

Office of the Governor
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December 12, 2016

The Honorable John Kennedy
Senator-elect
State of Louisiana
P. O. Box 44154
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Dear Senator-elect Kennedy:

Congratulations on your election to the United States Senate. With so many challenges facing our state, from infrastructure needs to our ongoing flood recovery efforts, there is no shortage of work ahead. Since taking office in January, the entire congressional delegation and I have worked closely together to achieve big wins for our state, including receiving disaster assistance following the floods with unprecedented speed and securing \$100 million in transportation funding to improve our infrastructure here at home. I look forward to having you join in this effort.

I read with great interest your comments regarding flood relief following your election. Particularly, as it relates to the State's plan to help homes and businesses that have been impacted by two record flood events. The article states that "Kennedy placed partial blame for the shortfall on Edwards, saying the administration hasn't provided an adequate road map for how the federal funding will be spent."¹ I understand that your time has been consumed with campaigning for the office you will assume in January 2017; therefore you are not up to speed on our flood recovery efforts. Since the August floods, I have personally made five trips to Washington, DC to work with our delegation and congressional leaders to provide additional assistance. Everyone from the President, to the Speaker of the House, to Senate leaders in both parties have embraced our recovery proposals, which is why we have been so successful in receiving assistance in record time.

¹ USA Today Network, December 12, 2016, [Not so fast: Sen.-elect Kennedy has unfinished business as treasurer](#)

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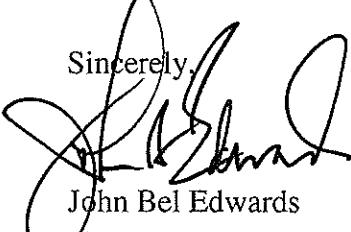
As I am sure you are aware, on Sept. 13, 2016, I established the Restore Louisiana Task Force to lead our recovery efforts. The group is made up of recovery experts, state and local officials, and business and community leaders. The task force, after consultation with local officials who have been impacted by the floods, has made a recommendation on how the initial assistance should be utilized. However, finalized plans are dependent upon guidelines published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The federal process, which you will soon oversee as a member of Congress, sets forth a procedure for disbursement of these funds. The guidelines were not published until November 21, 2016. The state has further developed a plan for how these recovery dollars will be spent and is following the procedures required by HUD.

In addition, I would like to reiterate the speed with which these additional dollars have been secured. Less than two months following the devastating August floods, the congressional delegation and I secured a down payment of \$438 million. Immediately upon Congress' return from the election, we were able to secure an additional \$1.2 billion. While this is well below our needs and the requests of my administration, our delegation and the President, we all have agreed to return to leaders in Congress when the funding mechanism returns in the spring.

I fully intend to work with you in good faith on recovery and other issues related to the state. If this process has taught us anything, it is that Louisiana succeeds when everyone - the congressional delegation, myself and other statewide leaders – are unified in our efforts. It is my hope that we can set aside the partisan politics to achieve great things for our state. The congressional delegation and I have established a relationship which has proven to be beneficial to our state, and I would ask you to join with us.

My staff has reached out to yours in an effort to provide a full briefing of our flood relief efforts. I intend to participate in that meeting, and I would hope that you can find the time to join us.

If there is anything I can do to make your transition to the U.S. Senate easier, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

John Bel Edwards
Governor