

Infinity Lounge:
Scaling the Next Generation of
Innovative

SAVE THE REGION AND ECONOMY

**INVEST IN RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE
AS A STIMULUS THAT PAYS OFF FOR
WORKERS AND OUR NATION**

Background

Climate change is not abstract for our region. More than one million people across New York and New Jersey live at risk of flooding today. Yet, eight years after Hurricane Sandy, we are still unprepared. What is at stake? Your home, your business, your school, your park, your neighborhood, and your way of life. Delaying action is not an option. Now is the time to address the greatest threat to our region's future.

The Rise to Resilience campaign is today's roadmap for a more resilient tomorrow. Together we can build resilience, support our communities and economy and create a more equitable and just region.

Please join us at rise2resilience.org.

Issue overview

Many of the same communities that were hit hardest during Superstorm Sandy in the New York-New Jersey region have been hit hard again during the COVID-19 crisis—communities like Red Hook, the Rockaways and Jersey City, where many essential workers live.

As we consider the roadmap for our economic recovery, investing in resilient infrastructure can help put Americans back to work on the solutions that make us more resilient to the devastating impacts that are already here and will intensify in the future. Stimulus investments can put our region back to work and benefit communities through investing in resilient infrastructure and quality green and blue jobs, reaping a return of six dollars for every one invested, plus creating thousands of good-paying jobs.

ACTION:
Fund shovel-ready projects that create jobs and reduce our future risks posed by climate

These could include, but are not limited to funding:

- > **Community resiliency projects** already identified by frontline communities. This could be accomplished through developing a resilient natural infrastructure and communities competitive grant program through the National Estuary Program or the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation and supporting states and local governments to facilitate community planning and implementation of priority resilient and green/natural infrastructure, develop well-paying green and blue jobs and build capacity for community and volunteer organizations active in disaster, especially in frontline communities. Additionally, investing in hazard mitigation projects identified in the most recent Hazard Mitigation Plans is a way to create jobs and simultaneously mitigate risks for future disasters.
- > **Housing and communities:** invest in public housing infrastructure fixes and retrofits for energy efficiency and flood resilience and new affordable housing developments in upland areas. Fully-fund billions in overdue capital needs for public housing through HUD and increase funding for Community Development Block Grants.
- > **Habitat:** the 22 priority habitat restoration and flood resilience projects identified through the Hudson-Raritan Estuary Comprehensive Restoration Plan. (USACE)
- > **Working waterfront:** invest in resilient maritime infrastructure that supports short-sea shipping through increased funding for MARAD grants.

ACTION:
Invest in workforce development

Workforce development investments can help to put the region back to work on a resilient recovery, including increasing funding for grants from the HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences worker training program. Additionally, create a new Conservation Corps through the Corporation for National and Community Service to hire workers to restore ecosystems, or a Clean Water Corps focused on local investments in repairing/replacing water infrastructure. And finally, support community and technical colleges for online training to ready workers to perform retrofits for resilience and energy efficiency.

ACTION:
Expand flood mapping and risk assessment capacities

Many communities will need assistance in developing the technical capacity and risk assessment tools needed to inform their decisions. Flood maps and risk information are critical to ensure the nation has informed community planning that reduces flood risk, lowers property and infrastructure damage and helps protect lives. Expanding FEMA capabilities and map quality to evaluate and map risk at-scale should be explored to advance the science of risk management.

ACTION:
Establish a Resilient Communities Revolving Loan Fund

This concept has been proposed with bipartisan support through the State Flood Mitigation Revolving Fund Act of 2019 or the Resilience Revolving Loan Fund Act of 2019 and would provide low- to zero-interest loans for communities to invest in projects and programs that improve disaster preparedness and long-term resiliency in the face of increasingly severe storms, flooding and other natural hazards, with an emphasis on the use of natural infrastructure. To support efforts in lower-income communities, the loan fund would be administered alongside a grant program with aligned goals or should include a mechanism to ensure access to the program and assistance in applying for communities that otherwise would not have the resources available to participate.