

LOUISIANA RECOVERY AUTHORITY

A Resolution to Endorse Updated Federal Recovery Priorities List

October 11, 2007

OVERVIEW: A Resolution to urge and request the Louisiana Recovery Authority Board to endorse an updated federal recovery priorities list for the 110th Congress of the United States of America.

Whereas, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated much of south Louisiana in 2005, claiming lives, and destroying homes and businesses;

Whereas, two years after the storms, Louisiana has made great strides toward recovering to a stronger, smarter and safer state; however, much remains to be accomplished before the state reaches a full recovery;

Whereas, Governor Blanco and members of the Louisiana Congressional Delegation, along with members of the Louisiana Recovery Authority Board, have worked tirelessly to inform Congress of the state's recovery needs and have ensured that recovery funds already appropriated have been accounted for;

Whereas, Louisiana has reached a critical stage in its recovery and the future of the state will be highly dependent upon the receipt of additional federal resources and assistance;

Whereas, Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Majority Whip James Clyburn recently led a delegation of their congressional peers to the state to view progress and identify remaining recovery needs;

Whereas, such visit assisted Governor Blanco in reminding Congress and fellow American citizens that, although much has been accomplished, the needs of the state are great and that Louisiana continues to fight to recover; and

Whereas, it is imperative that the state promote its priorities for recovery and inform members of Congress and the general public of what Louisiana's remaining needs are to achieve full recovery and the sustainable growth envisioned in Louisiana Speaks and other long-term community recovery plans.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Louisiana Recovery Authority Board does hereby endorse the updated federal recovery priorities list for the 110th Congress of the United States of America as outlined below:

Continue the restoration of homeowner and workforce housing

- Fill the funding gap in the Road Home Homeowner Assistance Program

- Guarantee the use of Hazard Mitigation funds for the Road Home if sufficient CDBG dollars are not appropriated to address the state's inability to use \$1.2 billion in HMGP funds for this purpose
- Enact S 29/HR 641 to assure that Road Home grants are not subject to taxation, including reversing the IRS's determination that homeowners who took casualty losses must reverse them
- Specify that Road Home grants are not duplicative of SBA loans, allowing applicants to repay SBA loans on their original terms
- Secure comprehensive workforce housing assistance, starting with:
 - S 1668, the Landrieu-Dodd bill
 - HR 1227, the Waters-Frank bill
 - HR 1427, the Federal Housing Reform Act
- Expand the state's two existing rental redevelopment programs by providing additional CDBG funds and Low Income Housing Tax Credits
- Stabilize the property insurance market with federal intervention, starting with the creation of a federal catastrophic backstop

Secure Louisiana with adequate hurricane protection levees and coastal restoration projects

- Enact Water Resources Development Act conference report (S 1228, HR 1495)
- Secure funding to reestablish 100-year flood protection in the Greater New Orleans area along with a waiver of the state's cost share match for this construction program
- Secure funding for coastal restoration projects

Cut through arcane bureaucracy by reforming the Stafford Act

- Create a catastrophic annex and implement other reforms to the Stafford Act to reduce red tape and streamline its Public Assistance program to better support the repair and reconstruction of our damaged schools, roads and bridges, fire and police stations, hospitals, etc.

Help families in crisis

- Immediately enhance behavioral health services, including mental health and addictive disorders, with a special focus on the student population
- Target homelessness solutions for areas most impacted by the storms
- Provide 3,000 new vouchers for permanent supportive housing (PSH) for people with disabilities and the frail elderly
- Expand direct assistance to returning families through the Louisiana Family Recovery Corps

Combat crime

- Provide additional COPS grants or financial and personnel resources to reestablish the criminal justice system in the New Orleans region.

Restore health care access for all

- Provide immediate deployment to the affected areas of mental health and other health care professionals through the United States Public Health Service to address shortfalls
- Enhance recruitment and retention of nurses and allied health professionals
- Expand access to care at the community level by securing flexibility to use existing funds for physician and clinic uncompensated care services, including funding for temporary facilities as may be necessary
- Help hospitals address post-Katrina labor costs with Medicare wage index adjustment
- Support medical schools and hospitals that train physicians with an extended exemption from the traditional three-year rolling cost average that does not recognize post-disaster circumstances

Make modern education available to every student

- Promote the rebuilding of damaged schools as modern learning centers by streamlining the FEMA Public Assistance program and providing critical gap funding for costs not covered by available federal funds.
- Prevent adverse penalties on disaster-impacted schools in the reauthorized No Child Left Behind Act
- Help the tens of thousands of displaced college students return to the classroom by providing funding to re-establish the “Return to Learn” student financial assistance program.
- Create a post-disaster loan program within the Department of Education to help all colleges and universities cover essential rebuilding costs that don’t qualify for other funding streams.

Bolster economic recovery

- Support small businesses and entrepreneurs in the recovery areas with financing, low cost capital, and technical assistance—both neighborhood-based commercial enterprises and high growth start-ups in industries that local communities have prioritized as economic development targets, including digital media, biomedical and technology based businesses, and incubators.
- Enact pending small business assistance legislation:
 - HR 1468, disaster relief for small businesses
 - HR 1361, the RECOVER Act
- Increase the state’s allocation of GO Zone bonds and New Markets Tax Credits
- Address the acute domestic labor shortages in all economic sectors by:

- Providing transitional assistance for workers wanting to return home
- Supporting domestic labor recruitment from regions with persistent job shortages
- Enhancement of available immigrant labor programs in the GO Zone
- Support the expansion of the existing Renewal Community Zone designation in New Orleans
- Stabilize the commercial insurance market with federal intervention, starting with the creation of a federal catastrophic backstop
- Promote the continued restoration of historic structures by enhancing the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program and expanding the effective Historic Building Recovery Grants Program
- Provide funding to support the resurgence of the state's cultural and tourism economy, including funds for tourism marketing

Fund local and regional rebuilding plans

- Provide gap funding for basic PA-ineligible repair costs for the sewerage and water systems in the New Orleans region to prevent those costs from being recouped through crippling rate increases on residents and business
- Invest additional infrastructure funds in the implementation of local and regional long-term plans like Louisiana Speaks, which have been designed by Louisiana citizens as the blueprints for a safer, stronger and smarter Louisiana

Assist in the recovery of Louisiana's commercial and recreational fisheries

- Provide adequate and equitable resources for the recovery of our commercial and recreational fisheries, including direct support to fishers and seafood processors as well as infrastructure
- Ensure that FEMA tasks the Coast Guard by mission assignment or interagency agreement with the responsibility for conducting a comprehensive marine debris removal program as was done in Alabama and Mississippi
- Provide sufficient funding for NOAA to complete their Gulf Coast Survey work along the entire Louisiana coast