

TOWN OF KIRKWOOD

Town Board

Gordon E. Kniffen, Supervisor
William J. Diffendorf, Councilman
Lewis C. Grubham, Councilman
Robert F. Weingartner, Councilman
Linda J. Yonchuk, Councilwoman

Joseph A. Griffin Town Hall

70 Crescent Drive
Kirkwood, NY 13795
(607) 775-1370
Fax (607) 775-1372
TDD (800) 662-1220
www.townofkirkwood.org

March 21, 2016

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Schumer:

In reference to your office's press release of June 2015 we have some questions and thoughts to share with you. In your press release in June 2015 you also included a copy of a letter to the ACOE addressed to Lt. General Bostick requesting a detailed update and timeline for implementation of the Upper Susquehanna River Basin Feasibility Study. This study apparently has been added to the ACOE's budget and requires a non-federal sponsor.

In 2010 a Reconnaissance Study of \$100,000 was approved. However for the ACOE to move forward they required the partnership of a non-federal sponsor. The last that we heard regarding this study was that the New York State DEC was going to be the non-federal partner. To date no agency has been able to advise us the current status of this study.

Not knowing this status, your office has advised us that the ACOE has moved on to a feasibility study of the Upper Susquehanna River Basin which again will require a non-federal cost sharing participant. Therefore we have two different studies for the Upper Susquehanna River Basin. The first is the Reconnaissance Study for which we do not know the current status and the second is the Feasibility Study for which we need more information.

On the surface this is confusing to us. We would appreciate knowing the answer to your letter to Lt. General Bostick. It has been almost nine months since you requested this information.

Senator Schumer, the damage to our people from catastrophic flooding comes quickly; in the wink of an eye. However our response as public representatives comes very slowly and is still not within our grasp. We have said so many times "when there is a disaster such as flooding, the emotions run high with vigor and determination." However as time goes by, these emotions settle down and the thrust of the moments begins to dissipate. We can chalk that up to human nature, perhaps!

But we can never forget the horror of terrible flooding especially for those directly affected by its ravages. The loss of income, the search for shelter, the thoughts of how are we going to survive and begin again!

Here we are ten years later and what have we gained? Let's give credit to the administrations of Broome County Executives Fiala and Preston and their staffs for continuing the fight. We do appreciate that effort but we cannot do it here at the local level. This is a federal issue.

This proposed Feasibility Study is only for the Upper Susquehanna River Basin. Shouldn't it be the entire river basin? Senator, what will we say to our people when the next flood happens? Of course we will take the immediate steps of first responders, secure safety, and start the cleanup. There may or may not be flood buyout programs. We appreciate your representation of our State but this issue cannot and should not be in the "rear view mirror!"

How are we going to expedite this process? It cannot be the same old tune! Do we need a committee to work with your office to keep the pressure and attention to this matter current and on the move? We realize with our federal government any process takes time and effort. Things don't become an issue today and solved tomorrow. However you must admit ten years is a long way from tomorrow.

If there is no mitigation to flooding in our area other than what we can do internally and locally, which our Town and others have done, let's come to that conclusion and share it with our people. There are environments all thru our great country which cause earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, and torrid snow conditions. No one is spared the events of natural disasters. However there are safe guards for some situations. Is our community and surrounding communities one of these or are we in a place where we want to live but are willing to accept the environment of our land.

Senator Schumer please respond to our concerns relative to the contents of this letter at your earliest convenience. Thank you.

Sincerely,



GORDON E. KNIFFEN
Supervisor

cc: Kirkwood Town Board
Oliver N. Blaise, Attorney
John Mastronardi, Engineer
Chad Moran, Building & Code Inspector
Debbie Preston, Broome County Executive
Frank Evangelisti, Broome County Planning Department
Senator Fred Akshar
Assemblyman Cliff Crouch
Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo
John Finch, Jr., Water & Sewer Department
Michael Marinaccio, Supervisor Town of Dickinson
Rich David, Mayor City of Binghamton
Greg Deemie, Mayor Village of Johnson City
Country Courier