

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE def# 11/15/2012
OCEAN COUNTY SEEKS MODIFICATION TO TAX ASSESSMENT LAW

TOMS RIVER – In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, homeowners in Ocean County are returning to homes that have been extensively damaged by the super storm and in some cases washed away from foundations by the wrath of nature.

Ocean County officials want to make certain those homeowners' property tax assessments reflect the most up to date information.

“This is important for both the homeowner and the municipality,” said Ocean County Freeholder Deputy Director John C. Bartlett Jr.

Bartlett noted that the Board of Freeholders will work closely with Gov. Christie so that tax assessment laws can be modified in order to reflect new assessments created by storm damage.

Bartlett said that under the current law, the number that is on the books as of Oct. 1 is the number used for the property value and towns and tax assessors are required to use those numbers when preparing new budgets and subsequently new tax bills.

“If a person has sustained damage or loss of a structure they need to notify the tax assessor of the damage in order for the tax assessor to re-evaluate that property,” Bartlett said. “At this point, tax assessors are not authorized to do this on their own without notification from the property owner, however we expect this situation to be rectified.”

Bartlett said he spoke to Gov. Christie about this issue on Nov. 10 during a meeting and has also talked to the Ocean County Board of Taxation.

“The Governor agreed that this was a situation that would have to be changed possibly by legislation,” Bartlett said. “The state is fully aware of this impending problem and intends to cure it.”

Bartlett said tax assessors will need additional time to reassess properties that have been damaged and urged delaying the 2013 budgetary process so this can take place.

“We need to do an assessment of the new situation before the taxes go into effect for 2013,” Bartlett said.