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For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
March 1, 2007

Fact Sheet: Working with State and Local Leaders to Help Rebuild the Gulf Coast

[In Focus: Hurricane Katrina](#)

A Federal Commitment Of Over \$110 Billion To Help Communities Recover

Today, The President Visited Mississippi And Louisiana To Discuss The Progress Of Recovery – Including The Federal Commitment Of Over \$110 Billion To Help The People Of The Gulf Coast Rebuild. Hurricane Katrina was the most destructive natural disaster in U.S. history. The Federal government has committed more than \$110 billion to help the Gulf Coast recover, and most of this money has already been made available or sent to the region. The Federal government will continue to provide assistance and guidance, but the people of the Gulf Coast and their elected leaders must drive the effort to rebuild their lives and their communities.

- **In Mississippi, The President Visited With Gulf Coast Grant Recipients In Long Beach And Met In Biloxi With Elected Officials – Including Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour – And Community Leaders From Across The Mississippi Gulf Coast.** Located approximately 15 miles west of Biloxi, Long Beach sustained heavy damage from Hurricane Katrina.
- **In Louisiana, The President Met With Elected Officials – Including Louisiana Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu – And Community Leaders And Visited Samuel J. Green Charter School.** In operation for only two weeks before sustaining severe damage during Hurricane Katrina, Samuel J. Green Charter School was established as a public charter school in an effort to turn around an underperforming elementary school. On January 9, 2006, the school merged with the highly successful New Orleans Charter Middle School, which was flooded and destroyed during Hurricane Katrina, and reopened to serve 350 students – kindergarten through eighth grade.

Fulfilling The Federal Commitment To Helping The Gulf Coast's People Rebuild

The Federal Government Has Provided More Than \$110 Billion In Resources To The Gulf Coast Region. Of this \$110 billion, more than \$85 billion in total has been obligated, and more than \$53 billion has been spent. This funding is being used in efforts including:

- **FEMA Has Provided More Than \$10 Billion In Grants To Gulf Coast States To Remove Debris And Repair And Rebuild Public Infrastructure And Buildings.** This includes repairing sewer and water systems, roads, and bridges, as well as public buildings such as schools and fire stations. Since Hurricane Katrina, FEMA has worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Coast Guard to fund the removal of more than 100 million cubic yards of debris along the Gulf Coast.

- **The U.S. Department Of Housing And Urban Development (HUD) Is Administering Nearly \$17 Billion In Flexible Federal Grants As Part Of The Largest Housing Recovery Program In U.S. History.** HUD's Community Development Block Grants program is helping thousands rebuild their homes and enabling communities to restore damaged public housing, promote affordable rental housing, and restore critical infrastructure. HUD approved Gulf States' plans to rebuild housing in record time, and the agency continues to provide support and assistance to States.
- **The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Paid More Than \$16 Billion In Claims And Has Closed Almost All Claims Made By Policyholders.**
- **The U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers Has Received Almost \$6 Billion To Repair And Restore Levees And Strengthen The New Orleans-Area Flood Protection System.** The Corps repaired and restored more than 220 miles of levees and floodwalls in the year following Hurricane Katrina. It continues its work to repair and enhance the levees, make the entire hurricane protection system better and stronger by 2010, and begin to restore the wetlands surrounding greater New Orleans.
- **The U.S. Department Of Education Has Provided Almost \$2 Billion To Help Reopen Schools And Educate Displaced Students After Hurricane Katrina.** In Mississippi, 99 percent of schools have reopened. In Louisiana, the number of schools open is at 94 percent of pre-Katrina levels. First Lady Laura Bush has visited many of these excellent schools, which have opened their doors to students from across the region.
- **Gulf Opportunity Zone (GO Zone) Tax Credits Provide An Estimated \$8 Billion In Federal Tax Incentives Over Five Years To Spur Private Business Investment And Economic Development.** In December 2005, the President signed the GO Zone Act to help create jobs and spur development by providing tax relief for businesses and entrepreneurs in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Since then, the U.S. Department of Treasury has provided \$600 million in GO Zone New Markets tax credits to the Gulf Coast region, with an additional \$400 million expected to be awarded this fall.
- **The Small Business Administration (SBA) Has Disbursed More Than \$5 Billion In Hurricane-Related Disaster Loans.** In addition, SBA Administrator Steven Preston has implemented key reforms to speed disbursement of these funds. Of 94,000 outstanding hurricane-related loan applications in September 2006, 51,000 people have now received all the loan money they qualified for; 19,000 have drawn some of the money; and 24,000 have canceled their approved loans.
- **The U.S. Department Of Justice (DOJ) Has Provided More Than \$60 Million To Support Louisiana And The City Of New Orleans In Their Efforts To Fight Violent Crime And Rebuild Their Criminal Justice Systems.** \$30 million has been directed to New Orleans, which has one of the highest murder rates in the Nation. DOJ assistance to New Orleans also includes additional Federal law enforcement agents and prosecutors, and additional technical assistance and training for the New Orleans Police Department.
- **In December 2006, President Bush Signed Legislation Allowing Louisiana To Share In Revenues From Drilling Along The Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).** Louisiana has promised to use these funds to restore its coastal wetlands, which will help defend against future storms.
- **In Addition To Federal Assistance, Policy Holders In Mississippi And Louisiana Have Received Private Insurance Payments Totaling \$10.5 Billion In Louisiana And Over \$5 Billion In Mississippi.**
- **Americans Have Contributed Over \$3.5 Billion In Cash And In-Kind Donations To The Gulf Coast – More Resources Than After Any Other Natural Disaster In Our Nation's History.** According to the Corporation for National and Community Service, more than half a million individuals offered their services as volunteers on the Gulf Coast in the year following Hurricane Katrina.

Ensuring The Nation Is Prepared For Future Disasters

On February 23, 2006, The Administration Released Its "Lessons Learned" Review Of The Federal Response To Hurricane Katrina. The Report identifies deficiencies in the Federal government's response and lays the groundwork for better preparation for and response to future natural disasters.

Dramatic Improvements Have Been Made At The National Level To Respond To A Disaster.

- FEMA has strengthened its ability to respond, establishing a variety of rapidly deployable teams to quickly establish a Federal presence at a disaster scene to coordinate with State and local officials.
- FEMA has dramatically increased its stockpiles of relief supplies, such as emergency meals and ice, and the ability to track them.
- FEMA has improved its customer service capabilities to provide better support while also protecting against fraud and abuse. FEMA now has the capacity to handle 200,000 calls per day from disaster victims seeking assistance.
- The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is working with all 50 States and America's largest cities to refine their emergency response plans and disaster preparedness drills.
- The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) is now better integrated with FEMA, assigning an 8-person coordination element to the FEMA office in each of the ten FEMA regions
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has created rapidly deployable medical teams to quickly and effectively respond to a disaster or terrorist attack
- Multiple Federal departments (DHS, DOD, HHS, Department of Transportation) have worked together to provide support to the Gulf Coast to assist with evacuations should another hurricane threaten the area.

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