



NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

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NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ANNOUNCES NEW SAFETY INITIATIVES AHEAD OF THE FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF HURRICANE SANDY

City and FEMA unveil new high water mark signs to promote public awareness about storm surge risk

October 27, 2016 – The New York City Emergency Department and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are unveiling new high water mark signs this week to promote public awareness about storm surge risk ahead of the fourth anniversary of Hurricane Sandy. The first sign was unveiled in Breezy Point on October 27, while two additional signs will be unveiled in Coney Island on October 28.

“The impact of Hurricane Sandy and the close calls from Hurricane Joaquin in 2015 and Hurricane Hermine this past September show that hurricanes pose a real threat to the City,” said **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito**. “These new initiatives will help remind New Yorkers of the life-threatening danger that hurricanes bring to coastal communities.”

“These high water mark signs help remind us of the extensive, challenging, and rewarding recovery and resiliency work we’ve done in collaboration with New York City, New York State, and the communities in Breezy Point and Coney Island. We’ve done some great work together to ensure that the next time a major coastal flood hits, we’re better prepared and our losses will be significantly reduced,” said **Jerome Hatfield, Regional Administrator, FEMA Region 2**.

In Breezy Point on Thursday, NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito was joined by local leaders to unveil a new sign located adjacent to the town’s shopping center, where storm surge waters reached nine feet.

“The impact that Hurricane Sandy had on my constituents will certainly never be forgotten, much like the strength and endurance our community showed in the days immediately after, and still today as we continue rebuilding what was lost four years ago. In many parts of my district – including Howard Beach, Hamilton Beach, Broad Channel and the Rockaways – storm surges still pose a very real danger to homeowners every single day, even without the threat of a coastal storm,” said **Senator Joseph Addabbo Jr.** “These high water mark signs will remind the community to never lose its awareness of high water levels and how being prepared for a storm surge can not only save countless dollars in property damage, but could potentially save a life. I thank NYC Emergency Management and FEMA for their commitment to making sure all of us understand the importance of being prepared for high water levels, and I continue to welcome

any initiatives, including flood preparedness and dredging in our local waterways, that will contribute to Queens' ever-increasing resiliency."

"We are proud to partner with NYC Emergency Management and FEMA in an effort to remember the impact of Superstorm Sandy. The Breezy Point Cooperative is determined to rebuild a better and more resilient community," said **Chairman AJ Smith**. "It's our hope that by unveiling this high water mark sign, we continue to move forward always keeping in mind flood risks and doing our best, along with the local, state, and federal authorities, to maintain the safety of our residents and community."

Additional high water mark signs will be unveiled at MCU Park and outside of the Coney Island Library in Brooklyn on Friday, October 28, where storm surge waters reached five feet at both locations during Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

"The pain of the high water mark left by Superstorm Sandy's storm surge is being turned into purpose, specifically into the purpose of a high water mark we want to establish for public awareness on future coastal flooding risks," said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams**. "I thank Commissioner Esposito for his continued commitment to community education on emergency matters that can make a big difference in the hours where circumstances test us most."

"We are pleased to be a part of the High Water Mark Initiative. This will bring public awareness to the risk of flooding in our community; to remember that we had five feet of water during Hurricane Sandy," said **Community Board 13 District Manager Eddie Mark**. "The markers will remind public to develop wisely against future flooding."

"Six Brooklyn libraries were badly damaged by Hurricane Sandy, none more so than the Coney Island branch, which was flooded by five feet of water and closed for more than a year," said **Brooklyn Public Library President and CEO Linda E. Johnson**. "The high-water mark sign outside that library will be a reminder of the destructive power of nature – just as the branch's beautifully renovated interior stands as evidence of New York's resiliency."

The High Water Mark Initiative is a community-based awareness program that increases local communities' awareness of flood risk. As part of the project, communities post high water mark signs in prominent places and conduct ongoing education and complete mitigation actions to build community resilience against future flooding. The high water mark signs in Breezy Point and Coney Island remind residents that Hurricane Sandy brought a storm surge of nine feet and five feet respectively. Last June, as part of FEMA's pilot program, New York City unveiled its first high water mark sign in Midland Beach, Staten Island. Other cities that have participated in the High Water Mark Initiative pilot program include: Harrisburg, PA, Nashville, TN, Orange Beach, AL, Sacramento, San Anselmo, and Roseville, CA, and Santa Rosa County, Fl.

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