

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12) today joined Sen. Frank Lautenberg and the entire New Jersey congressional delegation in sending a letter to President Obama urging him to submit a funding request to Congress to help the state rebuild following Superstorm Sandy. Governor Christie released his initial cost estimate for the storm late last week, and the delegation is supporting federal resources to rebuild and improve New Jersey's beaches and transit system; repair roads, bridges, and infrastructure; and help residents, homeowners, businesses, and local governments recover. The delegation letter stresses the need to provide emergency funding before the end of 2012.

Additional signatories to the letter, which was organized by Sen. Lautenberg, included Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Representatives Bill Pascrell (D-NJ-8), Jon Runyan (R-NJ-3), Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ-2), Frank Pallone (D-NJ-6), Albio Sires (D-NJ-13), Scott Garrett (R-NJ-5), Steve Rothman (D-NJ-9), Leonard Lance (R-NJ-7), Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ-11), Chris Smith (R-NJ-4), Rob Andrews (D-NJ-1), and Donald Payne, Jr. (D-NJ-10).

"In the weeks since Sandy's rains and winds subsided, New Jersey has begun to look beyond the immediate recovery and toward the larger task of rebuilding," Holt said. "Gov. Christie and the state's congressional delegation have worked closely together to advance this damage assessment. Now, it's time for the president and Congress to pass these much-needed funds into law as quickly as possible."

The full text of the letter follows.

November 27, 2012

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing in regard to Governor Christie's initial Superstorm Sandy damage assessment and to urge you to submit a request to Congress for funding to help New Jersey rebuild stronger. Governor Christie's estimate reflected a preliminary assessment of the catastrophic storm, which caused widespread destruction never before seen in New Jersey. While the assessment will likely be updated, it's crucial that we begin the rebuilding process by providing emergency supplemental appropriations before the end of the year to help families, businesses, and communities recover. We thank you for the federal government's robust and swift response to the storm thus far, but much work remains. The Garden State needs your continued support and we look forward to working with you to ensure that the federal government provides our state with the full funding it needs to build a stronger New Jersey that is ready for the next storm.

Superstorm Sandy slammed into the Jersey Shore on Monday, October 29th and disrupted virtually every aspect of life in our state. The storm caused at least 34 deaths in New Jersey and destroyed or severely damaged thousands of homes, forcing many residents to seek emergency shelter or temporary housing. Businesses closed and employees missed days and sometimes weeks of work. Winds as strong as 90 miles per hour knocked down trees and power lines, leaving more than 2.5 million customers without electricity. Gas shortages crippled commerce across the state and left many residents in the precarious situation of having no power at home or access to fuel to run their generators.

In addition to severely impacting homes and business, Sandy devastated New Jersey's public infrastructure. Every New Jersey Transit rail line was affected by the storm, and highways, bridges, and the tunnels that connect New Jersey to New York closed for days. Sandy also devastated the electrical grid by destroying transmission lines, flooding substations, and ruining expensive equipment. The storm damaged hospitals, shut down major ports, and overwhelmed water treatment facilities, leading to sewage releases that polluted a number of waterways.

Sandy's overwhelming storm surge and strong winds also did lasting damage to the Jersey Shore itself, which is the basis for the state's \$38 billion tourism and fishing industries. Fortunately, early reports show that previously constructed U.S. Army Corps of Engineers beach projects prevented further damage, demonstrating that investments in beach projects prevent costly damage and save taxpayer money. Repairing and improving existing beach projects and building new projects to protect the entire Jersey Shore should be part of any rebuilding and recovery effort.

New Jerseyans are tough, but recovering from this catastrophic storm will be a long and difficult process. We thank you again for your support thus far, and look forward to working with your Administration to ensure a complete recovery in our state.