

Email: (2 Pages)

From: Lori Dupont
Sent: Monday, September 19, 2016 1:22 PM
To: 'Sen. Dan "Blade" Morrish'
Cc: Lori Dupont
Subject: Restore Louisiana Task Force
Attachments: JBE16-65 Restore Louisiana Task Force.pdf; Gov Letter to President Obama 08.23.16 - flood recovery.pdf; Gov Letter to President Obama 2016 Flood 9.12.16.pdf; Louisiana Request_House Appropriations_Rogers.pdf; LA Flood Congressional Briefing 9.19.16.pdf

Good Morning –

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the Governor’s Restore Louisiana Task Force, which is charged with establishing short and long-term priorities in developing plans for recovery and redevelopment throughout the state of Louisiana as a result of the March and August flooding events. **Our first meeting of the task force will be held on Wednesday, September 28, 2016, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., in House Committee Room 5 at the Louisiana State Capitol.** Please let us know if you are able to attend by responding to Lori Dupont, copied here, at Lori.Dupont@la.gov. I have attached the following documents for your review and records in preparation for our first meeting:

1. Executive Order JBE No. 16-65 creating the Restore Louisiana Task Force;
2. A letter from Governor Edwards to President Obama dated August 23, 2016;
3. A letter from Governor Edwards to President Obama dated September 12, 2016;
4. A letter from the Executive Office of the President, Office of Management & Budget, to House Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers; and
5. A flood briefing document prepared for our visits with members of Congress.

We would like to engage the members of the task force as early as this week in our meetings with HUD, FEMA, and GOHSEP this Friday, September 23rd. Please let us know if you would like to join us for these meetings this week.

Restore Louisiana Task Force Membership

- Adam Knapp, President & CEO, Baton Rouge Area Chamber
- Jacqui Vines, Retired Executive, Cox Communications
- Don Pierson, Secretary, Louisiana Economic Development
- Michael Olivier, CEO, Committee of 100 for Economic Development, Inc.
- Sean Reilly, CEO, Lamar Advertising
- Michael Faulk, Superintendent, Central Community School System
- Ollie Tyler, Mayor, City of Shreveport
- Johnny Bradberry, Executive Assistant to the Governor for Coastal Affairs, Coastal Protection & Restoration Authority Board Chairman

- Dr. Shawn Wilson, Secretary, Department of Transportation & Development
- Dr. James A. Richardson, State Economist
- Raymond Jetson, Board Member, Baton Rouge Area Foundation, President & CEO, MetroMorphosis
- Ronnie Harris, Executive Director, Louisiana Municipal Association
- Roland Dartez, Executive Director, Louisiana Police Jury Association
- Jimmy Durbin, Former Mayor, City of Denham Springs
- Joel Robideaux, Mayor-President, Lafayette Parish
- Dave Norris, Mayor, City of West Monroe
- Mike Strain, Commissioner, Department of Agriculture & Forestry
- Edward “Ted” James, State Representative, District 101
- Dan W. “Blade” Morrish, State Senator, District 25
- J. Rogers Pope, State Representative, District 71
- Robert E. Shadoin, State Representative, District 12
- Suzie Elkins, Consultant

Restore Louisiana Task Force Staff Support

Erin Monroe Wesley, Special Counsel, Office of the Governor

Pat Forbes, Executive Director, Office of Community Development

Rowdy Gaudet, Chief of Staff, Office of Community Development

Lori Dupont, Executive Assistant to the Executive Director, Office of Community Development

Additional staffers to be identified.

We look forward to working with each of you in our state’s recovery efforts.

Erin

Erin Monroe Wesley

Special Counsel (Policy Director/Legislative Affairs)



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Office of the Governor
State of Louisiana

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR



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BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70804-9004
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August 23, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I would first like to thank you for visiting Louisiana and for the support your administration is giving to our state in this time of great need. As Louisiana rebuilds from this catastrophic and historic flooding event, our federal partners have been responsive to all of our requests. In particular, I want to express my appreciation for the work done by Administrator Fugate and his team at FEMA. From the very beginning of this event, FEMA has been by our side and I am confident this cooperation will continue through our recovery.

