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**MARKING SANDY ANNIVERSARY, MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES THAT
BUILD IT BACK PROGRAM WILL BE COMPLETE BY END OF 2016**

As a result of de Blasio administration's overhaul, 100 percent of reimbursement checks now out to over 5,300 families; over 2,000 construction starts to date

City continues to aggressively implement \$20 billion resiliency plan to protect against climate risks

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio announced today that the Build it Back single-family home program will be complete by the end of 2016, and that 100 percent of reimbursement checks have now been sent out to homeowners.

To date, there have been 2,015 construction starts (including 1,217 construction completions), as well as 5,319 reimbursement checks totaling nearly \$104 million (representing all homeowners eligible for checks). In total, 63 percent of applicants have now seen a check or construction. Over 5,000 homes have entered design. All of these numbers are compared to zero in early 2014.

“Last year, we were fixing Build it Back – and now we’re finishing it, committing to completing the program and getting families home by the end of next year,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “While there has been major progress since our overhaul – including 100 percent of reimbursement checks now out to homeowners – we won’t stop pushing forward until every applicant sees relief. Even as we work to get every family home, we are also aggressively moving to address the risks of climate change. We’re already safer today than we were three years ago, and we will continue to implement our comprehensive \$20 billion resiliency plan across the five boroughs.”

The de Blasio administration also released a series of videos today highlighting progress on recovery and resiliency, available at <http://on.nyc.gov/sandy>.

In spring 2014, Mayor de Blasio overhauled Build It Back, taking a program that was previously weighed down by bureaucracy and implementing solutions to ensure much-needed relief for homeowners. The City took over direct management of Build It Back centers, expanded eligibility, dramatically increased its community presence, and aggressively moved relief dollars to homeowners.

In addition to the 9,300 applicants in Build it Back's single family program, there are over 11,000 households that have already seen relief through the Build it Back multi-family program.

As part of the Mayor's overhaul, the Office of Housing Recovery and the Department of Small Business Services launched Sandy Recovery Workforce1, focused on connecting Sandy-impacted New Yorkers to jobs on Build it Back and other recovery and resiliency projects. To date, approximately 800 residents from Sandy-impacted neighborhoods have been hired. The City is also offering Sandy-impacted residents training opportunities for union construction jobs; to date, dozens of additional residents have benefitted.

As a result of recent progress, more than half of the entire Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery from the Department of Housing and Urban Development is now obligated.

Last year, the Department for Small Business Services also turned around the Hurricane Sandy Business Loan and Grant Program to focus on awarding grants, make guidelines more flexible, and increase disbursements. SBS has now awarded over \$54 million in support to nearly 350 businesses across the city – marking a successful completion of the program.

Even as the City focuses on getting Sandy victims home, it is also implementing a comprehensive \$20 billion resiliency program – informed by the best available climate science – that is continuing to build a stronger, more resilient New York by strengthening coastal defenses, protecting infrastructure, strengthening communities, and adapting buildings.

The five boroughs are already much safer than they were three years ago when Sandy hit, as a result of short-term measures that have already been put in place, including:

- 4.2 million cubic yards of sand in Coney Island and on the Rockaway peninsula
- 9.8 miles of dunes across the Rockaway peninsula and in Staten Island
- 10,500 linear feet of bulkheads across the city
- 16 new improvements to the City's building code to address new climate threats

Large-scale infrastructure projects are also underway, including the following:

- On the Lower East Side, the Office of Recovery and Resiliency has undertaken a year of public engagement and is now moving into final design and environmental review on the \$335 million East Side Coastal Resiliency project funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Rebuild by Design competition.
- In Hunts Point, the City's food distribution hub, \$45 million is being invested in resiliency measures and long-term planning to ensure the long-term viability of the city's food supply.
- In Staten Island, the City is restoring 68 acres of degraded wetlands and piloting an innovative mitigation banking proposal at Saw Mill Creek led by the New York City Economic Development Corporation.
- In Lower Manhattan, the City recently committed an additional \$100 million of City funds, on top of a prior \$15 million to launch design work, and is working to secure

additional federal investment for Lower Manhattan: Protect and Connect through HUD's National Disaster Resilience Competition.

