersey municipalities to qualify for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance funding. That funding could cover 75% of disaster response costs. To date, the State Office of Emergency Management has been able to assess municipal, county and State damages of \$11 million. But, unless the threshold is reached, all of those costs will have to be borne by New Jersey taxpayers. We appreciate the outreach that was initiated, by the Governor's Office, in response to requests made by the Mayors of the municipalities that suffered storm-related damage, on June 23. We want to single out, for special mention, Harrison Township Mayor Louis Manzo, who also serves as President of the Gloucester County Mayors Association.

Earlier today, an informational meeting was held in Woolwich Township. Led by Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno, the leaders of several key State agencies brought Mayors and their representatives up to speed on State actions, to date, and advised the Mayors on how best to proceed, going forward. The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Charles Richman discussed the Local Finance Notice (LFN), which was released by the Division of Local Government Services (DLGS), late yesterday. He was accompanied by DLGS Director Tim Cunningham, who will be the prime point of contact for municipalities looking for budgetary advice on dealing with the disaster. (Phone 609-292-6613)

Also earlier today, the Officers of the League of Municipalities sent a letter to the Governor, respectfully asking him to issue an Executive Order, declaring a state of emergency for municipalities in southern New Jersey counties. That letter stated, in part, "To assist all who have suffered losses as a result of the storm, and on behalf of the Mayors and citizens of the affected

municipalities, respectfully, we call on you to formally declare a state of emergency to have existed in those communities, beginning with the earliest indication of the potential of weatherrelated dangers.” A declaration of a state of emergency would provide cap law flexibility for local budgets. The League’s letter is online at: <http://nj-njslom.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/6482>

If you have any questions on this letter, please contact Jon Moran at 609-695-3481, ext. 121 or [jmoran@njslom.com](mailto:jmoran@njslom.com). Have a safe and happy Fourth.

Very truly yours,

Michael J. Darcy, CAE  
Executive Director