



# NEWS from DHSES

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For Immediate Release  
February 7, 2014

## **NEW YORK HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROJECTS ADVANCE FOR FEDERAL ACTION**

*Projects totaling \$41.2 million to enhance weather forecasting and help communities build back better following recent natural disasters.*

Six New York resiliency projects have progressed to the final stage of federal review and approval by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This past June, Governor Cuomo called for government and non-profit organizations across New York State to submit applications for projects under FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) to rebuild smarter, stronger, more sustainable communities in the wake of recent natural disasters. The State has collected more than 1000 applications for review under the FEMA process.

The grant program is aimed at increasing the State's resiliency, mitigating the risks of loss and damage associated with future disasters, and reducing hardship. FEMA funds provide 75% reimbursement of eligible project costs.

During the recovery and reconstruction process following a federally declared disaster, such as Hurricane Irene, Tropical Storm Lee and Superstorm Sandy, FEMA provides HMGP funds for states to administer grant programs that mitigate the vulnerability of life and property to future disasters.

The six projects are:

### **SUNY Albany: Establish a State-of-the-Art Weather Detection System - \$23.6 million**

#### **Background**

According to a 2011 study published by the American Meteorological Society, New York is the most vulnerable of the 50 states to the negative economic effects of weather variability. Studies also suggest that during recent decades there has been a clear trend toward more extreme precipitation in the northeastern United States including New York State, suggesting that this vulnerability may increase in the future.

Currently, the National Weather Service's (NWS) offices in New York rely on 27 automated surface observing system (ASOS) stations deployed across the state. The ASOS network does not provide the high-resolution

data needed to support monitoring and predictive modeling of events responsible for weather-related risks statewide, including rainfall/floods, heavy snow/ice, and high winds.

#### HMGP Project

On January 7, 2014, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced with Vice President Biden during a planned visit to Albany, a series of innovative hazard mitigation projects including the NYS Early Warning Weather Detection System to be led by SUNY/Albany. This will make New York home to the most advanced statewide network in the country.

This network will add nearly 100 additional interconnected surface weather stations to detect weather phenomenon across the entire State. In addition, up to 17 sites will be equipped and enhanced with additional instrumentation to remotely gather meteorological data above the ground using state-of-the-art profiling technology. These profiling stations will measure important meteorological variables above the surface in support of more accurate forecasts.

This early warning weather detection system will address the limitations highlighted previously – both at the surface level and in the atmosphere. Specifically, it will provide state and local government officials with access to high-resolution, real-time data and more robust predictive models, enabling emergency management decision-makers to better plan and mitigate for extreme and devastating weather events.

#### **City of Troy: Seawall Stabilization - \$9 million**

##### Background

The City of Troy has an existing protective bulkhead wall, known as the “seawall” due to its location within the tidal zone on the Hudson River. The seawall protects the City from the river’s flooding, erosive and tide effects. The seawall exhibits varying degrees of damage due to ice floes, high velocity flooding and large debris traveling downstream during intense storm events. The risk of damage to the seawall is exacerbated by the wall’s age and the increasing frequency of unusual weather patterns.

##### HMGP Project

Funding will be used to rebuild the wall and shore up eroded portions of the riverbank to provide long-term protection against flooding and, where possible, an improved interface with the river for the community’s residents.

#### **City of Amsterdam: Dove Creek Wall - \$1.5 million**

##### Background

Dove Creek flows along the east side of St. Mary’s Hospital in the City of Amsterdam. The walls that contain the creek during flood conditions are currently failing. Should these walls fail completely, the creek would be blocked, flooding the only hospital in the City and damaging the infrastructure to the south. The walls risk major erosion and potential collapse due to deterioration along their full length.

##### HMGP Project

This project involves demolition and removal of damaged retaining walls and cleanout of the creek bed. New pre-cast stackable concrete retaining walls will replace the failing sections. Heavy stone fill will be placed in other eroded areas along the creek banks. This approach will entail minimal change from the existing condition and little disruption to local traffic, while providing ultimate erosion protection.

#### **Suffolk County: Smith Point Park Tidal Wetland Restoration - \$534,000**

##### Background

The south shore of Suffolk County was severely impacted by Superstorm Sandy. The area suffered total loss of hundreds of homes; major damage to remaining homes, businesses and public infrastructure; loss of economic activity and disruption to local ecosystems. The area also experienced high floods during Tropical Storm Irene. Tidal marshes provide a strong natural flood buffer for populated areas. However, the poor conditions of tidal marshland have diminished their flood mitigation effectiveness. Restoration and improvement of the marsh will reduce damage from floods and intense storms in the future, thereby reducing immediate losses and recovery costs.

#### HMGP Project

The objective is the improvement of natural protection against flooding and storm surge damage for the residential area of Shirley through an integrated marsh management project in the north section of the Smith Point County Park. This project will restore proper sedimentation along the mid-section of the marsh by altering a network of currently degraded linear ditches. The ditches will be converted to a new hydrologic system composed of tidal channels, ponds, and shallow connectors.

#### **Cobleskill: Water Supply Protection - \$3.1 million**

##### Background

The Cobleskill Water System consists of three water surface reservoirs (Dow, Smith and Holding Pond) all of which supply water to the local water treatment facility. Water is fed from the water treatment facility through distribution piping and storage tanks to the various system users. There are several potential damages that could result from future flooding of these structures, posing a threat to public health, property damage and loss of life.

##### HMGP Project

This project will protect the water supply and reduce flooding. Improvements to the water treatment plant, including back-up electrical power, will ensure that it is not disrupted by a storm. Dredging, repairs to Cobleskill's dam spillway, and improvements to Dow Reservoir will help mitigate the severe flooding experienced by the community in the past.

#### **Clarkstown: Klein Avenue Levee - \$3.46 million**

##### Background

The existing Klein Avenue Levee was constructed circa 1975 and was designed for rainfall events at that time. Increases in rainfall and storm severity have increased the flood elevation of the Hackensack River, reducing the effectiveness of the existing levee to protect the adjacent residential neighborhood, local businesses and public infrastructure from flooding in severe storm events. The levee has been overtopped by several recent storms, in 2007, 2010 and 2011.

##### HMGP Project

This project will raise and extend the levee to prevent overtopping and contain the flood flows of the Hackensack River to the river channel and overbank areas. It will better protect the local community from future flood events.

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