

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

United States Senate

May 23, 2018

Dear Colonel Asbery,

In light of the recent announcement by the NYC Parks Department that Beaches 91 to 102 in Rockaway will be closed to the public this summer, I write to urge the Army Corps of Engineers New York District to schedule public meetings as soon as possible to discuss with the community a detailed timeline with hard deadlines for the construction of permanent beach protections.

After Hurricane Sandy devastated Rockaway and the communities surrounding Jamaica Bay, I worked very hard to lead a bipartisan push to pass a \$63 billion relief package. Following that, we worked together to remove debris, make homeowners whole, build a new state-of-the-art boardwalk, repair playgrounds and schools and roads, and place 3.5 million cubic yards of sand to replenish beaches and protect the area from future storm surge, but the pace of erosion in Rockaway is now threatening the public's safe access to the beach and the livelihood of local business owners, while leaving homeowners too vulnerable to the next storm.

With each day that passes, Rockaway stands to lose even more. More aggressive action is needed to begin building more permanent and effective protections against beach erosion and storm surges.

I appreciate that your District is grappling with extremely complex engineering and environmental questions as you make progress on the Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Reformulation Project, but the community is in need of more immediate answers. Therefore, I urge you to schedule meetings with the public so that you can update residents specifically on when construction will begin on hard protective features – such as a sea wall, jetties, and groins – to protect their fragile beachfront.

Earlier this year, I was proud to secure \$730 million in additional federal funding to support critical resiliency and mitigation work by the Corps in New York, as we worked together to expedite the timeline of the Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Reformulation Project.

Thanks to these efforts, we have the resources, know-how, and forward momentum we need to protect this precious natural resource. I urge your District to now update local stakeholders on when these advantages will lead to shovels in the ground.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator