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**After Reed Delivers Federal Funding, East Providence Families in Flood Prone Properties Begin to Get Their Voluntary Home Buyouts**

**EAST PROVIDENCE, RI –** Today, U.S. Senator Jack Reed commended the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Rhode Island Association of Conservation Districts (RIACD), and East Providence Mayor Bob DaSilva and his staff for teaming up to help residents relocate out of flood prone areas.

Last year, Senator Reed helped deliver critical federal funds to buyout flood prone properties and deliver relief for homeowners who suffered from repetitive flooding.  Now, owners of chronically flooded properties are closing on real estate deals with the federal government, meaning fewer homes will be flooded during future storms.

Reed, a member of the Appropriations Committee, [secured up to $9.65 million in federal funding for voluntary property buyouts for eligible homeowners along Marsh Street and around the State Street neighborhood](https://www.reed.senate.gov/news/releases/reed-announces-over-12-million-buyout-lifeline-for-flood-prone-properties-in-east-providence-middletown-and-narragansettfederal-funds-will-help-homeowners-and-offer-natural-storm-protection-to-vulnerable-neighborhoods), which includes Abbott Street, Luther Avenue, Julien Avenue, and Humphrey Street. The federal funding comes from USDA’s NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection-Floodplain Easements (EWP-FPE) program.

NRCS, RIACD, and East Providence officials have worked for months to assist homeowners with the buyout process.

In November of this year, eleven houses and one vacant lot were purchased for a total of $4,297,460.

Two more houses and four vacant lots are scheduled to close in early February of 2024.  The costs for these closings will be approximately $1 million.  This includes the purchase price for the properties, plus legal fees and relocation funds for homeowners and renters.

As the lead agency, NRCS must complete a thorough technical review for each eligible property.  Once approved, NRCS purchases easements (the rights to the properties) to restore floodplain functions. The City of East Providence will hold the property titles (remaining interest in the property).

“These closings are welcome news for vulnerable property owners and will help the community enhance natural storm protection.  These closings mean that families who wanted to relocate were able to take this voluntarily buyout and get fair value for their homes.  It also means less flood damage going forward.  I appreciate NRCS, RIACD, and East Providence for working together, listening to community input, and taking action to assist families in need by helping prevent future flood damage,” said **Senator Reed**.

“This project brings much relief to residents who have been dealing with ongoing flooding issues due to the high water table,” **Mayor Bob DaSilva** said. “These properties will now be restored to their natural environment providing watershed capacity and new, public space for the community to enjoy.”

Reed expects nearly $8 million in federal funding will be used for the project. In addition to the home buyouts, some funds were paid to RIACD to manage the project and the remaining funds will be used to hire an engineering firm to design and implement the final floodplain restoration plan, which could include overseeing the demolition of the properties, restoration of the floodplain, and installation of stormwater mitigation works.

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