As you know, this flood event has been devastating for south Louisiana. It has resulted in destruction to homes, businesses, and public infrastructure in twenty-six (26) parishes, with twenty (20) of those parishes being included in the Major Disaster Declaration. Further, this event comes on the heels of the March 2016 flood event which saw flooding in every corner of the state and included thirty-seven (37) parishes in the Major Disaster Declaration. As in previous times of difficulty for Louisiana, our people have risen to meet the challenge and to help their friends, families, and neighbors – or even total strangers – begin the process of starting anew. While we do not doubt the ability of our citizens to recover, we need the help of the federal government. Thus, after careful consideration of Louisiana's needs, I ask that you consider the following requests.

- 1) **State cost share reduction.** I ask you to grant Louisiana relief from the 25% costs share from this event and for the March 2016 flood event. Given the amount of destruction from both of these declared disasters, I am confident that we will exceed the threshold of \$137 in damages per capita. In this event, we believe well over 100,000 homes were damaged or destroyed. In March, more than 29,000 homes were damaged or destroyed. Further, the damage to public buildings, roads, and bridges has been devastating. While we are still assessing damages from this flood, we know that from the March floods we have over \$20 million in damages to roads and bridges. The damage from this most event will be considerably higher. I therefore ask you to reduce Louisiana's cost share from 25% to 10%. Further, because the need to get our citizens back in their homes and communities quickly and safely is so acute, I ask that you forgive completely the state's

cost share for the the Temporary Shelter Assistance (TSA) program and the shelter in home assistance available under Category B.

- 2) **Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds.** As you know, this was a one in a thousand year flood event, and most of the affected homeowners did not, nor were required to, have flood insurance. The Individual Assistance funds that will be available, while critical, will simply not be sufficient to allow our citizens to rebuild their homes. Without an appropriation of CDBG-DR funds, many neighborhoods and communities will not be able to recover. I ask that you include a supplemental appropriation in your budget request to Congress to fill the enormous gap that will exist between the available funds and the costs to rebuild. Given that we are still assessing the damage to homes, businesses, and public infrastructure, I ask that you allow me to supplement this request in short order with hard data about the needs for Louisiana. Within ten (10) days, I believe I will be able to provide you with clear information about the damage assessments and specifics about the necessary federal assistance.
- 3) **Hazard mitigation funds.** Administrator Fugate has confirmed that this event will not cause FEMA to revisit its flood maps, and that those homes and businesses not in flood zones will not need to be elevated. This is a very welcome statement, which will allow for homeowners to immediately begin the process of rebuilding their homes. We do not plan to encourage or require homeowners and businesses to simply build higher. Instead, I intend to focus on large scale and community based mitigation projects. One such project is the Comite River Diversion Project. This project, which was first authorized in 1994, would have diverted a significant amount of the flow of the Comite River into the Mississippi River and away from homes and businesses in East Feliciana, St. Helena, East Baton Rouge, and Livingston parishes. The Corps reports the construction plans are 95% complete. In the First Extraordinary Session of the Louisiana Legislature this year, I approved state funds to relocate utilities. Residents have paid taxes for this project for nearly 20 years. All that remains to be funded is the congressionally authorized federal share. To facilitate this request, I ask that you allocate \$125 million to the Army Corps of Engineers to construct this critical flood protection project. Further, I ask that you further empower Louisiana and allow for inclusion of Work-In-Kind on this project. I also request that Louisiana be able to use recovery funds to satisfy the non-federal share of acquisitions of Land, Easements, Rights of Way, Relocations, and Disposals (LERRDS). This worthy and necessary project is only one part of the hazard mitigation plan that we intend to develop with federal funding and assistance.
- 4) **FHWA Emergency Highway funding.** This flooding event inundated many roadways throughout southern Louisiana, affecting interstate highways, along with dozens of state, parish, and local roads. Our Department of Transportation and Development is actively inspecting all affected roads and bridges, and it is certain the infrastructure needs will be immediate and significant. To help Louisiana respond to this disaster, the Emergency

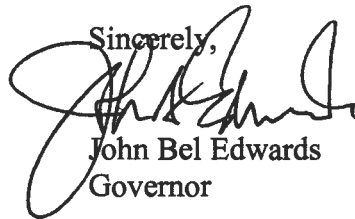
Relief funding backlog must be cleared. By clearing this \$724 million backlog, Louisiana would be able to receive \$14 million from the March 2016 flood and up to \$25 million for this most recent flooding. Further, given the backlog, I ask that you also waive the 180 day limit on Emergency Relief funds. I also request that the state be allowed to use ER funds to mitigate roadway inundation to ensure that interstate highways remain open and available, even during future flood events.

