

LOUISIANA RECOVERY AUTHORITY

Allocation of Additional Funding to Fisheries Infrastructure Recommendation Approval

July 30, 2008

OVERVIEW: A resolution to request the Louisiana Recovery Authority Board approve Amendment No. 26 to Action Plan No. 1 to allocate \$9.75 million of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to address continuing fisheries infrastructure needs resulting from the devastation suffered by the commercial fishing industry in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Through the implementation of this targeted program the total available funding to rebuild and repair fisheries infrastructure in Louisiana will go from \$19 million to \$28.5 million.

Whereas, the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) Fisheries Infrastructure and Assistance Program Amendment No. 3 to Action Plan No.2 (\$20 million) was passed by the Louisiana House and Senate by mail ballot on September 13, 2007. The allocations of the Action Plan amendment were as follows:

1. \$15 million - To improve and expand infrastructure critical to the fisheries industry, including but not limited to docks, icehouses, boat launches, processing and shipping facilities, boats and other necessary infrastructure;
2. \$5 million - To provide direct aid to fishermen through the Small Firm Loan and Grant program;

Whereas, through another vote on that same September 13th mail ballot, the Legislature also approved reducing the overall funding for this program from \$20 million to \$19 million as part of our reallocation plan to add funding to the Road Home Program; that reallocation reduced the \$5 million in direct assistance to fishermen to \$4 million;

Whereas, Louisiana's fisherman and the fishing industry are one element that is part of the cultural identity of the State;

Whereas, the Louisiana Recovery Authority hearing from the fishing community and the needs of the small business community created the business recovery grant and loan program, that in the first round saw seventy six percent of all fisherman who apply receive funds which totaled in excess of \$14 million;

Whereas, at the board meeting held on October 11, 2007, the Louisiana Recovery Authority Board voted to approve Amendment No. 17 to Action Plan No. 1 reallocating the \$4 million of CDBG funds originally allocated to Direct Assistance for Fishermen to Fisheries Infrastructure thereby increasing the available funding to Fisheries Infrastructure from \$15 million to the entire \$19 million;

Whereas in January of 2008, Fisheries Infrastructure Program received in excess of \$115 million dollars of requests for fishery infrastructure projects;

Whereas, the commercial fishing industry in the summer of 2008 is still suffering serious losses from the 2005 hurricanes;

Whereas, only unfunded projects from the first round of the fisheries infrastructure program that primarily address the commercial fishing industry will be eligible for funding in the new Commercial Fisheries Program;

Whereas, many of these projects address a continuing urgent need for commercial fisheries as expressed by local, parish and state officials, who see the commercial fishing industry as a key economic driver in community revitalization and resurgence;

Whereas, Louisiana's multibillion dollar fishing economy is the second largest fishery in the United States, trailing only Alaska and commercial fisheries in Louisiana provide significant sources of rural employment and are an economic engine for local municipalities, parish governments and the State's economy;

Whereas, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Federal agency that regulates marine fisheries and can provide disaster assistance funding to fishing communities, estimates the total economic loss from Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana exceeds \$1.2 billion;

Whereas, as of the summer of 2008, less than \$100 million of Federal aid from NOAA has been allocated to address the commercial fishing crisis in Louisiana;

Whereas, this Action Plan Amendment No. 26 to Action Plan No. 1 was drafted and published for public comment on July 24, 2008;

Whereas, the Louisiana Recovery Authority recommends that an additional \$9.75 million in CDBG funds be allocated to Fisheries Infrastructure for the implementation of the Commercial Fisheries Program to assist this sector recovery;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Louisiana Recovery Authority Board does hereby approve Amendment No. 26 to Action Plan No. 1 to allocate an additional \$9.75 million of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to Fisheries Infrastructure to address the continued devastation suffered by the fishing industry in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita through the implementation of the Commercial Fisheries Program.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Louisiana Recovery Authority Board does hereby recommend that Amendment No. 26 to Action Plan No. 1 be sent to the Governor and the Louisiana Legislature for approval.