

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 2, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

On Sunday, August 29th, Hurricane Ida made landfall in southeast Louisiana as a Category 4 storm following a period of rapid intensification. The storm made landfall near the same area that Hurricane Katrina struck exactly 16 years before. Hurricane Katrina was a Category 3 storm with 125 miles per hour (“mph”) winds when it struck Louisiana’s coast 16 years ago. Conversely, Hurricane Ida had sustained winds of 150 mph when it made landfall, and it was just 7 mph shy of ranking as a Category 5 storm.

Hurricane Ida moved slowly through Louisiana causing catastrophic wind damage and flooding in numerous parishes and leaving nearly 1,000,000 people statewide without electricity, which experts say it will take weeks to restore. At this time, many communities remain without access to drinking water, food, gasoline, and basic needs, while temperatures remain in excess of 100 degrees. Consequently, you have already approved Louisiana’s request for a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration and for that we are grateful.

The full extent of Louisiana’s damages have not yet been determined and will likely not be fully known until after immediate matters of public safety are addressed. Further, Hurricane Ida is not the only disaster to strike Louisiana in the past year. In fact, a record breaking five named storms –Cristóbal, Marco, Laura, Delta, and Zeta— hammered Louisiana within the past year resulting in dozens of lives lost and billions of dollars in damages. To date, communities across Southwest and Central Louisiana such as Lake Charles, Lafayette, Leesville, and Alexandria, among others, still await desperately needed disaster funding from the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery program through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, to address unmet financial needs.

As such, we are writing you now to alert you to the need for Congress to provide emergency supplemental appropriations to address Hurricane Ida and the storms from last year, as was done following Hurricane Katrina. Without substantial and robust emergency

appropriations from Congress to critical unmet needs accounts like the CDBG-DR program, Louisiana families will continue to languish as a result of these devastating storms. Other federal disaster recovery and response programs, like those at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Economic Development Administration, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the U.S. Department of Transportation, will also be essential for Louisiana's most impacted communities to recover.

We are also attaching a copy of P.L 109-61 which was the initial emergency appropriation addressing Hurricane Katrina that became law within 4 days of Hurricane Katrina hitting Louisiana. This law provided billions for the Department of Homeland Security's Emergency Preparedness and Response Disaster Relief including funding for the Department of Defense's Operations and Maintenance for emergency hurricane expenses to support costs of evacuation, emergency repairs, deployment of personnel, and other costs resulting from immediate relief efforts.

We remain ready to work together on legislation needed to provide emergency supplemental assistance.


Sincerely,



John Kennedy
U.S. Senator



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
U.S. Senator



Clay Higgins
U.S. Representative



Mike Johnson
U.S. Representative



Steve Scalise
U.S. Representative



Garret Graves
U.S. Representative



Julia Letlow
U.S. Representative



Troy Carter
U.S. Representative

CC: Cedric Richmond
Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Public Engagement
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20501