- 5) **Title 32 status for Louisiana National Guard.** In an August 17, 2016 letter to Secretary Ashton Carter, I requested that the Louisiana National Guard be granted Title 32 USC 502(f) status for up to 2,800 Soldiers and Airmen called up in active duty in response to the flooding. I ask that you and Secretary Carter give strong consideration to this request which would allow for 100% funding of the LANG response for 30 days of service.
- 6) **Waiver of state cost share for Hurricane and Storm Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS).** While this storm was not a named tropical system, it is a stark reminder of the destruction that could be caused if a hurricane were to strike Louisiana. To protect against such a future disaster, we must restore our coast. However, the costs to do so are enormous. Because of the funding arrangement and state share requirements for the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity (LPV) and Westbank and Vicinity (WPV) projects, Louisiana is obligated to make approximately \$100 million in annual payments to the federal government through 2048, which will result in payments of over \$3 billion. These obligations are crippling to the state as we attempt to fund Master Plan projects designed to save the Louisiana coast. The 2012 Master Plan has a 50 year cost of \$50 billion, and I fully expect the 2017 Master Plan to have significantly higher costs. As such, I request that you grant Louisiana a full waiver of the cost share requirements for these projects. A full waiver will allow Louisiana to spend these needed funds on coastal projects to prevent future disasters. Further, these coastal protection projects will protect the federal investments in the LPV and WPV as well as the necessary infrastructure of the oil and gas industry.
- 7) **Community Disaster Loan Program.** While this is a program normally used for local governments, I request that you allow FEMA to use this program to provide needed funding for Louisiana. Because of the significant budget shortfalls I inherited from my predecessor and the low price of oil, Louisiana is in the throws of a budget crisis. Even before this disaster, we anticipated significant cash flow issues in the fall that which will be worsened and more imminent with the recent spending in response to the flood. Before this event, my administration was in consideration of floating revenue anticipation bonds to carry us through this cash flow crisis. If this loan program were to be made available to the state, Louisiana would be able to recover from this event more effectively, while at the same time getting back on sound financial footing.

- 8) **Recovery Task Force.** In the coming days, I intend to issue an Executive Order creating a task force to oversee the recovery from this flood event. Given the need for federal help, I ask that you trigger FEMA's National Disaster Recovery Framework to assist this task force in the coordination of Louisiana's recovery. Further, I ask that you delegate members of your administration from Housing and Urban Development, Homeland Security, Transportation, Commerce, and Health and Human Services to be full participants in this task force. With meaningful participation in the planning and development of programs to assist our citizens to return to their communities, our federal partners can continue to be a part of rebuilding Louisiana.

The people of Louisiana are strong and resilient. However, the severity of this flood event, combined with the other difficulties faced in this state over the last several months, is testing our spirit in ways we have not seen since the challenges posed by Hurricane Katrina. While I know our best days remain in front of us, we need help from the federal government to get us there. I ask that you please consider all of these requests and that you encourage your administration to continue its strong support for Louisiana's recovery.

Sincerely,



John Bel Edwards
Governor

cc: FEMA Administrator, W. Craig Fugate
Senator David B. Vitter
Senator William G. "Bill" Cassidy
Congressman Stephen J. Scalise
Congressman Cedric L. Richmond
Congressman Garret N. Graves
Congressman Charles W. Boustany, Jr.
Congressman Ralph L. Abraham, Jr.
Congressman John C. Fleming, Jr.

Office of the Governor
State of Louisiana

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September 12, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As I discussed in my original August 23, 2016 letter that I delivered to you on your visit to Baton Rouge, we continue to re-evaluate and assess the needs of the people of Louisiana as we recover from the devastating flooding that has inundated our state. In that regard, I would like to take this opportunity to update the requests I have made for needed federal assistance to Louisiana.

In my September 2, 2016 letter to you, I requested \$2 billion for estimated unmet needs in the areas of housing, economic impact, and infrastructure. After discussions with your Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Louisiana congressional delegation, we are supplementing this request for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG-DR) funds to include investments in our state's resilience. I am requesting an additional \$800 million for resilient infrastructure projects implemented both locally and on a watershed-wide basis in the flood impacted areas. As I discussed in my recent meeting with Secretary Castro, the objectives of these projects will be to reduce the base flood elevations in entire basins, protecting far more homes and businesses from future flooding than elevations and other flood-proofing measures, and reducing overall damage from future flood events. This will also include projects that make existing infrastructure and infrastructure currently under design more resilient in future disruptions. Effective implementation of this approach will require large-scale planning and design to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the investments.

