

Office of the Governor
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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

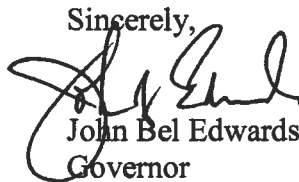
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funding for projects like the Comite River Diversion project as well as other significant infrastructure projects. In addition, clearing the FHWA Emergency Relief funding backlog, which has \$39 million in funding for Louisiana highway projects, would 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