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*Contact: Collin Nash or Sid Nathan
(516) 869 7794*

Schumer, Kaiman Announce Cash for Caulkers

North Hempstead, NY—North Hempstead Supervisor Jon Kaiman joined with Sen. Charles Schumer and Babylon Supervisor Steve Bellone last week to urge the federal government to model its proposal to make older homes energy-efficient after the Town of Babylon's groundbreaking energy retrofit initiative.

“Realizing that Steve was onto something, we are proud to follow his lead and join with Senator Schumer to help position Long Island as a leader of the “Cash for Caulkers” model,” Supervisor Jon Kaiman said outside the Garden City Park home of Annette and John Foppiano. “This way we can make a real difference economically and environmentally on Long Island.”

Schumer said modeling the federal program after Babylon's Green Homes (LIGH) program, to which a consortium of seven other towns, including North Hempstead, have signed onto, would benefit not only residents like the Foppianos with older homes but practically everyone.

“Making homes energy efficient is a golden opportunity to conserve energy, green our communities, create jobs and help jump-start the economy.” Schumer noted that he is pursuing funding to help Babylon expand its program to communities across Long Island. “It should be a model for the entire country...,” he added.

To launch their own LIGH programs, Babylon, North Hempstead and six other towns including Brookhaven, Huntington, Islip, Oyster Bay, Smithtown and Southampton have committed 20 percent from their Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants (EECBG) allocation to provide revolving funds to launch their own Green Homes programs.

“We have an opportunity to do something profound here on Long Island,” Babylon's Supervisor Bellone said at the press briefing. “Fundamentally, it's about green jobs and helping people like the Foppianos better enjoy their homes and sustain its value.”

President Obama's “Cash for Caulkers” program would pay a homeowner up to \$12,000 in rebates for energy-saving retrofits and the installation of energy-efficient appliances. It would also fund renewable energy companies.

Schumer said rather than funnel “Cash for Caulkers” funding through the States, it should go directly to municipalities so it gets injected quickly into working programs like LIGH.

“What's special about the LIGH program is that it has no income restrictions,” said Marianne Garvin, president and chief executive of the Community Development Corp. of Long Island. “I'm proud to be part of this initiative,” she said.

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Caption: (L to R) Babylon Supervisor Steve Bellone, North Hempstead Supervisor Jon Kaiman, Senator Chuck Schumer and Annette and John Foppiano.