In meetings with Director Donovan and Secretary Castro just this past week, I emphasized the severity of the situation in Louisiana and the critical role that time plays in this recovery. As I write this letter, the people of Louisiana are making decisions about whether they can rebuild their homes or reopen their businesses. They need to know now that they will have the resources to start again. Given the urgency of these decisions, I ask that you request Congress include an emergency appropriation for CDBG-DR funds of \$2.8 billion in the continuing resolution currently under consideration in Congress. Delay in giving people hope that they will be able to get their homes and communities back will be devastating to the success of the recovery.

This request for CDBG-DR funds is the most critical need for Louisiana, but it is far from the only one. I reaffirm the requests I made in my August 23, 2016 letter, which included requests for

President Barack Obama
September 12, 2016
Page 2

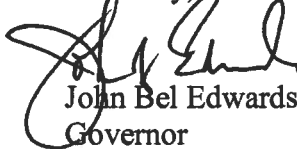
funding for projects like the Comite River Diversion project as well as other significant infrastructure projects. In addition, clearing the FHWA Emergency Relief funding backlog, which has \$39 million in funding for Louisiana highway projects, would have a significant positive impact on the recovery. While most of the backlog is committed to projects in other states, this \$39 million in funding will allow for assessment and road improvement projects for the dozens of roadways which were damaged by the floodwaters.

I also believe that it is also critically important to address the impact of the flooding events on Louisiana families, particularly children, who have suffered through the trauma of this disaster. The ability of our state to provide quality mental health and support services to disaster-affected populations is a key component to our state's recovery. I formally request your consideration of \$92 million in Social Services Block Grant funding to assist Louisiana families in coping with the emotional toll of rebuilding their lives and communities.

Lastly, I want to thank you for your September 8, 2016 letter and your decision to approve a 90% cost share for public assistance for the August flooding. While this cost share reduction will provide much needed relief to the State of Louisiana and local governments, I ask you to reconsider the decision to limit this cost share to only public assistance for the August flood. Given that the effects of this flood were compounded by the earlier March flooding and the devastating effect it has had on individuals in the 56 of the 64 Louisiana parishes that you have declared for major disaster in the last five months, I ask that you expand this cost share to include the March 2016 flooding (DR-4263) and to individual assistance in both events. The overall effect of these two events will have long-lasting effects on the already fragile economy of Louisiana, and a shift of this cost share would be a significant part of our recovery.

Once again, I want to thank you for the personal attention you and your administration have given to our state and our recovery. I appreciate your attention to these requests, and I look forward to discussing the issues facing Louisiana when I am able to meet with you at the White House later this week.

Sincerely,



John Bel Edwards
Governor

cc: Senator David B. Vitter
Senator William G. "Bill" Cassidy
Congressman Stephen J. Scalise
Congressman Cedric L. Richmond
Congressman Charles W. Boustany, Jr.
Congressman John C. Fleming, Jr.
Congressman Ralph L. Abraham, Jr.
Congressman Garret N. Graves

State of Louisiana



Executive Department

EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER JBE 2016-65

RESTORE LOUISIANA TASK FORCE

- WHEREAS,** the floods of March and August of 2016 have been devastating to Louisiana families and communities, affecting fifty-four (54) of the sixty-four (64) Louisiana parishes;
- WHEREAS,** together, the floods inundated well over 100,000 homes, and have damaged or destroyed churches, schools, businesses, buildings, and public infrastructure all across the State of Louisiana;
- WHEREAS,** the August flood has been historically severe, as the flood waters swept over whole cities and towns, many of which had never seen flooding before;
- WHEREAS,** the fundamental priority of the response and recovery from these flood events shall be to assist our fellow Louisiana citizens to return to their homes and communities, and to ensure that those communities are economically, educationally, and socially sound and thriving;
- WHEREAS,** local, state, federal, and other public and private resources will be committed to the rebuilding and redevelopment of these areas;
- WHEREAS,** it is essential that such resources be coordinated and targeted as well as leveraged with traditional resources, in order to maximize their impact, improve efficiency and avoid duplication of efforts;
- WHEREAS,** the importance and magnitude of this response and recovery dictate that a coordinating task force be created;
- WHEREAS,** the Restore Louisiana Task Force is formed to ensure that redevelopment in response to the flooding is conducted to the highest standards of integrity and quality;
- WHEREAS,** the Restore Louisiana Task Force will work with all levels of government and in support of local communities to ensure that all impacted parishes have the opportunity to voice their concerns and needs and also see that resources are divided equitably between parishes according to levels of damage and affected population; and
- WHEREAS,** the Restore Louisiana Task Force will work to ensure transparency and accountability in recovery programs and to ensure that impacted communities remain informed and involved with all parts of the recovery planning process.

