

September 20, 2022

The Honorable Eric Adams  
Mayor of New York City  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Adams,

As you finalize the City of New York's Action Plan for deploying the \$187 million in Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds that Congress appropriated in the Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2022, H.R. 5305, we urge you to consider implementing a voluntary buyout program for homes vulnerable to hazardous flooding in Queens.

Last year, Queens tragically lost 11 community members to Hurricane Ida. Countless others were left without a home, car, and possessions, costing millions of dollars in damages. And on September 13, just days after marking the one-year anniversary of this tragedy, many of these same residents were rudely awoken to water rushing into their homes. This most recent storm dropped roughly 2 inches of rain over the course of several hours, far less than the 3 inches Ida dropped in a single hour. Sadly, many of these homes were flooded just the same.

According to New York City's 2018 Stormwater Flood Maps, many of these homes are vulnerable to inland flooding.<sup>1</sup> An unfortunate example of this is Peck Avenue, Flushing, where homes sit on a dredged lakebed. Just between Peck Avenue and 56 Avenue in Queens, three residents died due to Ida flooding, and once again, this area experienced extreme flooding from the September 13 rainfall. It is unacceptable for these residents and others to live under the imminent threat of flooding year after year. That is why we urge you to use the federal CDBG-DR funding to implement a voluntary buyout program to give homeowners a fair market price for their homes so they may relocate.

According to the CDBG-DR, grantees may use funds for designing and implementing a buyout program in which the city could purchase properties in a target area with the intent to demolish the structures to create park amenities, open space, or flood storage/overflow areas. Implementing this program, in conjunction with the city's work to improve stormwater infrastructure throughout Queens, is paramount to the safety and well-being of our communities.

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<sup>1</sup> "New York City Stormwater Flood Maps" City of New York. 2018.


<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/6f4cc60710dc433585790cd2b4b5dd0e>

The \$187 million was provided through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's CDBG-DR for the purpose of funding long-term recovery efforts following Hurricane Ida. Given the impacts of Ida on Queens as well as the September 13 flooding, your consideration of a home buyout program is critical. We look forward to your response on this matter.

Sincerely,




Grace Meng  
Member of Congress



Donovan Richards Jr.  
Queens Borough President



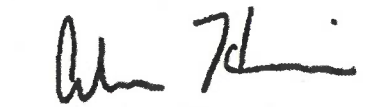
John Liu  
NY State Senator



Toby Ann Stavisky  
NY State Senator




Leroy Comrie  
NY State Senator




Andrew Hevesi  
NY State Assemblymember



Catalina Cruz  
NY State Assemblymember



Linda Lee  
NYC Councilmember



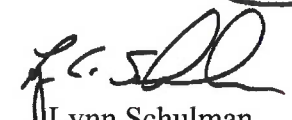
Robert F. Holden  
NYC Councilmember



Sandra Ung  
NYC Councilmember



Nily Rozic  
NY State Assemblymember



Lynn Schulman  
NYC Councilmember