



Built to Lead

For Immediate Release: 12/21/2016

GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO

GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES \$1 MILLION IN PLANNING GRANTS TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY CLIMATE RESILIENCY THROUGHOUT UPSTATE NEW YORK

Grants Announced During Southern Tier Regional Sustainable Development and Collaborative Governance Conference

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced that \$1 million in planning grants will be made available through the Environmental Protection Fund Smart Growth Program to enable upstate counties to develop community resiliency plans. These plans will address responses to climate change risks and vulnerabilities associated with an increase in frequency and severity of storm and precipitation events, sea-level rise, storm surge, and flooding.

"Climate change has made extreme weather the new normal and we must do all we can to ensure that we are prepared for whatever Mother Nature throws our way," **Governor Cuomo said.** "This funding will play a key role in helping stronger and more resilient communities across New York."

Resiliency plans will include a countywide risk assessment, resilience strategies, and accompanying recovery projects and actions to address areas in the counties that have been most affected by past storm damages. Applicants are encouraged to focus their efforts on increasing public education and awareness; assessing vulnerability and risk; identifying and implementing management measures, standards, or policies; and designing structures to accommodate changing conditions.

All interested counties must complete and submit their applications by March 22, 2017. More information on this grant opportunity is available at <http://www.dos.ny.gov/funding/>.

"New York's communities have faced multiple weather-related challenges over the past several years including severe flooding, damage from tropical storms and other events associated with climate change," **said Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul who announced the \$1 million initiative during Governor Cuomo's Southern Tier Sustainable Development Conference.** "These grants being made available through the Environmental Protection Fund Smart Growth Program will provide local planning boards with the resources they need to create resiliency plans that help protect their future from the damages caused by extreme weather events."

The Resiliency Planning Grant Program will be funded through the Environmental Program Fund. Created in 1993, the EPF was established to provide funding for the broad categorical areas of Solid Waste, Parks and Recreation and Open Space. In 2016, Governor Cuomo proposed and the Legislature approved \$300 million for the State's Environmental Protection Fund – a \$123 million increase from the previous fiscal year and a \$45 million increase from the Environmental Protection Fund's highest level of funding achieved in 2007.

New York Secretary of State Rossana Rosado said, "New Yorkers have endured some of the most severe weather-related events in our history and these grants will help upstate counties plan to be better prepared. They will help mitigate future risks, damages and threats to human life and property as we build a stronger New York."

In the past several years, communities throughout New York have been impacted by a number of extreme weather events, including Hurricane Irene, Tropical Storm Lee, Superstorm Sandy. These events signaled that New Yorkers are living in a new reality. Rising sea levels are problematic in the marine environment, which includes the reach of the Hudson River to the federal dam in Rensselaer County, and extreme weather events are occurring across the State with increased frequency and damage as the effects of climate change continue to unfold.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Basil Seggos said, "Governor Cuomo is investing in New York's resiliency so communities across the state are better prepared for the challenges of severe storms and extreme weather events. The State's investments in sustainability are just part of the Governor's broader efforts to protect New Yorkers from the impacts of our changing climate and safeguard the State's unparalleled natural resources."

Development of these plans will build upon the methods employed under the NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program following Superstorm Sandy, Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. The Program funded and empowered the State's most impacted communities to develop reconstruction/resiliency plans, with detailed project profiles, that will help build physically, socially, ecologically and economically resilient communities. It was recognized as a Top Ten innovative program in 2015 by the Harvard Ash Center's Innovation in Government Award. The Program's initial round served 102 storm-impacted communities throughout the State; Round II developed recovery/resiliency plans in 22 more communities, including five Upstate Counties—Montgomery, Herkimer, Oneida, Madison and Niagara.

Governor's Office of Storm Recovery Executive Director Lisa Bova-Hiatt said, "Far too many New Yorkers have felt the direct effects of catastrophic weather events and flooding. We in the Governor's Office for Storm Recovery understand that this is the new normal. Our primary focus is to find the best and most sustainable ways to make our communities strong and resilient, moving people out of harm's way as much as possible. As much as we at GOSR are dedicated to repairing storm damage, we are

committed to building smart for the future. Our work, combined with this planning initiative, should give people and businesses confidence, knowing that the Governor of the State of New York has both their best interests and safety at heart."

New York's Environmental Protection Fund supports land acquisition, farmland protection, waterfront revitalization, municipal recycling, local government assistance to improve wastewater treatment plants and municipal parks, and supports several innovative programs to solve environmental challenges. It also supports the stewardship of public lands, including state parks and millions of acres of public lands throughout the state. Through partnerships with volunteer organizations, state agencies use stewardship funding to manage trails and lands, protect natural resources, preserve wildlife habitats, make critical capital improvements at parks and campgrounds, educate students about conservation and provide access to persons with disabilities.

###

Additional news available at www.governor.ny.gov
New York State | Executive Chamber | press.office@exec.ny.gov | 518.474.8418