NOW THEREFORE, I, JOHN BEL EDWARDS, Governor of the State of Louisiana, by virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution and laws of the State of Louisiana, do hereby order and direct as follows:

SECTION 1: The Restore Louisiana Task Force (hereafter the “Task Force”) is hereby established within the Office of the Governor.

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.
- B. In coordination with the Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, the Office of Community Development, and the affected parishes and municipalities, the Task Force shall assist in developing data about the individual, business, and public infrastructure needs for recovery.
- C. The Task Force shall work in coordination with state and local governments and the federal delegation to assist in identifying additional sources of federal funding, such as Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery funds.
- D. The Task Force shall establish a federal and state legislative agenda for the recovery and redevelopment effort and for coordinating between levels and branches of government to implement that agenda.
- E. The Task Force shall, in conjunction with parish and local governments, set priorities and offer direction to the Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness relating to the use of funds made available through the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act and any additional available federal funds.

SECTION 3: The Task Force shall be composed of a maximum of twenty-one (21) voting members, who shall be designated by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor. The Governor may also name non-voting ex-officio members of the Task Force.

SECTION 4: Two members of the Task Force shall be selected by the Governor to be Co-Chairs.

SECTION 5: The Task Force shall meet at regularly scheduled meetings and at the call of the Governor or the Co-Chairs.

SECTION 6: The Task Force shall be authorized to set up a committee structure that should include, but not be limited to, committees on housing, education, finance, public infrastructure, and agriculture.

SECTION 7: Task Force members shall not receive additional compensation or a per diem. Further, all voting Task Force members shall be subject to the ethical restrictions contained in La. R.S. 42:1113.

SECTION 8: All meetings of the Task Force shall be subject to the Open Meetings Law

as contained in La. R.S. 42:11 et seq. and shall be held in a location to allow access by the public.

SECTION 9: The Task Force shall be staffed by employees of the Office of Community Development. In addition, the Task Force may draw upon staffing and resources from other executive branch agencies as needed, and as approved by the Commissioner of Administration.

SECTION 10: All departments, commissions, boards, offices, entities, agencies, and officers of the State of Louisiana, or any political subdivision thereof, are authorized to cooperate with the Task Force in implementing the provisions of this Order.

SECTION 11: This Order is effective upon signature and shall continue in effect until amended, modified, terminated, or rescinded by the Governor, or terminated by operation of law.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand officially and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of Louisiana, in the Capitol, in the City of Baton Rouge, on this 2nd day of September, 2016.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "J. Bel Edwards", is written over a horizontal line.

GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA

ATTEST BY
THE GOVERNOR

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "M. C. Toles", is written over a horizontal line.

SECRETARY OF STATE



CONGRESSIONAL FLOOD BRIEFING

Executive Summary.

I am calling on Congress to support a supplemental appropriation of \$2.6 billion of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to allow for additional public investments in housing, economic development, and resilient infrastructure. Louisiana's housing need is projected to exceed \$1.2 billion alone. With an outlook of \$3 billion in economic loss, and preliminary estimates of \$8.7 billion in damages, not including public infrastructure, a \$2.6 billion request in CDBG funds is a necessary first step to rebuilding Louisiana. Without an appropriation of CDBG funds, many neighborhoods and communities will not be able to recover.

Flooding Events.

Louisiana experienced severe storms and flooding events in both March and August 2016, resulting in 56 of our state's 64 parishes receiving a federal disaster declaration. The August flooding event dropped an unprecedented 7 trillion gallons of rainwater in South Louisiana and has been designated by the National Weather Services as a "1,000-year" rainfall event. It resulted in the flooding of more than 100,000 homes and claimed 13 lives. Roughly 30,000 search and rescues were performed, with 11,000 citizens sheltered at the peak of the flood. In March, more than 29,000 homes were damaged or destroyed.

