

TOP STORIES

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\$80M GRANT ADDED FOR SEWAGE REPAIR

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WASHINGTON — FEMA has agreed to grant an additional \$80 million to the already approved \$730 million project to fix superstorm Sandy damage to the Bay Park Sewage Treatment Plant, according to a letter to Nassau County officials delivered last evening.

The newly approved \$810 million for the project falls short of the \$847 million in costs that Nassau County Executive Edward Mangano told Craig Fugate, director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the plant will actually cost when they met in Washington on Wednesday.

But Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), who arranged the meeting in his Capitol Hill office and announced the quick decision on the new amount, said, "It's very good for the people of Nassau County."

Schumer called the \$810 million "the largest FEMA project for a sewage treatment plan ever," and said it included an unprecedented amount of money to fortify the plant against future storms.

"We will have a top-notch up-to-date plant serving the people of Nassau County," he said, "and it doesn't cost the local people a nickel" in local or state taxes.

Mangano was not immediately available for comment.

The new total amount FEMA awarded the county includes \$431.5 million for repairs and restoration and \$378.9 million to fortify against future storms.

FEMA will cover 90 percent of the cost. The other 10 percent, Schumer said, can be paid for with federal Community Development Block Grant funds set aside for Sandy recovery in last year's special \$60 billion appropriation.

Sandy knocked out the Bay Park plant in East Rockaway for two days in October 2012, flooding its pumping and electrical systems and resulting in the release of raw sewage. The plant serves 550,000 people.