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**FREEHOLDER CALLS FOR CHANGES TO TAX LAW FOR SANDY VICTIMS**

**TOMS RIVER** – When it comes to personal casualty losses, victims of Superstorm Sandy deserve the same consideration from the Internal Revenue Service that past storm victims have received, says Ocean County Freeholder Joseph H. Vicari.

“Superstorm Sandy is being called the second costliest storm in our history,” Vicari said. “Why we have to ask the IRS to change the tax laws to help our residents just as the agency did for other storm victims is beyond me. Victims of Superstorm Sandy deserve the same consideration. They are working hard to put their lives back together following this devastating storm.”

In a letter to federal representatives, Vicari noted that following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the Internal Revenue Service made changes to the tax law which lifted certain loss limitations for Katrina victims.

According to the IRS, ordinarily, to figure a deduction for a personal casualty or theft loss, you must reduce the loss by \$100 and also reduce the total of your casualty and theft losses by 10 percent of your adjusted gross income. Only the excess over these \$100 and 10 percent limits is deductible. The changes to the law removed those limits for Hurricane Katrina losses, so that the entire amount is deductible, Vicari stated in his letter.

“Many of our residents here in Ocean County and throughout the state of New Jersey have lost everything as a result of Superstorm Sandy which came ashore on Oct. 29, 2012 just as those citizens living in the Gulf States suffered extreme losses as a result of Hurricane Katrina in 2005,” Vicari wrote. “In my County, thousands of taxpayers remain displaced following Sandy as they work to rebuild their homes, navigate the bureaucratic red tape that has been foisted upon us with new mapping elevations from FEMA all while working full time jobs and caring for families and themselves.

“Our citizens affected by this storm have not had an easy go of it and deserve the same assistance that has been afforded to other states and other citizens impacted by similar disasters,” Vicari said.

Vicari encouraged the Senate and Congressional leaders representing Ocean County to advocate for this change in the tax law.

“On behalf of my residents, I am asking for your help in having the federal income tax law as it relates to casualty losses be changed as it had been for Katrina victims,” Vicari said. “In addition, I would also ask the residents that have already filed income taxes be allowed to amend the documents in order to reflect this change.

“I believe this amendment will go a long way in helping our citizens,” he said. “They have been through far too much already not to be extended the same courtesy given to other regions of the United States.”