



THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

June 30, 2006

Honorable George Pataki, Governor  
Office of the Governor  
State Capitol Building  
Albany, New York 12224

Honorable Sheldon Silver, Speaker  
New York State Assembly  
932 Legislative Office Building  
Albany, New York 12248

Honorable Joseph Bruno, Majority Leader  
New York State Senate  
909 Legislative Office Building  
Albany, New York 12247

Dear Governor Pataki, Speaker Silver and Majority Leader Bruno:

With great urgency we write to request the full support of the Legislature and the State of New York with regard to the horrendous flooding that has once again befallen the Catskill, Hudson Valley, Mohawk Valley and Southern Tier regions of the state. Twice in the last fifteen months we have witnessed massive and unprecedented flood events that have resulted in the loss of life and millions of dollars of damage to properties located throughout Upstate New York. It has become painfully apparent that natural and man-made forces have combined to threaten the safety and security of the areas we represent.

As a follow up to our letter to the Governor calling for efforts to secure a Major Disaster Declaration for the regions devastated by this week's floods, we request that swift action be taken by the state to provide relief to the victims of this latest tragedy and equally significant, to oversee and finance the development of a comprehensive flood control strategy in order to mitigate the impact of future events. In realization of the clear and continuing threat presented by reoccurring flooding, we now ask that, as leaders of this state, you make an immediate and serious commitment of government resources aimed at addressing this long-term crisis in a preventive as well as responsive way.

There is no doubt that action must be taken to address dam safety, flood prevention, response and recovery, but in doing so it is vitally important that the motivation for such measures be driven by an obligation to ensure the safety of the public at large, not simply by a desire to respond to political pressure. In this past year, a number of events have led to a heightened level of anxiety for countless residents who live in and around the impacted areas. Back to back years in which we have seen instances of disastrous flooding coupled with recent revelations about the structural integrity of the Gilboa Dam within the New York City Watershed and dam safety generally in our state have amplified the necessity of having comprehensive disaster preparedness and watershed management plans for those communities that might be impacted by future flooding in the event of a dam failure or a reservoir overflow.

As you know, earlier this year under the leadership of Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee Chair Thomas DiNapoli we held extensive hearings on the subjects of dam safety and disaster

preparedness in New York. The information we received from officials in public agencies and local governments presented an unsettling picture of our current situation. Our disjointed approach to disaster management and watershed maintenance has placed our communities at risk and forced residents and businesses to exist under a constant state of fear over repeats of floods and other dangerous conditions. This most recent weather event has proven those fears to be justified. Clearly, the time has come for a new, comprehensive, regionalized, even statewide, approach to these pressing matters. It is imperative that the state act to provide the resources and leadership necessary to protect New Yorkers from future events.

We write to ask you to join us in seeing to it that the state bring to bear all appropriate resources in providing the services and financial means necessary to assist the victims of this latest tragedy towards full recovery. It is equally critical that the state immediately outline a coherent timeline for measures to ensure the placement of sound protocols to identify potential problems and the development of regionalized courses of action to prepare state and local governments to take the most appropriate means to protect surrounding communities while addressing the issue in the safest and most timely manner possible. All regions that are at risk of flooding should be provided with the resources and guidance necessary to implement a carefully thought out plan, tailored to the needs of their residents and communities.

Government has the basic moral and legal obligation to keep our citizenry safe to the fullest extent possible. Now is the time to act to move New York State closer towards the fulfillment of that responsibility. We urge you to use the resources at your disposal to make flood preparedness, response and recovery a top priority going forward.

As always, thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your response.

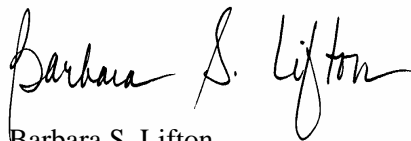
Sincerely,



Aileen M. Gunther  
Member of Assembly



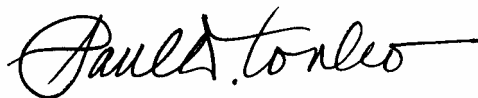
Donna A. Lupardo  
Member of Assembly



Barbara S. Lifton  
Member of Assembly



Kevin A. Cahill  
Member of Assembly



Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Assembly



RoAnn M. Destito  
Member of Assembly



William Magee  
Member of Assembly

cc: Honorable Eliot Spitzer, New York State Attorney General  
Honorable Alan Hevesi, New York State Comptroller