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Fact Sheet: President Bush Requests $19.8 Billion for Hurricane Recovery

📄 Text of a Letter from the President to the Speaker of the House of Representatives
📄 In Focus: Hurricane Recovery

Today's Presidential Action:

Today, President Bush asked Congress for $19.8 Billion in Emergency Funding to Support Ongoing Hurricane Recovery Efforts. President Bush is committed to helping residents of the Gulf Coast rebuild their lives in the wake of the disaster, and these additional funds will support ongoing recovery efforts of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Small Business Administration (SBA), and other Federal government agencies.

To date, the President and Congress have provided over $87 billion for Hurricane Katrina and Rita relief and recovery efforts. With these funds, FEMA and other Federal agencies, working with faith-based and other humanitarian organizations, have responded to the immediate housing, food, and medical needs of evacuees, continued response and recovery efforts, and provided support for urgently needed repairs to local government facilities such as schools and other public buildings.

The supplemental funds requested today will build on these recovery efforts by assisting families, rebuilding communities, combating fraud, renewing vital Federal facilities, restoring the environment, and strengthening hurricane defenses.

- **Rebuilding Lives and Communities**

  Direct Relief: The President is requesting $9.4 billion for FEMA disaster relief. This funding will support ongoing response efforts, including direct assistance to families for shelter, medical care, and other FEMA disaster assistance benefits. Additionally, funds will support the rebuilding of local public facilities, emergency protective measures, debris removal, and other recovery activities.

  Housing and Flood Mitigation: To help rebuild homes and communities so they are less vulnerable to future disasters, the President is requesting $4.2 billion in Community Development Block Grant funds to Louisiana to address the State's special need for future flood mitigation, including relocation or improvement of housing and infrastructure; $1.3 billion for SBA's Disaster Loan Program; and $202 million for HUD's voucher assistance for disaster housing for low-income renters.

  Direct Community Relief: The President is requesting funds to support $400 million in loan volume for Community Disaster Loans to help local governments provide essential services, rebuild neighborhoods, and restore communities; $10 million for the Federal government to purchase floodplain easements in disaster-prone areas; and $21 million to restore fishery resources and implement sustainable approaches to fishery redevelopment in the Gulf region.

- **Strengthening the Gulf Coast's Hurricane Defenses**
  Improving hurricane defenses will save lives and reduce damage in future storms. Requested improvements to hurricane defenses include:

  Improved Storm Protection: $1.36 billion to strengthen and improve hurricane and storm protection for greater New Orleans and surrounding areas. These funds are in addition to the $1.5 billion that Congress provided for these needs in December 2005 at the President's request and meets his commitment to improve the area's storm protection.

  Wetland Restoration: $100 million to reduce the risk of storm damage to the greater New Orleans metropolitan area by restoring surrounding wetlands.

  Early Warnings: $70 million to reconstruct and improve existing public alert, warning, and crisis communications systems in the Gulf region.

- **Restoring the Gulf Coast Environment**
  In addition to homes and cities, the Gulf Coast's natural environment was seriously damaged by the hurricanes. The President is requesting more than $200 million to restore the Gulf Coast's unique environment:

  Wildlife Refuges: $132.4 million to repair 30 national wildlife refuges.
  National Parks: $55.4 million to repair 12 national parks.
  Environmental Monitoring: $6 million for air-quality monitoring of debris burning and construction emissions.
  Underground Tank Repairs: $7 million to repair damaged underground storage tanks.

- **Rebuilding Federal Services and Facilities**
  The Federal government is a major source of employment and economic stimulus in the Gulf region. To continue restoring this presence, the President is requesting more than $2.6 billion for Federal rebuilding including:

  Defense: $1.8 billion to repair and replace damaged equipment, reconstruct destroyed facilities, and cover increased shipbuilding costs caused by delays at Gulf Coast shipyards.
  Veterans: $600 million to rebuild the VA hospital in New Orleans that served more than 40,000 veterans in 2005.
  Coast Guard: $69 million for major repairs, reconstruction, and equipment replacement at Coast Guard facilities.
  National Finance Center: $25 million for equipment and repairs to the National Finance Center in New Orleans.
  Research Center: $20 million to restore the Agricultural Research Service facility in New Orleans.
  NOAA: $11.8 million to repair the NOAA science center supporting the Gulf's seafood industry.
  Customs and Border Protection: $16 million for Customs & Border Protection rebuilding in New Orleans.
  Geological Survey: $10.2 million to repair US Geological Survey facilities and stream gauges.

- **Preventing and Prosecuting Waste, Fraud, and Abuse**

  The Administration is committed to spending taxpayers' money responsibly. To make sure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and honestly, the President is requesting $13.5 million for agency Inspectors General to

investigate and audit recovery activities and $9.7 million to prosecute fraud. This is in addition to the $15 million Congress previously appropriated to the Department of Homeland Security Inspector General to guard against waste, fraud, and abuse.

The American People Have Made An Unprecedented Commitment To The Gulf Coast

- **Congress and the Administration have already made available over $87 billion in direct relief to the Gulf Region.** Funds made available to date have gone for immediate relief, recovery, and rebuilding efforts, paying more than 200,000 flood insurance claims, and for Federal agency relief and recovery operations and facility reconstruction.

- **Gulf Opportunity Zones are providing tax relief for businesses affected by Hurricane Katrina.** On December 21, 2005, the President signed into law the Gulf Opportunity (GO) Zone Act of 2005 to reinvigorate the Gulf Coast economy. The Act increased business expensing, accelerated bonus depreciation, expensing for demolition and cleanup expenses, and net operating loss carry-backs..

- **Private individuals, groups and businesses have contributed more than $3 Billion to charities supporting Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.** In his Address to the Nation from New Orleans' Jackson Square on September 15, 2005, the President called on all Americans to help those affected by Hurricane Katrina. Private individuals, groups, and businesses met the challenge and have contributed more than $3 billion in support of faith-based and community organizations and disaster relief agencies.

The Administration is Providing Local Officials the Resources Necessary to Rebuild

- **In December 2005, the President appointed Don Powell to coordinate Federal assistance to state and local rebuilding efforts.** To date, the Administration has obligated approximately $29.6 billion for disaster assistance, SBA loans, and flood insurance claims in Louisiana; $10.4 billion in Mississippi; and $7.1 billion total in Alabama, Texas, and Florida, with millions more going to other states assisting relief efforts.

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