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MEMBER

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Economic Development  
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Housing  
Small Business Committee

THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY



ASSEMBLYMAN  
**ARI BROWN**  
20<sup>th</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT  
NASSAU COUNTY

ALBANY OFFICE

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DISTRICT OFFICE

525 Chestnut Street, Suite 103  
Cedarhurst, NY 11516  
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Email : [browna@nyassembly.gov](mailto:browna@nyassembly.gov)

January 31, 2024

**FEMA – Region 2**

Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation  
26 Federal Plaza, Suite 1802  
New York, N.Y. 10278

<https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/environmental-historic/nepa-repository>.

FEMA – Region 2,

Our office has been made aware of the proposed construction of a seawall at Lawrence High School in Cedarhurst, (Lawrence High School Flood Mitigation Cedarhurst, Nassau County, New York FEMA-4085-DR-NY) a project aimed at safeguarding the campus from the impact of severe weather events. While we appreciate the efforts to mitigate future tidal surges and flooding, there are concerns within the community, especially among the residents of the Village of Cedarhurst. The Lawrence High School sits within a residential zone, and the construction of the seawall raises apprehensions about potential adverse effects on the neighboring homes. It is crucial to ensure that the measures taken to protect the school do not inadvertently redirect seawater and create new challenges for the residents.

Our primary concern is the lack of information on the measures FEMA has implemented to safeguard the residents and residential units from the potential consequences of this mitigation effort. The community, apart from a newspaper notice, seems to have received minimal notification regarding the project. We believe that such a significant initiative requires more interactive communication and collaboration with the local community, and we urge FEMA to engage in a more inclusive dialogue with the residents.

Additionally, we would like to inquire whether any investigation was made about the feasibility of relocating the high school to the underutilized Lawrence Middle School, which is situated on higher ground? This option, along with other district properties on higher ground, could potentially serve the purpose of safeguarding the school without incurring the substantial cost of \$75 million. We understand the importance of protecting the Lawrence High School, but exploring alternatives and engaging the community in the decision-making process is crucial.

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We kindly request information on any studies or assessments conducted to evaluate the potential impact of the seawall construction on neighboring homes and the environment.

Moreover, we suggest a comprehensive and inclusive discussion with the residents of Cedarhurst to address their concerns and gather valuable insights.

We understand that FEMA is committed to the safety and well-being of communities, and we appreciate the agency's efforts to provide assistance in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. However, we believe that a temporary pause in the construction, coupled with a thorough examination of alternative solutions and increased community engagement, would contribute to a more well-informed and collaborative decision-making process.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your prompt response and the opportunity to work together to address the concerns of the residents in the Village of Cedarhurst.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ari Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Ari Brown

Cc. Congressman Anthony D'Esposito  
County Executive Bruce Blakeman  
Senator Patricia Canzoneri Fitzpatrick  
Mayor Benjamin Weinstock