

# **WE ARE THE SANDY 75%**

## **Vast Majority of People Hit Hard by Sandy Say Christie Administration Has Failed Them**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Trenton, NJ (October 29, 2013) – On the one year anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, a Monmouth University poll shows that 75% of New Jerseyans severely impacted by Sandy say that the Christie Administration's recovery is not working for people like them; we are the people behind the poll. Today, people impacted by Sandy and organizations fighting for a fair recovery are marking the anniversary with a clear message: The Christie Administration's approach to recovery is not working; major changes are needed.

*"We have mitigated, raised, elevated, restored, and done everything to code. Passed all inspections. Inside and out. Yet we get nothing. Governor Christie lied and we the people are suffering. The RREM grant is worthless."*

**-Lee Siegfried, disabled First Gulf War combat veteran from Keansburg.**

*"It takes every ounce of energy NOT to throw something at the TV when I see those 'Stronger than the Storm' ads telling us just how great the recovery is going. I want to ask, whose recovery? Not mine, not my neighbors. My story is just like every other 75%. We got shafted with grants, we got shafted with assistance, we got shafted through the insurance industry, our own Governor shafted us."*

**-Isabel Newson of Keansburg, displaced from her home after it was severely affected by the storm.** She was unable to obtain assistance through the RREM program.

*"The Stronger NJ Business Grant Program is an administrative nightmare. The documents they ask for are overwhelming and they don't have the staff capacity to work with you. When Christie says that businesses aren't applying for money that is bull. They have designed a program that is almost impossible to use."*

**-Kristen Scalia, Jersey City business owner (NJ Citizen Action's Main Street Alliance).** Scalia's business was flooded with four feet of water and lost all of its inventory, yet has not been able to access a single dollar of recovery funds from the Christie Administration.

*"It looks good in a headline to say all this money is there but no one is seeing a dime. It's a mess where everyone is stuck. There are lots of homes in my neighborhood that are vacant because of Sandy and rotting away. They are full of black mold and I'm afraid down the line people are going to get lung cancer because of this."*

**-Simone Dannecker, homeowner from Union Beach facing foreclosure from a predatory loan.**

*"Every day people call me who are trying to get back home. But because renters whose homes were destroyed have received little attention from the Christie Administration, there are few answers."*

**-Mike McNeil, Housing Chair of the New Jersey Chapter of the NAACP and Executive Director of Solutions to End Poverty Soon (STEPS).** STEPS helps low-

income families looking for housing after Sandy in Ocean County, the hardest hit county in New Jersey.

*"In this day and age, nobody would expect two separate and unequal recovery processes, with Spanish language information leaving out important deadlines and Latino communities being ignored. We are all the 75% that feel left behind by the Christie Administration. The only way to be heard is to unite all of our voices to get the country to see what is going on here."*

**-Frank Argote-Freyre, President of the Latino Action Network (LAN).** LAN filed a federal complaint yesterday over the State's failure to provide accurate information on the recovery process in Spanish.

*"The Christie Administration spent \$25 million on 'Stronger than the Storm' ads, but next to nothing on telling people who live at the Shore, or anywhere else in NJ, how to get help. Neither homeowners nor renters are getting the help they need to navigate the State's confusing programs with ever-changing rules. New Jersey residents deserve better."*

**-Staci Berger, Executive Director of the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey (HCDNNJ).** HCDNNJ works with community organizations assisting residents impacted by Hurricane Sandy everyday.

*"The recovery is going pretty well for out-of-state consultants making millions of dollars off of state contracts. But average New Jerseyans affected by Sandy overwhelmingly are not benefiting from the Christie Administration's recovery."*

**-Adam Gordon, Staff Attorney with Fair Share Housing Center (FSHC).** FSHC sued the Christie Administration last month over the lack of transparency regarding where federal money is going.

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