

For Release: Immediate
Monday, March 04, 2013

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**SENATE AND ASSEMBLY ENVIRONMENT PANEL CHAIRS ISSUE
STATEMENTS ON JOINT LEGISLATIVE HEARING FOCUSED ON SANDY
REBUILDING CONCERNS**

Panel Received Testimony on Eight Bills Focused On Shore and Beach
Protection As Part of Sandy Rebuilding Efforts

(Trenton) The Senate Environment and Energy Committee and the Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee convened today a joint hearing to discuss eight measures that would ensure beach and shore protection during the planning and rebuilding of shore communities damaged by Hurricane Sandy. The chair of each environment legislative committee, Senator Bob Smith (D-Middlesex) and Assemblywoman Grace Spencer (D-Essex) released the following statements on the testimony:

Senator Smith: "The damage caused by Hurricane Sandy to our coast line and Shore have had a devastating effect on our coastal communities, destroying infrastructure and beaches, businesses and homes. As we pick ourselves up from the storm and rebuild, it is imperative that we are conscious that – due to climate change – Sandy may not have been a once in a lifetime storm. We must rebuild smarter, using modern technology to ensure the protection of our shoreline and the homes that sit upon it and we must find creative ways to fund these efforts.

"Today, we began to tackle these issues. From ensuring the viability of the Shore economy – a \$3.3 billion industry that sustains thousands of jobs in local communities – to protecting homeowners from the disastrous effects of future storms, there is much to be done. Today was just the tip of an iceberg that over the coming months will bring new ideas and legislation to ensure that our rebuilding and recovery efforts ensure the safety of our coastline, our residents and our Shore communities."

Assemblywoman Spencer: "The overwhelming, widespread damage of Superstorm Sandy has raised a bevy of significant concerns in regard to land use, home construction, flooding hazards and beach protection for the people of New Jersey. Our hearing today opened the discussion of rebuilding by inviting to the table the people who understand the needs and problems in storm-affected areas.

"We do recognize that there are several projects presently underway. Before we continue to invest our money we must be sure the actions we are taking going forward will surely protect the people of New Jersey long term.

"What is clear is a 'one size fits all' approach will just not work in this situation. Our methods to rebuild must ensure responsible restoration of our communities – all of New Jersey's communities. For urban areas affected by the excessive flooding from the storm, we must ask ourselves what needs to be done to protect communities in respect to fairly drawn flooding zones and prone to flooding hazards.

"In doing so, all officials on the state, county and municipal level, must remain cognizant of a changing environment and prepare for the next Sandy-like storm with smart, well-researched solutions that will be helpful to everyone."