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U.S. Senator Charles Schumer Pledges His Support for Securing Lower Manhattan Resiliency

Increased Lower Manhattan funding is “top of the list” and a “high priority”

(March 23, 2015) – At this morning’s Downtown-Lower Manhattan Association (D-LMA) meeting, Senator Charles Schumer announced his clear, strong commitment for helping Lower Manhattan secure the additional resiliency funding it needs and deserves.

The Senator’s remarks follow the recent announcement of \$14.75 million in City and State funding for resiliency investments in Lower Manhattan.

“We must be ever more prepared and resilient in Lower Manhattan and move forward with work that will lead us to long-term, lasting solutions. I’m incredibly honored and excited to hear Senator Schumer championing this incredibly important issue,” said Downtown-Lower Manhattan Association President Jessica Lappin.

In his remarks, Senator Schumer calls for the allocation of additional funding that will allow resiliency efforts to go beyond planning stages and into critical construction stages. Specifically, funding would be allocated from a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program competition. Under the HUD program, \$1 billion in federal funds will be available to cities proposing innovative resiliency and storm hardening plans.

Excerpt from Senator Schumer’s remarks as delivered at the D-LMA annual meeting:

... We have to protect Lower Manhattan from another Sandy-related storm. We have learned the hard way that we are a vulnerable place. We never used to think of New York as vulnerable to floods and even to the elements. We are.

And the HUD Rebuild by Design, which I mentioned, committed \$1 billion to resiliency and coastline protection with the most funding of any going to the Big U project to protect Manhattan from 23rd Street to Montgomery Street. That’s a good start, but we need to do more. We need to finish the project going from Montgomery to the Battery and then up the West Side...

So as I said, we need to finish the project and that’s important. [The] second thing I want to say about the future. –

I was pleased to hear that the City of New York recently announced, and they deserve praise for this along with Jessica and your lobbying efforts and the other friends of downtown, a [\$14.75] million investment in resiliency for Lower Manhattan.

It works in two steps. The first is an \$8 million direct investment in flood protection design and mitigation at Battery Park and then there's another [\$6.75] million for planning and design of a broader flood protection plan from Montgomery Street south to the Battery and up the west side.

The planning comes from city and state funds. They have the money for the planning process, but we need to think about the construction funding now, that's the big nut.

I believe we have the right source for that funding. At the moment, HUD is conducting a \$1 billion national disaster resiliency competition. It's essentially expanding the Rebuild by Design competition that we had here in New York and downtown got some of the money for, nationally. The funding is only available to areas like New York that have been recently hit by an actual disaster. And they'll be picking the most innovative resiliency and storm hardening plans.

So I think that resiliency in Lower Manhattan is the perfect fit. We have so much to protect and it makes sense, so I'm here to commit to you that I'm going to make this the top of my list and try to get the HUD CDBG funding from the national competition to fulfill the investment in downtown.

Think about it – where is HUD going to get the most bang for their buck in resiliency if not Lower Manhattan? So that's a project that I will, that's going to be one of my high priorities.

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