- The City has secured \$3 billion for NYCHA resiliency investments to move forward the design and implementation of this program across its 33 impacted developments, a game-changing investment in the City's public housing stock.
- The City and Health and Hospitals Corporation secured \$1.8 billion from FEMA for resiliency investments at Bellevue Hospital Center, Coney Island Hospital, Coler Rehabilitation and Nursing Care Center, and Metropolitan Hospital.
- The City is working in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to advance significant investments in Sea Gate, the Rockaway peninsula, Jamaica Bay, and the East Shore of Staten Island.
- The City is leading additional investments in coastal protection for Breezy Point, Red Hook, and vulnerable shorelines across the city.
- The New York City Office of Emergency Management released new hurricane evacuation maps to better guide hurricane planning, and expanded NotifyNYC, ReadyNY, and Know Your Zone campaigns for better public risk awareness.
- The City released new climate projections with the New York City Panel on Climate Change to better plan for adaptive climate resiliency measures.
- The City reconvened the Climate Change Adaptation Task Force, a regional group of public and private infrastructure operators.
- And the City expanded focus on social and economic resiliency, including new urban heat island mitigation efforts.

"When Mayor de Blasio overhauled Build it Back last spring, we completely reimagined how the program would work," said **Amy Peterson, Director of the Mayor's Office of Housing Recovery**. "Taking over direct management of the application process and working closely with the affected communities, we implemented dramatic reforms and began moving money out the door. Today we can see the finish line. Our reimbursement program is complete. Our construction program, which quadrupled its capacity this year, will be complete by the end of next year. Though the work will be challenging, we are in a stronger position than ever. We look forward to continued collaboration with our elected officials, civic leaders, and community groups who have all been so instrumental in getting relief to homeowners."

"Nearly three years ago, Hurricane Sandy devastated New York City, highlighting the city's growing vulnerability to coastal storms and the impacts of climate change," said **Daniel Zarrilli, Director of the Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency**. "Today, we are safer than we were before Sandy thanks to improvements in emergency preparation, investments in our coastal defenses, and the launch of a comprehensive \$20 billion resiliency program. And we have more to do before we'll be satisfied. We are committed to making our city ready to withstand and emerge stronger from the impacts of climate change and other 21st century threats, in collaboration with communities across the city."

"We applaud the Mayor, his Recovery Office, and our partners on the Administration's multi-agency team, with whom we collaborated to streamline approvals for Build It Back jobs," said **Commissioner Rick Chandler, Department of Buildings**. "Our dedicated team of plan

examiners and inspectors worked closely with homeowners to move their projects forward -- enabling thousands of New Yorkers to rebuild their homes and lives."

"The New York City Department of Design and Construction has been honored to be involved in the Build it Back program, and by understanding what is at stake, we have approached this initiative with a keen sense of urgency and dedication," said **Commissioner Dr. Feniosky Pena-Mora, Department of Design and Construction**. "We have been responsive to the unique needs of each one of the homeowners affected by this tragedy. Our three construction managers – SLS in Staten Island, Tishman Construction in Queens, and the LiRo Group in Brooklyn – each bring a distinct and comprehensive approach to Build it Back's current design and construction capacity. Great work has already been done, but we know that there is more to accomplish. We are committed to Mayor de Blasio's vision for a healthy and sustainable city and we will work hard to ensure that the houses of those New Yorkers who are still affected by this tragedy are rehabilitated and protected against extreme weather conditions."

"Mayor de Blasio deserves major credit for successfully overhauling the 'Build it Back' program and for making sure that thousands of Sandy-impacted homeowners, who went into their pockets to pay for repairs themselves, will finally be made whole. We've certainly come a long way since Sandy, however, we have more to do. We must help Sandy victims still tangled in bureaucracy, we must stop federal clawbacks, and we must speed-up FEMA's Sandy flood insurance claims review process. I will continue working hard on behalf of Sandy victims until everyone is made whole," said **Senator Charles Schumer**.

Staten Island Borough President James Oddo said, "Establishing a hard deadline – a date certain – when Sandy housing recovery operations must be completed is precisely the approach that is needed. I think we at Borough Hall have forcefully pushed that sense of urgency to the top of the Administration and we see the top – Mayor de Blasio – is pushing down on all his agencies to get this work done. I want that. I welcome that. I applaud that. This is not a victory lap. There are no victory laps, even at the end of 2016. This is a commitment to finally live up to our collective responsibilities."

"The resiliency efforts of the city agencies on the Hurricane Relief Task Force have helped restore our neighborhoods into thriving communities once again. I thank the Mayor and his administration for their commitment and attention to our residents and small businesses. Marking a Build It Back deadline at the end of 2016 means the completion of the recovery and rebuilding efforts is on the near horizon," said **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz**.

