



THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

Ranking Minority Member  
Oversight, Analysis & Investigation Committee

**BRIAN MANKTELOW**  
Assemblyman 130th District

**COMMITTEES**  
Banks  
Labor  
Small Business  
Veterans' Affairs

December 7, 2020

Mr. Peter T. Gaynor, Administrator  
FEMA  
P.O. Box 10055  
Hyattsville, MD 20782-8055

Dear Administrator Gaynor:

As you are aware, New York State is facing massive financial constraints, largely brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. With the state in such dire fiscal strain, we are seeking to secure federal funds to ensure projects to protect our Great Lake shoreline communities and surrounding habitats receive all necessary funding.

The enactment of Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Plan 2014 sought to regulate the water level and flow, protecting the residents in these communities. However, it fell short in providing the state with adequate time to prepare for significant high-water events, such as those that occurred in 2017 and 2019. In learning from the events of the devastating floods, which were undeniably catastrophic to the communities that surrounded the lake and river shorelines, it is incumbent upon us as representatives of this region to guarantee funding that would protect against any future flooding events.

The Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Board was able to successfully reduce peak water levels for Lake Ontario by 18 centimeters in 2020 by deviating from Plan 2014; however, the International Joint Commission (IJC) has not yet granted the Board the authority to make such deviations in 2021 and it is not clear whether the IJC will. We cannot place any reliance on the possibility that the Board will have the same tools to reduce water levels that it did in the past year.

Currently, Lake Erie and the other Great Lakes are well above their average water levels. It is inevitable that these water supplies will flow into Lake Ontario and potentially cause further damage to the shoreline communities. It is imperative that we work now to take all precautionary measures to make our communities more resilient and harden our infrastructure. Proactive funding of shoreline resiliency and flood mitigation projects may help to reduce the amount spent to provide disaster relief to Lake Ontario shoreline communities after they have been devastated by annual flooding.

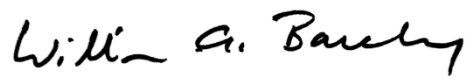
As a result of the state's financial constraints, it would be especially difficult for local governments to commit to any cost-sharing agreements that may be required with a potential FEMA grant. We request that the federal government omit this cost-sharing requirement to ensure these shoreline communities do not face another additional economic hardship, as they have already been affected by recent flooding events on top of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We appreciate your attention to this important matter and look forward to hearing from you soon about how we can work together to provide the essential funding to this growing problem that threatens our constituents and their shoreline communities.

Sincerely,



Brian Manktelow  
130th Assembly District



Will Barclay  
Assembly Minority Leader



Ken Blankenbush  
117<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Stephen M. Hawley  
139<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Mark Johns  
135<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Peter Lawrence  
134<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Michael J. Norris  
144<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Mark C. Walczyk  
116<sup>th</sup> Assembly District