CHARLES E. SCHUMER
NEW YORK

Majority Leader

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

September 25, 2023

Lieutenant General Scott A. Spellmon
Chief of Engineers
Commanding General
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Dear Lieutenant General Spellmon:

I write to you with an urgent matter regarding storm damage done to four U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) projects in Suffolk County, New York and request that USACE use their authority under Public Law (PL) 84-99 to provide emergency assistance to the county by reviewing the previous requests and the supplemental damage information submitted to USACE. The project areas that sustained damage are the:

1. Fire Island Inlet to Moriches Inlet (FIMI) Stabilization Project
2. Fire Island Inlet and Shores Westerly to Jones Inlet Beach Erosion Control and Navigation Project
3. West of Shinnecock Inlet (WOSI) Interim Storm Damage Reduction Project, and
4. Downtown Montauk Stabilization Project.

Since the beginning of this year, the county and state have at multiple points requested emergency assistance from USACE for several of these project areas.

Multiple winter storms in December 2022 and January 2023, including a December 16th Nor'easter and the historic December 21-26 extratropical cyclone – informally called Winter Storm Elliott, which crippled much of the northeastern United States – caused significant losses of sand along the Atlantic Ocean shoreline. On the East End of Long Island, the West of Shinnecock Inlet area has long been a site of erosion and the storm of late December 2022 caused severe additional erosion at WOSI, as well as to the beach area along the commercial and residential hub of Montauk. Major erosion also occurred along Fire Island's beaches, and emergency repair is particularly needed in the eastern Fire Island communities where the beachfront has diminished and USACE assistance is critical to protecting them from future storm events: communities including Seaview, Ocean Bay Park, Point O'Woods, Cherry Grove, Fire Island Pines, Water Island, and Davis Park. In Fire Island Pines, for instance, it's my understanding that water has overtaken and greatly eroded sections of the dune. Significant erosion also occurred in the area just west of Fire Island Inlet and the beaches to its west, and sand placement is needed in this area to nourish the westerly beachfronts that protect critical roadway infrastructure, local government assets. It is critical that USACE provide its expertise and ability, and work with state, county, and local officials to restore the project areas as soon as possible.

Local officials, Suffolk County, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation have done what they could to help these areas recover, but are seeking assistance from USACE to provide a robust, more-permanent restoration. It is my understanding that the county and

the state have submitted additional information to better inform USACE of the significant damage that has been done to these structures. Once again, I request that USACE headquarters review the additional information, and use its PL 84-99 authority to coordinate with state and local officials to address this pressing issue and provide aid with all due haste.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

CC: COL Alexander Young, Commander and District Engineer, New York District, USACE

CHARLES E. SCHUMER
NEW YORK

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October 4, 2023

Lieutenant General Scott A. Spellmon
Chief of Engineers
Commanding General
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Dear Lieutenant General Spellmon:

I write regarding the urgent matter of the storm damage done to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) projects in Suffolk County, New York following the recent storms, including Tropical storm Ophelia and request that USACE use its authority under Public Law (PL) 84-99 to provide emergency assistance to New York State and Suffolk County in the wake of recent storm damage. The project areas that recently sustained significant damage are the eastern beaches of Fire Island, the site of USACE's Fire Island Inlet to Moriches Inlet (FIMI) Stabilization Project.

While multiple storms over the past year have pounded the ocean shores of Fire Island, Tropical Storm Ophelia and its remnants battered the area for nearly two weeks at the end of last month. The persistent tropical storm, its sustained easterly winds, and increasing tidal surge caused the retreat of dunes as much as 30 feet along sections of eastern Fire Island. The residential Fire Island communities of Seaview, Ocean Bay Park, Point O'Woods, Cherry Grove, Fire Island Pines, Water Island, and Davis Park were already vulnerable pre-Ophelia thanks to the degraded condition of the FIMI dune system and beachfront, and now these communities are even more exposed to the elements and threats posed by storms. Not only is a robust and repaired FIMI dune system needed to protect the aforementioned communities, it is needed to provide storm damage protection to all the south shore communities along the Great South Bay, which separates the barrier island from Long Island's mainland.

The men and women of USACE – especially those in New York District who work with my office – work diligently and resolutely to protect Long Island and have been crucial in brining many projects of significance to fruition across downstate New York. I applaud and thank them for their continued work on behalf of the people of New York. I understand that USACE personnel are currently conducting damage assessments in the wake of Tropical Storm Ophelia, and hope that assistance can be provided swiftly to eastern Fire Island. Local leaders have requested federal PL 84-99 assistance, and I support their request and hope it will be approved by USACE.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

CC: MG William H. Graham, Deputy Chief of Engineers and Deputy Commanding General for Civil Works and Emergency Operations, USACE

COL Alexander Young, Commander and District Engineer, New York District, USACE

KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND
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SENATOR

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United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510–3205

October 4, 2023

Lieutenant General Scott A. Spellmon
Chief of Engineers Commanding General
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Dear Lieutenant General Spellmon,

I write to request that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) use its authority under Public Law (PL) 84-99 to provide emergency assistance to help address significant losses of sand and other storm impacts along the Atlantic Coast of Suffolk County, New York.

Over the last couple of years, multiple storms have damaged crucial beach areas along the southern shore of Long Island, most notably the historic extratropical cyclone, known as Winter Storm Elliott, that devastated the region in December 2022. These storms resulted in widespread losses of sand, and damaged the following four USACE project areas:

1. Fire Island Inlet to Moriches Inlet (FIMI) Stabilization Project
2. Fire Island Inlet and Shores Westerly to Jones Inlet Beach Erosion Control and Navigation Project
3. West of Shinnecock Inlet (WOSI) Interim Storm Damage Reduction Project
4. Downtown Montauk Stabilization Project

Over the course of this year, both the county and state have repeatedly requested emergency assistance from USACE to address several of these project areas. For example, the WOSI Interim Storm Damage Reduction Project has experienced consistent erosion, and the shoreline near the Downtown Montauk Stabilization Project is inching closer to vital commercial and residential infrastructure. Immediate sand replenishment is critically needed to fortify the western beachfront, safeguard important roadway infrastructure, and shield essential local government assets.

Emergency assistance from USACE is also urgently needed in the following communities on the eastern end of Fire Island, particularly in light of the recent impacts of Hurricane Lee and Tropical Storm Ophelia: Seaview, Ocean Bay Park, Point O'Woods, Cherry Grove, Fire Island Pines, Water Island, and Davis Park. It is my understanding that Suffolk County and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) are preparing another request for USACE to use its PL 84-99 authority to provide emergency assistance to help address the damaged beaches in these communities, which I urge USACE to expeditionary review and approve upon receipt. With emergency repairs already scheduled for the western end of Fire Island this fall, doing the emergency work on the eastern end over the same period of time would

be the best use of USACE's resources, and would help ensure that the eastern shoreline is not left vulnerable for a longer period of time than is necessary.

While local officials, Suffolk County, and New York State DEC have made concerted efforts towards recovery, they are now turning to USACE for a comprehensive restoration solution. Therefore, I respectfully request that you expeditiously review the information provided by the state and county regarding the previous PL 84-99 request, as well as the forthcoming PL 84-99 request, and engage with state and local officials to promptly address this alarming situation.

If you have any questions, or desire further information, please do not hesitate to contact my staff member, Theo Miller, at (202) 224-4451.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

CC: COL Alexander Young, Commander and District Engineer, New York District, USACE

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