



Assemblyman

Steve Otis

91st Assembly District
Larchmont - Mamaroneck - New Rochelle - Port Chester - Rye Brook and Rye



July 9, 2025

Dear Friends,

This newsletter includes news of state grant funding for flood mitigation projects on the Sound Shore, the Westchester Medical Center Health System Legislative Breakfast, Juneteenth celebrations, and information on the Hurricane Ida Renters Safe Housing Incentive program (RSHI).

As always, do not hesitate to contact me or my staff on issues in this email or any matter with which we can be helpful. My office number is 914-939-7028.

Warm Regards,

Governor Hochul and NYS DEC Announce Additional Funding for Sound Shore Flood Mitigation Projects



Assemblyman Otis with DEC Regional Director Kelly Turturro, County Legislator Nancy Barr, DEC Commissioner Amanda Lefton, County Legislator Erika Pierce, County Executive Ken Jenkins, County Legislator Catherine Parker and Mayor of Rye Josh Cohen at the Jay Heritage Center in Rye.

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Amanda Lefton returned to Westchester for the second time in two weeks to announce state funding for important flood mitigation projects on the Sound Shore. The local press conference coincided with Governor Hochul's announcement of \$21 million in funding for three flood mitigation projects on the Blind Brook watershed.

In addition to Commissioner Lefton, the press conference included County Executive Ken Jenkins, County Legislators Catherine Parker, Nancy Barr, and Erica Pierce, City of Rye Mayor Josh Cohen, DEC Regional Director Kelly Tuturro, and area environmental advocates.

The Blind Brook projects help fund replacing the county-owned Playland Parkway and Oakland Avenue bridges in the City of Rye. In the Village of Rye Brook, the East Branch of Blind Brook will be uncovered using natural stream design techniques and will expand floodplain areas with nature-based solutions. The project will include the creation of a properly sized, multistage channel and floodplain, installation of native plantings, grade control structures and scour protection measures along the restored channel to prevent damage and protect upstream infrastructure.

The support for the Blind Brook projects will come from the historic \$4.2 billion Clean Air, Clean Water and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act of 2022's 'Restoration and Flood Risk' funding category.

The announcement underscored the focus that the DEC has brought to Westchester since Hurricane Ida. After Ida, DEC conducted resilient stream studies for six watersheds in Westchester at no cost to local communities. These studies for the Blind Brook, Bronx and Hutchinson Rivers, Mamaroneck and Sheldrake Rivers, Beaver Swamp Brook, and Grassy Sprain River provide roadmaps for prioritizing and seeking funding for municipal projects to reduce flood damage and make these watersheds more resilient. This work is providing data and guidance for the planning of projects in the communities across the Sound Shore.

Last October the Village of Mamaroneck was awarded \$6.6 million in NYS Green Resiliency Grant (GRG) funds for flood resiliency projects in the village.

Senator Shelley Mayer and I have been working with NYS DEC, and other state agencies, to bring state dollars to Westchester flood mitigation projects, including \$23.35 million towards the state share of the Federal Army Corps of Engineers Mamaroneck Sheldrake program.

Governor Hochul and DEC have focused on the flooding challenges we face here in Westchester County and the resiliency needs throughout the state. The Environmental Bond Act included a major focus on storm mitigation, and these Blind Brook projects are the types of infrastructure work we need to better protect lives and property. We were pleased to welcome DEC Commissioner Lefton to the Sound Shore for this announcement and to thank DEC for their ongoing commitment to Westchester flooding issues. DEC's Resilient NY Streams Study Program has provided analysis of six stream areas in our county, which is a valuable tool for local governments and state agencies in prioritizing projects such as those announced today.

Applications for these latest rounds of funding are due by July 31, 2025. In April, the Governor also [announced \\$60 million in Environmental Bond Act funding](#) for the next round of [Green Resiliency Grants](#). The program supports vital stormwater management and resilient infrastructure projects in flood-prone communities across New York State. Applications for this program are due by Aug. 15, 2025. To learn more about resources available for resilient Bond Act-supported projects, visit environmentalbondact.ny.gov.

You can read the Governor's press release [here](#).



Westchester Medical Center Legislative Breakfast

This week I attended the WMCHealth’s Annual Legislative Breakfast, which was attended by a strong turnout of federal, state, and county officials. The breakfast was co-hosted by the Hudson Valley Access to Health Care Coalition.

