

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 5, 2005

The Honorable Michael D. Brown
Under Secretary of Homeland Security
for Emergency Preparedness and Response
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Under Secretary Brown:

I am writing to you today, in strong support of the Town of Rockland's application for *Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant* funding. Such funding will enable the Town of Rockland to acquire and remove fifteen residential properties located in the low-lying areas of Livingston Manor to convert the land back to a floodplain.

The hamlet of Livingston Manor has experienced many devastating flood events, most recently in January 1996, December 2000 and again in September of 2004. Three waterways merge at the town's southern edge, and when Hurricane Ivan dropped an average of 6 inches of rain across Sullivan County, the result was complete devastation of fifteen residential homes located along Pearl Street, Pleasant Street, River Street, Covered Bridge Road and Motts Lane. The families living here, despite their desire to move out of the floodplain, are economically disadvantaged and are not able to move without assistance. During the last three floods, Livingston Manor has sustained over \$2,000,000 worth of damage, most of this burden fell onto the shoulders of the residents, very few of which have flood insurance.

The Town of Rockland, with disaster mitigation assistance from FEMA, will acquire the fifteen properties and convert the land back to a floodplain. In addition to preventing further damage and health and safety risks for the homeowners and their properties, the conversion of the land back to a floodplain will also eliminate the need for emergency response services in the form of disaster assistance from both the Town of Rockland and the Federal Government. The flood issue in Livingston Manor has become high-profile, as many of the same families have been affected time and time again and are starting to feel abandoned. This grant will give the homeowners the resources they need to move their properties out of the floodplain and go on with their lives. I applaud the Town of Rockland for its foresight, and hope that its application for funding meets with your immediate approval.

Thank you for your consideration. For additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my Grants Director, Amy Pugh, in my Washington office at 202.224.6542.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator