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Hello,

Tuesday's flood has been catastrophic for you and many of our friends and neighbors. During this time of crisis, clear communication is key between you, the Town, and myself as your State Representative. I write to provide you with an update on the actions I have taken, a summary of the Town's response, what you can do in the immediate short-term, and an overview of how the state can respond.

Actions to date

- I am in contact with MEMA (Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency), the state's emergency response agency, to bring attention to the devastating damage in Needham and to understand what resources may be available to residents.
- I contacted the state's Division of Insurance as home and flood insurance may have a role in this crisis response.
- I have notified the FEMA Regional Director of the situation in Needham: our homes, businesses, and farms.
- I am working with Town of Needham elected officials and staff to support their responses and share resources and information.

Town response

- The Town requests that you report all flooding in your home or on public property, as well as blocked catch basins via a link on the Town's dedicated webpage for this extraordinary weather event. That site and instruction on how to make these reports are located here: <https://needhamma.gov/5457/August-2023-Weather-Event>.
- We understand that some individuals have heard that their insurance companies will cover certain damage if the town declares a local emergency. I support this declaration. I understand that the Town will be making a local emergency declaration shortly.

What you can do

- While your home insurance may not cover damage caused by catastrophic flooding, it is extremely important that you document all flooding and damage in photos and submit a claim. If your claim is denied, be sure to have that denial in writing.
- Please report all flooding in your home or on public property, as well as blocked catch basins, via [SeeClickFix](#).
- You can learn more about Disaster Financial Assistance [here](#).
- You can visit FEMA's fact sheet for [how to safely clean after a flood](#).

State response

- MEMA is conducting an initial damage assessment to determine if the state and county are eligible for public assistance or if residents would qualify for individual assistance. There is a high bar for individual assistance: 25 residences would need at least 18 inches of water on the first floor living space to qualify, according to [FEMA](#). We are seeking to clarify the definition of livable space, especially in a Town like Needham where many people have finished basements that they use for many reasons, including living and work space.
- Many other towns were impacted by this storm, so I am working with my colleagues in the House to support MEMA.
- If MEMA determines that we reach the threshold, the Governor can then petition FEMA to request that the President make a disaster declaration.

We will continue to share information with you as we receive it.

Yours in service,
Denise

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