DINOLFO SECURES FEDERAL AND STATE INTERVENTION ON LAKE LEVELS

County Executive Cheryl Dinolfo today announced the arrival of Federal and State responses as Monroe County continues to address ongoing high water levels on Lake Ontario. As a direct result of letters to and communication with State and Federal partners requesting assistance, responses have begun to arrive.

“For the past several weeks, I have been informing our State and Federal officials about the rising water levels in Lake Ontario and urging immediate action on their part,” said County Executive Cheryl Dinolfo. “After speaking with the Offices of Senator Schumer, Congressman Collins and Congressman Reed, that help has begun to arrive. My federal partners demonstrated an understanding that support can not be short-lived but needs to include measures to ensure prevention of these flooding events in the future.”

Over the past several weeks, Dinolfo communicated with members of the local Federal and State delegations expressing concern about high lake levels, flooding damage and the need for action by the International Joint Commission (IJC) as well as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Examples of those letters are attached.

Today, Senator Chuck Schumer and Senator Kristen Gillibrand informed Dinolfo they would urge the IJC to lower the lake level and recruit the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to provide additional resources. Copies of their letters in response are attached.

Congressman Chris Collins and Congressman Tom Reed, who have been active on this topic, assured Dinolfo they would both continue to contact the IJC and request that lake levels be reduced.

Also, today New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo visited Monroe County and advised that he had applied to the International Lake Ontario - St. Lawrence River Board to lower the water levels in Lake Ontario and this request was denied. He stated that New York State is appealing the decision.

Governor Cuomo also announced a localized State of Emergency in eight shoreline counties in New York State to provide expedited permit review for remediation and flood prevention work on the southern shores of Lake Ontario by the State Department of
Environmental Conservation. This response came one day after County Executive Dinolfo sought from the state long-term resources to address the flooding.

“I have been out to the lakeshore and witnessed, firsthand, the devastation of the flooding in our community,” said Dinolfo. “These residents and businesses need immediate help and it will take action from the IJC in order to prevent further damage. I greatly appreciate Governor Cuomo visiting Monroe County and his commitment of State resources as well as the responses of our State and Federal officials.”

This afternoon, the IJC released a statement advising that due to high lake levels in Lake Ontario they would move to active management of water levels to minimize damage to lakeshore property. The county will continue to pressure the IJC to decrease the levels in Lake Ontario.

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