"Whenever you can declare 'Mission Accomplished' and mean it, it matters. It matters that Mayor de Blasio kept his commitment to getting out every reimbursement check through it Build it Back to homeowners impacted by Superstorm Sandy and in need of financial relief. We now have a mission of completing the program by the end of next year, and I am confident that our City's focus on this imperative will lead us to achieving this new benchmark as well," said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams**.

"As the 3rd anniversary of Superstorm Sandy comes and goes, I am hopeful that Mayor de Blasio's rejuvenation and reinvention of the Build It Back program will continue to accelerate

the pace and broaden scope of the City's efforts to help families and neighborhoods fully recover by rebuilding not only their homes but their lives," said **Congressman Gregory W. Meeks**.

"After Superstorm Sandy, I fought in Congress to secure the necessary emergency funding to help New York recover, and I am proud to have helped bring federal resources to New York City to increase resiliency and coastal protections," said **Congressman Jerry Nadler**. "Thank you to Mayor de Blasio for his commitment to restoring the areas hit by Sandy and to investing in protections for all of New York City against future storms. I will continue to work with our federal, city and state partners to fight for resiliency in all of our neighborhoods. Continued federal investment in our infrastructure and flood protection is absolutely necessary to keep people and businesses thriving."

"Every check distributed and each set of keys handed over to a struggling family is a major victory in our recovery from Sandy," said **Assembly Member Phil Goldfeder**. "The Mayor's continued attention to our Sandy-devastated communities and aggressive goals for the Build it Back program will hopefully reassure families still trying to get home. Although our Sandy work is not yet complete, I applaud the City's progress in making our communities stronger and more resilient and I look forward to a time when every family will finally be safe and secure back in their own homes."

Council Member Margaret Chin said, "I applaud Mayor de Blasio for his commitment to Sandy victims by setting an aggressive timetable for efforts on behalf of families still looking to return to their homes. As we continue to work to get people home, I look forward to the speedy implementation of a comprehensive resiliency program to protect New Yorkers in the path of future storms."

Council Member Chaim Deutsch said, "Since taking office nearly two years ago, Mayor Bill de Blasio has revamped Build it Back, and alongside Director Amy Peterson, has demonstrated a commitment to streamlining and improving all aspects of the program. I have had a consistent and ongoing dialogue with Build it Back, and have taken Director Peterson to visit dozens of effected homes in my district. Working together, we have been successful in issuing more than 90% of reimbursement checks to Build it Back applicants in my district. With this commitment from the Administration to hasten the rebuilding process for single family homes, I am confident that Build it Back will continue to make great strides in my district. Recovering from Sandy is an ongoing process, and I am working with the Office of Recovery and Resiliency in order to identify problematic infrastructure and improve the resiliency of my waterfront district overall. Projects like Coney Island Hospital's \$923 million project to construct a flood wall and a critical services building are crucial to protecting essential resources from future storms. I look forward to working with Mayor de Blasio, Build it Back Director Amy Peterson, and Office of Recovery & Resiliency Director Dan Zarrilli, to support our communities in the effort to recover from Sandy and safeguard ourselves from future storms."

"I would like to commend Mayor de Blasio for putting in place a team dedicated to restoring the homes and lives of families devastated by Superstorm Sandy. Although tremendous progress has been made, there are still homes that need to be repaired and families that are still displaced.

However, I am confident that every effort is being made to help restore everyone impacted by Superstorm Sandy,” said **Council Member Alan Maisel**.

"By setting this ambitious deadline, Mayor de Blasio is firmly holding his administration accountable to the people who are still waiting to return home three years after Sandy devastated their communities, and creating a renewed sense of urgency to get them there. This provides an answer to the question so many of us have been asking – ‘When will housing recovery be completed?’ – and will give others some hope that there is light at the end of a very long tunnel,” said **Council Member Steven Matteo**.

"This administration's commitment to Sandy-affected residents has been a sigh of relief for those of us who have been on the ground from day one. I congratulate the Build it Back team on reaching this important benchmark. As we move forward, I encourage us all to continue to stay attentive--and responsive--to the needs of impacted New Yorkers, and ensure that true resiliency is reached, and that our communities are able to reach their fullest potential in the face of natural disasters," said **Council Member Carlos Menchaca**.

