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SENATOR OBERACKER: RELEASE FEDERAL FUNDS TO AID TENANTS AND LANDLORDS

ALBANY, 03/31/21 -- State Senator Peter Oberacker (R/C – Schenevus) today joined with members of the Senate and Assembly Republican conferences to call for the release of critical tenant and landlord relief funds.

“From the start of the COVID pandemic, housing has been a primary concern,” said Senator Oberacker. **“Many families and individuals have been unable to pay their rent and while moratoriums have rightfully allowed them to stay in their homes, small landlords have been ignored. Meanwhile, the governor is sitting on \$1.3 billion dollars in federal relief that can aid both tenants and landlords, but inexplicably has failed to get the money to the people.”**

The Republican conferences were recently made aware of \$1.3 billion in federal COVID-19 assistance being held up by the governor dating as far back as December 31, 2020. This \$1.3 billion is included in the second round of CARES Act relief assistance given to states, which in turn must be specifically distributed to tenants and landlords.

“Our local economies are facing a real crisis if tenants are unable to make rent. Property taxes and utility bills will go unpaid, home improvements will be neglected, and homeowners will eventually be forced under. Many of our small towns are already starved for good rental homes and we are staring at an even deeper housing emergency if action isn’t taken now,” said Senator Oberacker.

The Census Bureau’s latest Household Pulse Survey found that 42 percent of New Yorkers are “living in households not current on rent or mortgage where eviction or foreclosure in the next two months is very likely or somewhat likely.” According to the National Association of Realtors, over half of the households not current on rent throughout the nation live in one-family homes and two-to-four unit properties straining the “mom and pop” property owners who own 73 percent of such rental properties.

“In my senate district, landlords are often small business owners, or retirees who rent out one or two properties to make ends meet. They are our neighbors and upstanding community members who are already struggling after a year without receiving rent payments,” added Senator Oberacker.

The federal dollars allocated to New York State, per federal guidelines, must be used by September 30th. If the funds are not used by September 30th, the United States Department of Treasury is obligated to claw these funds back and reallocate them to other states. For this reason, the State Legislature must step up and intervene on behalf of tenants and landlords.

“We can bring peace of mind to families concerned about losing their homes today. There is no reason why these federal funds shouldn’t already be in the hands of tenants and landlords. Immediate action is needed to disperse these critical dollars,” Senator Oberacker concluded.

Thirteen states have already taken steps to develop a grant program or have started accepting applications for individuals to receive federal money.