

Washington, DC - The U.S. House of Representatives today voted to approve \$2.63 billion in federal disaster recovery funding that Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) fought to have included in the final version of a Fiscal Year 2012 appropriations bill. The congressman plans to continue working to secure additional aid. The funding, which is provided for disaster relief efforts nationwide, will help families, farmers and businesses throughout the Southern Tier and Hudson Valley that were devastated by the one-two punch of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

"I'm happy to report that an additional \$2.63 billion has been included in the 2012 budget to provide relief to Americans affected by natural disasters, including New Yorkers who were hurt by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee," said Hinchey. "I've been working, along with many others, to ensure that communities across America that have been affected by natural disasters are not left behind because of Washington's fights over the budget. There are still multiple disaster relief programs that need funding, namely those at the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers. This is a big step forward, but so much more needs to be done."

Hinchey has been lobbying his colleagues for months to secure additional disaster relief funding after House leaders refused to allow an up or down vote on a bipartisan comprehensive disaster relief bill, which passed the Senate. The \$2.63 billion provided in the 2012 appropriations bill represents a compromise between the Democratic-led Senate and Republican-led House. The bill has substantial disaster recovery funds for multiple federal programs including:

Economic Development Administration: The \$2.63 billion measure includes \$200 million in disaster relief funds for the Economic Development Administration (EDA). While Hinchey had requested \$500 million for the program, the \$200 million level is considered a success given that Republican leaders in the House initially opposed any funding. Hinchey has been working to secure additional funds for the EDA so that it can provide additional assistance to local communities struggling to maintain jobs provided by large employers who were affected by natural disasters. For instance, BAE Systems, which provides more than 1,300 in the Southern Tier, saw its Westover facility destroyed by the September floods. The EDA can use its additional funding to provide assistance to the Broome County Industrial Development Agency (IDA), which is working with BAE on the company's relocation. BAE announced today that it is remaining in the Southern Tier, but is still working to finalize a new location.

Agriculture Disaster Assistance: The package also includes \$367 million to assist farmers with

disaster recovery. The Environmental Conservation Program (ECP) will receive \$122.7 million. This program is coordinated through the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) to provide emergency funding and technical assistance for farmers and ranchers to repair farmland damaged by natural disasters. Conservation practices include removing debris, restoring fences and conservation structures, and providing water for livestock. The Emergency Watershed Protection program will receive \$215.9 million to help farmers respond to post-disaster hazards such as debris-clogged streams and channels, undermined and unstable stream banks, and jeopardized water control structures and public infrastructure. Technical assistance with both of these programs can be provided by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which is provided \$28.4 million in disaster recovery funds. Hinchey co-introduced the Post-Irene Emergency Farm Aid Act immediately following Irene and Lee and wrote to congressional leaders to secure funding for these crucial programs.

Federal Highway Administration's Emergency Relief Program: The Federal Highway Administration's Emergency Relief Program is provided \$1.662 billion to assist with the repair of highways that receive federal aid or roads that are on federal lands, which have been seriously damaged by natural disasters.

Community Development Fund: The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will receive \$400 million for disaster recovery to assist individual homeowners and business owners voluntarily buy out properties to make way for more robust flood protection in the future, and develop infrastructure to rebuild homes and business zones away from flood danger.

Increased funding for SRBC Flood Forecasting Systems: Language in the bill provides for increased funding to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to work with the Susquehanna River Basin Commission to support flood forecasting. Hinchey wrote to congressional leaders earlier this year, requesting the provision.

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