

I voted Yes on H.R. 152, the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act.

This bill provides emergency funding for ongoing relief and recovery efforts throughout the Northeast, primarily in downstate New York and New Jersey, due to damage caused by Superstorm Sandy in late October 2012. In total, this package contains roughly \$50.7 billion in Sandy-related aid.

Among the aid contained in this measure is \$3.9 billion to repair damaged hospitals, local roads, and small businesses; as well as \$1.35 billion for Army Corps of Engineers projects to restore navigation channels, beaches, and other damaged infrastructure to pre-storm conditions. \$5.4 billion is included for FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund which gives relief to individuals, families, and communities to support ongoing recovery. This includes individual assistance such as temporary housing and disaster unemployment assistance. It also provides for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and repair, replacement, and restoration of publicly-owned facilities. \$235 million would be appropriated for repairs and reconstruction at the Manhattan Veterans Affairs hospital and other veterans' medical facilities damaged by Sandy.

It is important to note that this package excluded non-Sandy pork and special-interest spending which were contained in the bill approved by the Senate last year. Additionally, I supported amendments on the House floor to improve oversight and transparency in the disbursement of these funds and remove spending on items that were non-essential to legitimate Sandy recovery efforts. For example, a provision was adopted which clarifies that only fisheries which both received a disaster declaration and were directly impacted by Sandy will receive aid – not far flung fisheries in places like Alaska. Another amendment I supported requires FEMA to disclose all disaster relief grants, not just those more than \$1 million, as originally proposed.

More than one hundred people were killed by Superstorm Sandy, countless homes were lost and critical infrastructure was destroyed. This bill represents a promised action in Congress' duty to provide assistance to Sandy victims in our part of the country.

I support this legislation because although our district was not impacted by Sandy, the Southern Tier and Mohawk Valley have previously experienced devastating flooding due to natural disasters. Just as the federal government helped – and continues to help – our region recover from storms, so must we stand with our neighbors downstate and throughout the Northeast

recover from the devastation of Sandy.

The bill was approved by a vote of 241 – 180.