TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 2006

LIEBERMAN WELCOMES REVERSAL OF FEMA TRAILER EVICTIONS

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Ranking Member Joe Lieberman, D-Conn., Tuesday expressed satisfaction that the Federal Emergency Management Agency has decided to suspend its planned evictions of 3,000 Katrina victims living in FEMA trailers in Mississippi. FEMA officials informed Lieberman that the agency has stopped sending out eviction notices and is in the process of withdrawing approximately 400 eviction notices already sent out.

“After its failed preparations for and response to Hurricane Katrina, FEMA has stumbled through a slow and mismanaged recovery process as well,” Lieberman said. “The people of the Gulf Coast are in extreme need. The idea that they would be kicked out of the temporary trailers that were provided to them is inconceivable to me. The point is to work to get people resettled into permanent housing not to render them homeless again.” Lieberman has asked FEMA to follow up with families that may have moved out of their trailers when they received an eviction notice and to allow families to remain in the trailers until their eligibility– or lack thereof — has been established. He also called on FEMA to post on its website its new policy regarding trailer evictions and to inform families why they are not eligible and how they might become so. It is unclear if and when FEMA will resume efforts to evict people from the trailers. Lieberman wrote to Homeland Security Department Secretary Michael Chertoff earlier in the year to ask him to improve housing assistance for Katrina victims. He also told FEMA Director David Paulison at his nomination hearing that inadequate planning, poor coordination, inflexible guidelines, and ineffective communications on FEMA’s part have hampered recovery efforts. “The

President promised to do everything necessary to help get the communities and families of the Gulf Coast back on their feet," Lieberman said. "Sending out eviction notices is antithetical to that promise. FEMA must move the Katrina recovery forward in a fair manner." -30-