Economic Impact.

Louisiana Economic Development (LED) partnered with Louisiana State University (LSU) to conduct an assessment of economic damages resulting from the August 2016 Louisiana flooding event, with primary economic damages consisting of a loss of economic activity, property damages to residences, businesses, and damage to governmental infrastructure.

Key details are:

- At the peak, 19,900 Louisiana businesses or roughly 20% of all Louisiana businesses were disrupted by the flooding event.
- A disruption of 278,500 workers or 14% of the Louisiana workforce occurred at the peak of the flooding event.
- An economic loss is estimated at roughly \$300 million in labor productivity and \$836 million in terms of value added during the period immediately surrounding the flood.
- Approximately 6,000 businesses experienced flooding.
- Over 109,000 housing units flooded in Louisiana. Of these units, just over 77,000 were owner occupied homes, 22,000 were renter occupied units, and roughly 10,000 were vacant units.
- Residential property damage to structures is estimated to be between \$3.5 and \$7.4 billion.
- The LSU Ag Center estimates Louisiana agricultural losses of over \$110 million.

Please support Louisiana's request for \$2.6 billion in CDBG funds.

Preliminary Plans.

Program Area	Estimated Allocation
Homeowner and Rental Housing	\$ 1.2 Billion
Economic Revitalization (Ag and Business)	\$250 Million
Infrastructure	\$550 Million
Resilient Infrastructure	\$600 Million

Available data and information related to housing damages and unmet needs are already fairly robust, allowing us to have a more accurate picture of the housing needs as a result of the floods. It is clear that at least \$1.2 billion will be needed to ensure people can return to their communities.

For homeowners, many of whom face foreclosure without additional assistance, several program options exist, each of which has been used for disaster recovery in the past. Building on lessons learned and best practices developed over the course of recovery programs from Katrina to Sandy, the following types of assistance to homeowners are currently under consideration:

- Reimbursement for homeowners who have already rehabilitated their homes using their own funds, but who can ill afford to do so and risk losing their homes due to debt overburden.
- Rehabilitation of homes using resources already available to the homeowner, supplemented with CDBG funds to fill the gap. This is a critical component of the plan to assist those who flooded but do not have flood insurance, rendering them unable to complete their repairs.
- Buy-outs can be used for homes that are in floodplains, are not elevated above the floodplain, and would not be feasible/economical to elevate. This solution is for addressing the most at-risk homes to reduce damages from future floods and get people to safer locations.
- Elevations can be used for homes that are currently below the base flood elevation, but that would be economical to raise and make safe.
- Compensation grants may be appropriate for verified losses of smaller amounts of unmet need. This approach is more economical and presents less risk when applied to smaller grants

Rental housing represents about 20% of the housing losses in the floods, and there was a shortage of affordable rental housing prior to the floods. Approaches to replacing rental housing include Piggyback projects, which combine CDBG funds with Low Income Housing Tax Credits to create mixed-income and low-income rental housing in the impacted areas. Providing funds to repair smaller rental properties through a rehabilitation program is also a useful tool. Which approach best fits the disaster can only be determined after gathering information from the impacted population.

Because of the massive damages suffered by farms and businesses in the impacted areas, investments in revitalizing the economy is critical. To address the business and agricultural losses, \$250 million could be used in grants and loans to farms and businesses to assist them in

surviving through the coming years and recovering from the damages. This approach has worked successfully in the past.

Information about damage to public infrastructure is very limited at this point due to the time proximity of the event. FEMA public assistance inspections are ongoing, but we know the damage is substantial. We also know that older infrastructure rebuilt with FEMA PA to pre-storm design and condition will not be resilient infrastructure in the face of future disasters. Using \$550 million of CDBG funds in conjunction with FEMA PA to upgrade and modernize damaged infrastructure will improve capacities to accommodate future needs, make that infrastructure better able to withstand future upsets, and create a more resilient future for the impacted communities.

The addition of \$600 million for resilient infrastructure provides an opportunity for the state and federal governments to create numerous models for how to build a more resilient future for disaster-impacted communities. Studying the impacted watersheds and developing and implementing basin-wide solutions for reducing flood levels in those watersheds will reduce the damages in future events, make communities safer and better able to quickly recovery from future events, and reduce future costs associated with disasters. Because nearly ten different watersheds in various different landscapes were impacted by the March and August flooding, models can be developed for several different situations. Examples of the types of projects that may come out of this approach include water retention and detention strategies on small and large scales, diversions and channeling of floodwaters away from populated areas and infrastructure during floods, reducing peak hydrographs through green infrastructure improvements like permeable pavement, risk-based land use planning to minimize development in and near floodplains, and retrofitting of existing infrastructure to reduce future risks, among others.



