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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510–6250

October 29, 2008

Administrator R. David Paulison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Administrator Paulison:

I am writing to urge FEMA to immediately begin working with the State of Louisiana to find innovative solutions to address the housing needs resulting from Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, which struck the state September 1st and 12th respectively.

As you know, in an October 28th letter, Louisiana Recovery Authority Executive Director Paul Rainwater requested that FEMA take steps to improve the recovery effort in the State. Specifically, the letter requested that FEMA: 1) mobilize mobile park model units to be deployed in Gustav and Ike impacted areas where other resources, such as rental units, are unavailable; 2) use Advisory Base Flood Elevation (ABFE) in order to determine safe flood levels until the parishes have adequate time to review and appeal the Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (D-FIRM) guidelines are released; and 3) provide alternative housing that is *"within the normal commuting patterns of the area or is within reasonable commuting distance of work, school, or agricultural activities that provide over 25 percent of the household income; and is within the financial ability of the occupant."* These steps will help strengthen the recovery effort in Louisiana and I encourage FEMA to quickly begin making arrangements to implement them.

Louisiana has spent the past three years fighting to recover from the catastrophic hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and as a result, the State's capacity to respond and recover from the 2008 storms has been diminished. The State has worked to identify areas in which creativity will lead to a more efficient recovery. I hope that you will direct FEMA's staff to take immediate action on the items outlined above, as requested by the State, and that FEMA will work with my Subcommittee on Disaster Recovery staff to identify other areas where we can work together to improve the recovery effort in all states impacted by these storms.

Thank you in advance for your efforts. I look forward to working with you to make disaster response and recovery more intelligent, efficient, and effective.

Sincerely,

Mary Landrieu

Mary L. Landrieu
Chairman
Subcommittee on Disaster Recovery