

Louisiana Representative Edward "Ted" James, Dist 101 said it, we are echoing the call to fight hard Now!



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When LA Rep James asked for a few minutes before Governor Edwards entered the room to express his feelings of how our Congressional Representatives were not fighting for Louisiana Disaster Victims hard enough, we ask, will he fight for us in our state?

This video is important to watch so please watch and share it with other disaster victims in our state.

We have a plan to help 3,800 or more Louisiana households and this Task Force member, as well as others can make it happen. Public input to make change to state policy is what we want and what we need.

Link to public solution: [Task Force Public Input: Citizens Proposed SBA Disaster Federal Assistance Declined Solution.](#)

Executive Order JBE-2016-65 allows the public to make suggestions. The order requires that the task force accept public input, provide a method for the public to submit input and to use public input to modify or change current policy or to create new programs and policy that will assist in the disaster recovery efforts of homeowners in the state of Louisiana.

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[Download the above video clip for offline viewing.](#)



Rep. James: **"What I have not heard, what I have not witnessed is a true fight for this duplication of benefits issue to be corrected."**

Note from Citizens to Rep. James, task force member: this issue of the Duplication of Benefits for those that have accepted the Federal Assistance is not your fight, it's the fight of our Congressional Representatives and the job of Congress to vote and pass whatever it takes to have the SBA Loans removed from the Duplication of Benefits calculation.

Your fight as a Louisiana Homeowners Assistance Task Force Member is to take our public input according to the executive order and make programs or **policy changes** from our input.

Background: Households that were approved by the SBA Disaster Loan program and later Declined to accept the federal assistance offered and have not received any money from the SBA are having their SBA approved loan amounts used as Duplication of Benefits. The State of Louisiana Office of Community Development - Disaster Recovery Unit applies **ALL** SBA approved loan amounts as SBA Duplication of Benefits even if the homeowner provides a letter from the SBA showing that the loan was declined or cancelled.

If you recall, the Governor announced that nearly 3,800 Louisiana Homeowners refused, declined, or did not accept the SBA federal assistance. If you recall the Governor also has grouped these same homeowners into the global SBA Loan issue.

We need you to fight for the 3,800! We the public ask that you pick up our input to make policy change today so 3,800 homeowners from around the state can continue with their rebuilds by removing SBA loan amounts that were never taken in the first place. **Help remove** these loan amounts from our Duplication of Benefits calculation and give us a fighting chance to rebuild after our historical flooding in 2016.

Representative James, please read the following and tell us all, the public, the citizens of Louisiana, the disaster victims what the following means to you and the people that declined, cancelled, withdrew from the SBA Federal Loan Assistance program and it's money.

"That with respect to any such duplication of benefits, the Secretary and any grantee under this section shall not take into consideration or reduce the amount provided to any applicant for assistance from the grantee where such applicant applied for and was approved, but declined assistance related to such major declared disasters that occurred in 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017 from the Small Business Administration under section 7(b) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(b)):" (Source: [Text for H.R.1892 - 115th Congress \(2017-2018\): Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018](#))

Resource: [Public Law 115-123](#) signed by President Trump Feb. 9, 2018

The public law as it is worded would allow those that were declined, cancelled or otherwise did not receive SBA federal assistance to have their SBA approved loan amount removed from the duplication of benefits

calculation. We believe if you propose to other members of the LA Task Force this can become policy.

Mr. Durbin has asked if the state OCD-DRU could waive bottlenecks in the DOB screening process, this could be the relief policy 3,800 families could use to rebuild a safe and secure home. We need to provide homeowners with remedy to the **Homeowner Responsibility** issue. We have a remedy and only need you and the task force to help the public.

The only argument that the Louisiana Task Force has heard against this type of policy change comes from the Director of OCD-DRU Patrick Forbes. His argument was that if the homeowners didn't finish their homes HUD would require the state to return that money. We know this is not 100% accurate, the task force can move money to support unmet needs of the homeowners. HUD only requires a safe and secure living condition. If we have a proposal to assist 3,800 homeowners by following public law 115-123 which is published on the HUD Federal Register notices, we could then allow this to go to the public comment phase and with public support, HUD will agree to our proposed plan to use Public Law 115-123 to remove SBA loan amounts from homeowners that have canceled, declined or otherwise refused SBA federal assistance. With HUD approval we can allocate the funds needed to allow these homeowners to rebuild a Safe and Secure homes as desired by HUD.

The vote of the Task Force to make Public Law 115-123 part of our Louisiana Flood 2016 / 2017 recovery would help thousands across the state to rebuild.

Representative James, Task Force Member and advocate of the people, we the people, the citizens of Louisiana ask that you champion our cause to make the OCD-DRU Director Patrick Forbes accept into policy Federal Public Law 115-123.

Any homeowner that was approved but declined assistance during our 2016 floods shall not have the state OCD-DRU (Grantee) reduce or take into consideration as duplication of benefits the SBA loan amount reported to the state by the SBA.

Thank you and we look forward to working with you very soon Rep. James of the Louisiana Task Force and Louisiana State Representative District 101.

Follow this link to read the SBA Loan Declined issue and solution.

[Task Force Public Input: Citizens Proposed SBA Disaster Federal Assistance Declined Solution.](#)

References, Documents, Sources:

- [Executive Order JBE-2016-65](#)
 - Section 2: The duties of the Task Force include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - A. The Task Force shall establish both short and long-term priorities in developing plans for recovery and redevelopment. Such priorities and plans shall draw upon traditional state resources and programs and create special programs dedicated to responding to the aftermath of the flooding. Such priorities and plans shall include timelines and benchmark goals. **There must be a mechanism for public input and the opportunity to modify priorities and plans based on such input.** These priorities and plans shall focus on the following areas: (1) housing and redevelopment; (2) economic and workforce development; (3) education; (4) infrastructure and transportation; (5) healthcare; (6) fiscal stability; (7) family services; and (8) agriculture.

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