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Statement from County Executive Kittleman marking one week since Ellicott City flooding

ELLICOTT CITY, MD – It's been exactly one week since severe flooding ravaged Main Street in Historic Ellicott City. Two lives were tragically lost, buildings and businesses were damaged and dozens of residents were displaced. It has been the largest destructive event our community has ever experienced.

We have been dealt a heavy blow. We were knocked down by a thousand-year storm that dropped six inches of rain in less than two hours. But we have gotten back on our feet and we are gearing up for what will be a long recovery and rebuilding process.

We moved quickly to provide access to those who were displaced to retrieve their valuables – purses, work clothes, family treasures, cash registers, valuable documents – because we know that even in the face of a disaster; we must find a way to move forward.

In the days since the storm, I've seen merchants pick through the rubble of what was once a thriving business. I've seen residents collect cherished possessions from their homes. I've seen despair and disappointment. But I haven't seen folks ready to quit.

I continue to be impressed by the resiliency of the people of Ellicott City and the compassion of the people of Howard County. In the face of these daunting challenges, there has been a resolve that we will get through this. And we will do this together.

Each day we are making progress. In less than a week, we have mobilized county work crews to board up and shore up buildings. We are pumping out water and working to get insurance adjusters and private contractors access to the scene.

Within two days of the flooding, we held a community information session for several hundred residents, businesses and property owners. The next day, we opened the Disaster Assistance Center to connect folks to local, state and nonprofit agencies. More than 100 residents and 56 businesses have taken advantage of the services offered by this one-stop shop.

We have helped businesses find temporary locations and helped find temporary housing for 14 displaced residents. Through the leadership of the United Way of Central

Maryland and the Ellicott City Partnership, we have raised nearly a quarter-million dollars to establish a dedicated fund to aid the victims.

More importantly, we have worked day and night to make the scene safe to allow access to residents and business owners so that they can see their properties first-hand and, soon, help with their own cleanup efforts. Recoveries can be long but we're trying to move as quickly as possible while making sure no one is put at-risk. As County Executive, my responsibility is to ensure that our residents, business owners and County employees are safe.

I have been inspired by the way our community has come together in this time of crisis. I am encouraged by the progress we have already made together during the last week. We may still have a long road ahead of us but we will walk together every step of the way and very soon, we will all again be walking down a vibrant Main Street, even better than the one we knew before.

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