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

THE DIRECTOR

September 13, 2016

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Flooding in the State of Louisiana this year has upended the lives of residents and damaged tens of thousands of homes. As a result, more than 140,000 people have registered with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for support for temporary rental assistance, essential home repairs, and general support to restore their lives to normal as quickly as possible. Local businesses, schools, and public infrastructure have been damaged, and many families are trying to regain stable housing, including those who already were homeless in the area before the storm. As you know, the Federal Government has an important role to play in supporting and assisting States and local communities as they respond to natural disasters of this magnitude.

At the direction of the President, and under the auspices of the National Response and Disaster Recovery Frameworks, the Federal Government has been actively involved in the response and recovery efforts in Louisiana. The Federal Government is doing everything it can jointly with the State of Louisiana to ensure that all available resources are in place as quickly as possible. As such, Federal agencies have provided Louisiana disaster survivors and communities with more than \$1 billion in aid following the August 14th disaster declaration. This total includes:

- \$616 million in support for more than 73,000 Louisiana families who are receiving assistance through one or more of the housing options available to them, including rental assistance, home repairs, hotel and motel stays, and other housing; and
- \$312 million in total payments to more than 28,700 flood insurance policyholders who sustained damages and have filed a claim.

In addition, last week, the President amended the Federal disaster declaration for the August flooding to increase the Federal share of public assistance from 75 percent to 90 percent of the total eligible costs.

President Obama visited Louisiana on August 23rd and saw firsthand the damage from these historic floods. The August floods were the most extensive single disaster event since Hurricane Sandy in 2012. During this visit, the President emphasized that he was prepared to work with Governor Edwards and the Congress to ensure that Louisianans get the resources they need to recover. Since then, damage assessments conducted by FEMA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) show that—even with their current emergency efforts—there will be significant unmet need for repairs in the region. The Administration has also received letters from the Governor of Louisiana and the Louisiana congressional delegation highlighting the need for additional resources to help communities rebuild after the flood.

The Administration urges the Congress to provide additional funding to address Louisiana's unmet housing and infrastructure needs as soon as possible. The damage assessments conducted by HUD and FEMA indicate that \$2.6 billion in additional Federal resources is needed for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program at HUD. Because the need for this funding arises from an unforeseen, unanticipated event resulting in the loss of life and property, these additional resources should be provided as emergency funding.

CDBG funding would provide flexibility to Louisiana to address disaster recovery needs in areas most impacted by this year's flooding. CDBG grantees use funds to design and carry out recovery and mitigation programs to address needs not met by other sources, including Federal agencies. These funds can be used to address: housing repair or replacement costs unmet by insurance, FEMA individual assistance, or Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster loans; unmet repair needs of small businesses (as defined by SBA regulations) that are underinsured and/or ineligible for SBA loans; public infrastructure investments; the State or local cost share required for other Federal programs; and other affordable housing and community development projects in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

This funding also would support resilient rebuilding and reduce future risks and vulnerabilities. Grantees could use these funds to design and implement measures to reduce the risk of damage and loss from future disaster events. Such measures could include elevating housing in the mapped flood zone or augmenting large local and regional infrastructure and recovery projects in a way that addresses the needs for long-term recovery and greatly increases a community's resilience to both current and future challenges. Investments in designing and rebuilding for the future would support the effective use of public resources invested in the recovery effort and help revitalize the health, social, economic, and environmental fabric of communities impacted by recent disasters.

Finally, we are prepared to work with the Congress to address the unmet needs of other States and localities that have experienced natural disasters and other catastrophic events, including Flint, Michigan.

Thank you for your consideration of these funding needs. I urge the Congress to take swift action to provide Louisiana and other communities with the resources needed to help those impacted by natural disasters and other catastrophic events. I stand ready to work with you to achieve this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shaun Donovan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Shaun Donovan
Director

Identical Letter Sent to:

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski
The Honorable Thad Cochran
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Harry Reid
The Honorable Mitch McConnell
The Honorable Paul D. Ryan