Council Member Deborah Rose said, “Three years ago, our city suffered one of its worst natural disasters, with 24 lives lost on Staten Island alone. Though recovery got off to an unacceptably slow start, the Build it Back program accelerated noticeably last year thanks to the efforts of Mayor Bill de Blasio and his team, and thousands of residents have finally received the relief they deserve. While so many lives will never be the same, the Mayor's announcement today that Build it Back will complete its work next year is welcome news, and I thank the Mayor for his leadership here. The progress made isn't a cause for celebration, but rather an acknowledgment that we are finally meeting the obligation that we owe to our fellow New Yorkers. I know that we are all committed to learning from this disaster and building our city back to be stronger and more resilient.

“When Build it Back first launched, we saw little to no results for far too long, which is why it is such a relief to see that many residents who have been picking up the pieces for three long years finally can see a light at the end of the tunnel,” said **Council Member Donovan Richards**. “The resiliency efforts of the program should also not be forgotten as the evidence of climate change shows that more hurricanes happen, more often, so the addition of more sand, dunes and bulkheads across the city have been so important to ensure that New York City is protected for generations to come. I'd like to thank Mayor de Blasio and Amy Peterson for overhauling this program and expediting the process for thousands of families.”

“As Chair of the Recovery and Resiliency committee and as a council member in one of the districts hit hardest by Sandy, it is obvious that we are at a very different place than we were a year ago. To the credit of Amy Peterson and the team that she put together at Build It Back – who in my view had a better understanding of how this process should work – we are finally starting to see the type of progress that we should have seen in Year One. It has long been my belief that this recovery will ultimately be judged not by announcements but by the number of homes rebuilt and reimbursement checks sent out. I appreciate that the administration is committing to certain deadlines the likes of which we did not see at the beginning of the recovery period. We still have much work to do to ensure that every victim from every impacted

neighborhood is made whole again and we must commit ourselves to nothing less," said **Council Member Mark Treyger, Chair of the Committee on Recovery & Resiliency.**

"The Broad Channel Civic Association has worked closely with Amy Peterson and her staff at the Build it Back program," said **Dan Mundy, President of the Broad Channel Civic Association.** "She has worked extremely hard to address the problems that had originally been identified by our residents. Many of the original hurdles have been overcome and the program is starting to really take off. Borough President Melinda Katz has been invaluable in helping to bring together the Hurricane task force which has helped to bring the agencies together and expedite the process. In addition to the new homes that have already been built we look forward to the numerous elevations that are set to begin shortly which will raise homes and make our residents safer in the event of another super storm Sandy. The addition of the Tishman company is going to really add to the capacity of the program to move forward on multiple projects simultaneously."

"As a network of both people of faith who have been directly impacted by Hurricane Sandy and allies who have stood with Sandy impacted communities we applaud Mayor Bill de Blasio and his team for announcing that Sandy rebuild construction will be completed by the end of next year and for completing the Build it Back reimbursement program," said **Onleilove Alston, Executive Director of Faith in New York.** "We also acknowledge those who are still waiting for relief and the need to make New York a more green and resilient city to offset the impact of climate change. Much has been accomplished and if faith, community, labor and government continue to work in cooperation we can accomplish much more in our beloved city."

"Today's announcement by the Mayor represents a huge step forward for Sandy-impacted communities. We applaud how the administration has made this progress with strong community engagement and opportunities for local workforce training and employment," said **Matt Ryan, Executive Director of ALIGN.**

"When I heard about the pre-apprenticeship I was looking for another job," said **Lamont Bryan, Laborers Local 79,** graduate of Edward J. Malloy Initiative for Construction Skills & Far Rockaway resident. "I wasn't expecting to get a career out of it. Now I'm a member of the laborers union and I am grateful for having gone through the Construction Skills program. It helped give me the training and the mindset needed to succeed in the construction industry."

"SLS is so pleased to be a part of the rebuilding process in Staten Island and playing a part in helping Sandy victims recover and rebuild, not only their homes, but their lives," said **Billy Sullivan, Principal of Sullivan Land Services (SLS),** the Construction Manager for Staten Island Build it Back. "While our job may be to rebuild storm damaged homes, our real responsibility and honor is to help Sandy victims put this devastating chapter in their lives behind them and move forward. SLS takes this responsibility very seriously, and we are dedicated to returning Sandy victims to strong and resilient homes, which match the character of the residents of this wonderful community."

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