

U.S. Sens. Patrick Leahy and Bernie Sanders and Rep. Peter Welch Wednesday announced the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) is now accepting applications from Northeastern communities affected by disasters last year, including in Vermont, for \$53,753,000 of disaster recovery assistance.

On Wednesday the EDA posted a Federal Funding Opportunity on grants.gov, the federal government's central grant application clearinghouse, that calls for applications from states, municipalities and nonprofit organizations to help rebuild infrastructure vital to a community's economic vitality and to implement economic development strategies that directly relate to a federally declared disaster and to improve the community's resiliency in future disasters.

Leahy, Sanders and Welch fought to include \$200 million in EDA disaster funding in a federal budget package that passed Congress last fall. The EDA allocated the largest portion of that funding to its Philadelphia Regional Office, which covers Vermont and other Northeastern states and some U.S. territories. Funding will be awarded competitively.

Leahy said, "Ensuring that Vermont's economy recovers from Irene's flooding will take more than rebuilding businesses, homes and roads. We will need to build our economic development infrastructure stronger and better – from improving wastewater capacity, to business incubators and forging long-term economic development plans. The efforts made possible by this EDA funding will help make sure that our economy recovers, thrives, and is more resilient in future disasters."

Sanders said, "These funds will be a much-needed boost in terms of creating jobs in areas of the state that experienced job-loss due to Irene, and in rebuilding damaged infrastructure. Many Vermont towns were struggling economically before Irene hit, so the announcement of this federal assistance is very timely."

Welch said, "In addition to homes, roads and bridges, Vermont's economic development infrastructure took a big hit from Tropical Storm Irene. While the state is well on the way to recovery, these funds will help rebuild our economy in hard hit areas through investments in infrastructure and economic development strategies."

Gov. Peter Shumlin said, "I thank Vermont's Congressional Delegation for their hard work on this and other federal disaster-recovery programs. We look forward to working with the Economic Development Administration to help our communities and businesses not only recover from Tropical Storm Irene, but rebuild in a way that leaves Vermont's economy stronger than Irene found it."

Eligible organizations can apply for funding online at grants.gov. The Federal Funding

Opportunity can be found directly at <http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do;jsessionid=QQKxPzrGhLnJxh9Y735T9N6dDsyvh0642QQQh9mvTzyk1RM5wvv!712472910?oppld=159393&mode=VIEW>

The EDA recommends that interested applicants contact Matthew Suchodolski, Economic Development Specialist at EDA, at (215) 597-1242.