

## TOP STORIES

# ★ LI TO RECEIVE \$400M FOR SEWAGE WORK

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Long Island will get at least \$400 million in federal storm-recovery money for wastewater projects aimed at protecting the area from future storms by reducing harmful nitrogen levels in its waterways, federal officials said yesterday.

Nassau County will receive \$150 million and Suffolk County will receive at least \$250 million in Community Development Block Grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the officials said.

In Nassau, the money will be used for a nitrogen-removal system for the Bay Park Sewage Treatment Plant. Nitrogen in the effluent, which discharges into Reynolds Channel, weakens marshes that are critical in protecting coastal communities from wave action and flooding during severe storms.

"Nitrogen removal is a critical component to the rebuilding of the Bay Park Sewage Treatment Plant," Nassau County Executive Edward Mangano said yesterday.

Suffolk's portion will be used for sewer projects.

Federal officials said the decision was made this week to grant the money to the two counties from the third install-

ment of a total of about \$16 billion in storm-recovery money funneled through HUD.

The total amount allocated to New York State in the third installment has not been announced, but the state received more than \$2 billion in the second round of HUD funding, announced in February, and \$1.71 billion in the first round in 2013. New York City receives separate allocations.

Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), who pushed for the funds for Long Island, said he was gratified by the grants.

"Putting nitrogen in Reynolds Channel is like pouring poison in the water," Schumer said yesterday. The money "will allow them to take out nitrogen and the Great South Bay will flourish as it hasn't in decades."

Nassau County also is seeking an ocean outfall pipe that will reroute effluent from the county-owned Bay Park plant into the Atlantic Ocean. Earlier this month, state Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Joe Martens requested \$690 million in Federal Emergency Management Agency funds for that project.

"The amount of nitrogen being discharged from wastewater treatment plants is essential to restoring marsh-

lands to buffer Long Island from future storms," Martens said yesterday.

The state already has secured \$810 million in federal funds for upgrades to the plant, which serves about 40 percent of the county and was inundated by floodwater during super-storm Sandy.

Rob Weltner, president of Operation SPLASH, a Freeport group dedicated to cleaning area waterways, called the funding "a step in the right direction."

It isn't yet clear which projects will be funded in Suffolk, where County Executive Steve Bellone seeks \$750 million in storm recovery money to extend sewers to 12,000 homes along the South Shore and another \$242 million to replace an outflow pipe from the Bergen Point Sewage Treatment Plant.

Bellone said yesterday the HUD "funds will help Suffolk County take the largest step forward to reclaim our water and strengthen coastal resiliency in the last 40 years." Adrienne Esposito, executive director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment, called the money "an unprecedented public victory which will result in a legacy of cleaner bays, cleaner waters and a stronger economy."