

*Congressman Secured Federal Funds to Study Options for Reducing Future Flooding and Implementing Ecological Restoration Measures*

*Livingston Manor, NY* - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today joined U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) officials to announce the beginning of a study that will determine the best ways to minimize damage from future flooding along the Little Beaverkill and Willowemoc Creeks in Livingston Manor. The congressman used his seat on the House Appropriations Committee to secure \$796,000 from Congress for this and other flood mitigation work in the Upper Delaware River Valley.

"It took a lot of work to get to this point, and I appreciate the efforts of the partners in this effort. I am very pleased that we are finally able to begin a critical study that will eventually lead to remediation work that helps to lessen the impacts of devastating flooding," Hinchey said. "In the past decade, we've experienced increased and severe flooding in the Little Beaverkill and Willowemoc watersheds, which has resulted in significant property damages and most unfortunately, the loss of life. The frequency and severity of such flooding has clearly demonstrated that action is needed to mitigate future flooding events, protect the safety of local residents, and reduce property damages from flooding. This study is the first part of that important process."

Early last year, Hinchey secured \$700,000 from Congress for the Army Corps to conduct flood mitigation studies in the Upper Delaware, specifically targeting the Little Beaverkill Creek watershed and the Callicoon Creek watershed. Hinchey was able to add another \$96,000 to that funding earlier this year. While this funding was an important step forward, the studies also required matching funds from a local sponsor.

On May 26, 2009, the DEC and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers executed the cost-sharing agreement for the Livingston Manor Flood Mitigation Study. Last Friday, the New York State Division of the Budget gave its approval to release the state's share of this funding. That enabled the commencement of the comprehensive flood mitigation and ecosystem restoration study for the 100-square mile watershed that converges in Livingston Manor at the confluence of the Willowemoc Creek and Little Beaverkill Creek.

"We deeply appreciate both the leadership of Congressman Hinchey and the cooperation of

New York State DEC in enabling us to reach this key milestone," said Lt. Col. Tom Tickner, who commands the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Philadelphia District. "With this feasibility cost sharing agreement in place, we can now better assist the community of Livingston Manor in identifying and evaluating potential ways to reduce their exposure to flooding and also help restore some of their prized environmental resources."

"The Department is pleased to participate in taking an innovative approach to reduce the potential for flooding in an area that has suffered catastrophic impacts from highwater events, especially in recent years," said DEC Commissioner Pete Grannis. "While we can't eliminate the potential for flooding, we believe this project provides opportunities to improve the region's ability to assimilate and convey water downstream in ways that reduce the impacts to residents, while also protecting important natural resources."

The study will highlight and examine alternatives to help lessen and avoid the serious and recurrent flood damage that experienced in Livingston Manor over the past decade. This study will also consider ecological restoration efforts to protect the nationally-recognized trout fisheries in both Creeks.

"The study is expected take 18-24 months to complete and is estimated to cost \$708,000, which will be shared equally by the state and federal governments through direct funding and in-kind services," Hinchey said. "Once we have specific recommendations from this study and better understand the specific options that offer flood mitigation and ecological restoration benefits, we will work cooperatively to identify and obtain funding to implement these recommendations. I am currently working to obtain additional funding for the implementation of any study recommendations from this and the Callicoon Creek studies."

In May, Hinchey announced the beginning of a study that will determine the best ways to mitigate damage from future flooding along the Each Branch Callicoon Creek watershed. That study is expected to be completed within a year.