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# HURRICANE KATRINA REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS PASS HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Washington, D.C. - The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee today overwhelmingly passed Committee Chairman Susan Collins and Ranking Member Joe Lieberman's Hurricane Katrina report and recommendations entitled Hurricane Katrina: A Nation Still Unprepared. This 737-page bipartisan report details specific findings on the mistakes made throughout the course of Hurricane Katrina, and offers systemic and structural changes to ensure that these failures are not repeated.

The most significant change calls for dissolving FEMA and replacing it with the National Preparedness and Response Authority, a distinct entity within the Department of Homeland Security, with a broader mandate, greater resources, more qualified leadership, and greater access to the White House than FEMA, to better prepare for and respond to national catastrophes. The report now awaits consideration by the full Senate. Over the last eight months, the Committee has conducted formal interviews of more than 325 witnesses, reviewed over 838,000 pages of documentation, and held 22 public hearings with 85 additional witnesses to arrive at these specific recommendations. The full report is available online at <http://www.hsgac.senate.gov/> and a three-page fact sheet is attached to this release. "Our Hurricane Katrina investigation into the widespread failures of planning, response, judgment, and leadership in our national response was a huge effort, and its findings and recommendations cover a vast range of issues. The brutal truth driven home by this report is that our nation remains acutely unprepared to plan for, mitigate, respond to, and recover from disasters," said Senator Collins. "Throughout our investigation it became clear that the problems at FEMA go far beyond matters of leadership, judgment, and equipment. FEMA lacks the stature, the internal resources, the connections with state and local officials and responders, and the lines of communication with the White House that are essential for the federal government to play its proper role in responding to a catastrophe." "The lack of preparation and the failed response at all levels of government to Hurricane Katrina constitutes a gross dereliction of duty on the part of nearly all the agencies involved and on the part of all those who were in a position to lead," said Senator Lieberman. "These failures cost lives and compounded the anguish of Katrina's survivors. We have produced a comprehensive and fact-laden report that presents hard-hitting findings and constructive and progressive recommendations. This report should serve as a primer for those at every level of government whose responsibility it is to react and respond to a catastrophe."