The highlight of the event was meeting WMCHealth’s new President & CEO Dr. David Lubarsky, who brings energy and history to his new leadership position. Dr. Lubarsky, previously served as CEO of UC Davis Health and has had a distinguished career, which included starting his medical career as an internal medicine intern at Westchester Medical Center decades ago.

Most of the discussion centered around concern over the recently passed federal

legislation that will cut federal funding to health care institutions and individuals. While the details are still being assessed, current estimates are that 1.5 million New Yorkers are likely to lose coverage, and health care providers will suffer large reductions in essential federal funding.

Speakers included Dr. Lubarsky, Congressmen George Latimer and Michael Lawler, Assembly Health Committee Chair Amy Paulin, and County Executive Ken Jenkins. Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins moved the audience when she relayed the importance of health coverage she had as a young child with asthma. She contrasted the necessity of that coverage with the position Washington has now placed the country with severe reductions in care, instead of finding ways to provide coverage.

As Chair of the Assembly Science and Technology Committee, I expressed concern over elimination of federal funding for medical research, clinical trials, and other research support that impacts the quality of health care. As to health care cuts that have been enacted in Washington, there is no doubt that the impact will affect every New Yorker. The funding streams cut are part of the financial support that allows hospitals, medical centers, and healthcare systems to operate, employ the staffing needed, and play the larger role on our state and local economies.

This was a timely meeting with more information of the impact of these changes from Washington to be forthcoming in the days ahead.



Juneteenth 2025

This year I joined Juneteenth Celebrations throughout the Sound Shore.

Juneteenth is both a celebration, historical remembrance, and a statement about challenges ahead. This year's commemoration is even more important because of efforts from Washington and in some states to remove portions of American history from our curriculum, books, and even federal websites. Earlier this year I reported on the US Department of Defense's actions to remove recognition of WWI hero, Sergeant Henry Johnson. Each Sound Shore event I attended was meaningful and different.

The Town of Rye hosted clean-up of gravestones at the [Town of Rye African American Cemetery](#) with Dave Thomas, founder of the Friends of the African American Cemetery, which has restored this sacred ground. You can also learn more about the work at the cemetery on the [Town of Rye website](#).



In Mamaroneck the event centered around the repainting of the Black Lives Matter street art next to Columbus Park and a presentation by the local group, REALM ([Recognizing Enslaved Africans of Larchmont Mamaroneck](#)).

The Port Chester/Rye branch of the NAACP hosted a ceremony at the Port Chester Historical Society's [Bush-Lyon Homestead at Lyon Park](#).

The largest event I attended was The Lincoln Park Conservancy's (TLPC) annual celebration at Glen Island Park in New Rochelle. The event was titled **Restoring our History** and featured performances, readings, craft and food vendors, and lots of enthusiasm. The Conservancy's three major programs are the Lincoln Park Community Garden, grow! Eat, and [The Lincoln Park Conservancy History & Culture Center](#).



I joined New Rochelle Mayor Yadira Ramos-Herbert, The Lincoln Park Conservancy President Stuart Reid, and Executive Director Linda Tarrant-Reid at the well-attended TLPC event at Glen Island Park.

Hurricane Ida Renters Safe Housing Incentive Program



WERE YOU A VICTIM OF HURRICANE IDA AND STILL SEEKING SAFE HOUSING?

If you are a renter and your home was damaged by Hurricane Ida in 2021, we can help you with paying for relocation expenses or buying a home if you move to safer housing.

Grants are available for tenants living in unsafe conditions or those who moved because of Hurricane Ida. Down payment grants may also be available to help buy a home.

Who can apply?

Flood victims who lived in Dutchess, Orange, Nassau, Rockland, Suffolk or Westchester County at the time of Ida and:

- Are still without permanent housing (including those currently located out of state)
- Had to move temporarily because of the flood, or
- Already moved out of the flood zone.

**For more information,
click here**



Contact us for more information and assistance with the application

Phone: 914-835-1512 | Email: hcr@crncy.org | Website: <https://hcr.ny.gov/rshi>

Help in other languages is available

Hurricane Ida Renters Safe Housing Incentive program (RSHI) was designed to encourage renters to relocate from storm-damaged homes while remaining in their existing communities. The program offers two pathways to achieving this goal: 1. A \$50K relocation incentive to renters who relocate to permanent and safe rental units, 2. Up to \$50K in down payment assistance to purchase permanent safe housing. Moving assistance may also be available. Interested parties will find more detailed program information as well as a link to the program intake through the RHC program page. <https://hcr.ny.gov/rshi>.




