

**CHARLES E. SCHUMER**  
NEW YORK

**United States Senate**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

COMMITTEES:  
JUDICIARY  
FINANCE  
BANKING  
RULES

August 24, 2007

Lieutenant General Robert L. Van Antwerp  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Headquarters  
441 G. Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20314

Dear Lieutenant General Van Antwerp:

There is a growing crisis affecting several communities in Suffolk County, New York. It has come to my attention that homeowners in the areas of Smithtown, Islip, and Brookhaven have been struggling with rising groundwater problems. This has led to foreclosed homes, abnormally high energy bills, and flooded properties. Although this problem has festered for decades, conditions have deteriorated since heavy rains in October 2005 pushed the water table to record highs. I urge you to take immediate and appropriate action to remediate this harrowing situation.

I understand that the United States Geological Survey (USGS) has confirmed that affected neighborhoods in places such as Lake Ronkonkoma, Hauppauge, and Smithtown are experiencing elevated water levels due to a high amount of precipitation. According to reports, the clay underneath the area does not allow the water to be absorbed properly; instead saturating the ground level. As a result, homeowners have been saddled with flooded basements, crumbling foundations and mold, backed up cesspools, and lawns infested with mosquitoes. Even nearby businesses and roads have flooded periodically.

With many pumping 24 hours a day just to keep the water out of their basements, my constituents in these communities sorely need assistance. I ask that the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) work closely with the USGS and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to explore potential short-term and long-term solutions before the damage is beyond repair. For example, the ACOE should consider installing pumps and wells, storm drain remediation, silt removal, and any other ways to divert the water.

I look forward to working with you on this issue of great import to Suffolk County homeowners. Please feel free to contact Matt Cohen at 631-753-0978 if I can assist further in this endeavor.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator