

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

To: Vermont Mobile Home Park Residents Impacted By Flooding

Fr: Governor Shumlin, Senator Leahy, Senator Sanders, Representative Welch

Dt: September 23, 2011

Re: Disaster Assistance

We are writing to give mobile home park residents impacted by Tropical Storm Irene an update on our efforts to provide you with assistance in removing destroyed homes and navigating state and federal disaster benefits.

First and foremost, if you were impacted by flooding you should register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) by calling 1-800-621-3362. By registering, you will begin the process of determining the benefits for which you may be eligible. This process also helps FEMA determine which mobile home parks have been the most severely affected. Once registered, you can call FEMA at any time for help finding a place to stay until you are back in a permanent home.

We also want to make sure you are aware of some of the efforts underway to provide relief to mobile home park residents. Below is a brief summary of our current efforts.

Removal of a Destroyed Home

While FEMA regulations stipulate that the removal of a destroyed mobile home is the responsibility of the homeowner, Governor Shumlin, Lt. Governor Scott and Vermont's Congressional Delegation recognize that this puts a tremendous burden on homeowners. We are working to find alternative resources to assist mobile home owners facing demolition and removal of their homes, and we will keep in touch with you as these options are finalized. These efforts include:

- The State has been working with FEMA to determine if exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis allowing FEMA to reimburse a town for the removal of a mobile home that poses a health risk.
- The Congressional Delegation has written to FEMA to ask for a blanket determination that the cost of removing destroyed mobile homes can be reimbursed under FEMA's public assistance program because of environmental and economic threats.
- Governor Shumlin and Lt. Governor Scott have announced an effort in partnership with private contractors to offer mobile homeowners a reduced price of \$1,500 to remove and dispose of destroyed mobile homes. More information is available by calling the Mobile Home Project at the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity at (802) 660-3455 x204. Work may begin at Weston's in Berlin as soon as October 3rd.
- We recognize that the reduced price of \$1500 for removal and disposal of destroyed mobile homes will be a hardship for residents. We are working together to identify funds that could be used to further defray the cost for individual mobile home owners. We hope to have more information on this in the near future.

FEMA encourages mobile home park residents to consult FEMA before removing a mobile home. Once you remove your home, you may no longer be eligible for certain FEMA benefits.

Identifying Temporary Housing

The Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Vermont's Congressional Delegation, and other state, federal and non-profit agencies continue to identify suitable temporary housing for those displaced by the flooding, making every effort to locate housing in or adjacent to the community flood victims currently live in. Below is a list of current efforts and resources.

- FEMA maintains a current listing of available properties. Whether you are registering for the first time or if your FEMA-identified temporary housing terminates, you can call FEMA at 1-800-621-3362 and ask for assistance identifying new housing.
- Last week the federal government eased residency requirements for more than 90 units of federally assisted housing across the state, allowing displaced Vermonters to move into vacant apartments usually reserved for only income-eligible renters. Call FEMA at 1-800-621-3362 for a referral. You can view these specific units by visiting <http://www.housingdata.org> or by calling (802) 828-3020.
- The State of Vermont, Economic Services Department, has General Assistance funds available to help with temporary housing costs. If you were displaced by Tropical Storm Irene, please call (800) 479-6151 for more information. The field offices are working to provide temporary housing assistance, outside of FEMA's rental assistance program. For the first 30 days following the disaster, there is no income test.
- The Governor and the Congressional Delegation are working to bring more federal housing resources into the state, including additional Section 8 Choice Vouchers and additional Community Development Block Grant funding.

Unemployment Assistance

- If you have been unable to work due to the flooding, you should contact your local Department of Labor office (call 211 for location nearest you) and inquire about special unemployment assistance that may be available to you. Unlike regular unemployment benefits, self-employed individuals who are out of work due to the flooding may qualify for disaster unemployment assistance. Contact your local Department of Labor office.

These efforts are targeted directly at aiding those who live in mobile home parks across the state to get back on their feet and begin rebuilding their lives. We recognize the difficult situation you are in, and that across the state, mobile home parks were disproportionately impacted by the flooding. We are working together to get you the information and help you need to begin to rebuild. Should you need assistance, for your convenience contact information for our offices is listed below.

Senator Patrick Leahy's Office
(802) 863-2525

Governor Peter Shumlin's Office
(802) 828-3333

Senator Bernie Sanders' Office
(800) 339-9834

Congressman Peter Welch's Office
(888) 605-7270

Lieutenant Governor Phil Scott's Office
(802) 828-2226

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