

Press Release from Mayor Heath Tortarella
3/2/15

Senator Schumer has submitted a letter to FEMA, urging the agency to release the funds promised for repairs to Asher Dam and the downstream pedestrian bridge that were damaged during Hurricane Irene. Initial repairs were made to the dam in 2012 and an extension was granted to the Village in 2013, extending the completion date until September 2015. Despite the granted extension, FEMA de-obligated all funding for this project. These repairs, necessary to ensure public safety, were completed in 2014 and an appeal of this decision has been filed by the Village. We have been working tirelessly to secure this funding and would like to extend a thank you to Senator Schumer for his support. An excerpt of Senator Schumer's press release can be seen below and the full version can be viewed at the following link:

http://www.schumer.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/schumer-urges-fema-to-fully-fund-repair-of-asher-dam-in-rhinebeck-dam-and-pedestrian-bridge-were-damaged-by-hurricane-irene_tropical-storm-lee--repairs-have-been-made-but-fema-is-withholding-funding-due-to-administrative-error-that-can-be-easily-corrected

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**SCHUMER URGES FEMA TO FULLY
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A copy of Senator Schumer's letter to FEMA appears below:

Dear Administrator Fugate:

I write to express my support for the Village of Rhinebeck's application for Public Assistance funding to repair the Asher Dam (PW 622, 4020-DR-NY). Due to a simple administrative error, FEMA de-obligated the Village's entire approved project cost; I urge you to make this administrative correction, and re-obligate the much-needed funding to Rhinebeck.

The Asher Dam was damaged by Hurricane Irene in August 2011, then was hammered again, just weeks later, by Tropical Storm Lee. Debris that washed over the spillway during the storms damaged one of the valves, located at the base of the dam, which is used to control water levels at Crystal Lake. Additional damage to the downstream side of the dam was also discovered after the water level of the lake was lowered to allow for the initial repairs to be made. After the disasters, FEMA approved a Project Worksheet to make repairs to the Asher Dam and the Pedestrian Bridge, located downstream of the dam.

FEMA de-obligated the entire project cost in August 2013 because the applicant made a simple administrative error, and was unaware that they were required to complete hazard mitigation work. The Village of Rhinebeck has since completed the entire project, including the FEMA-required hazard mitigation work to make the dam more resilient to future storms. The state has indicated that the administrative error would be very easy to fix; FEMA simply needs to release the Village of Rhinebeck's appeal, make a simple administrative correction of error, and then the project would be ready to move forward with final inspection and closeout. During final closeout, I also urge you to include any additional costs that the Village has incurred while making additional repairs to the damage that was discovered after the water level of the lake had been lowered.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator