

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 18, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice-Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy, Vice-Chairman Shelby, Chair DeLauro, and Ranking Member Granger:

As you know, the 2020 and 2021 Atlantic Hurricane seasons brought historic impacts to south Louisiana. State and local emergency response capabilities in Louisiana have been stretched to the limits by the COVID-19 pandemic, a significant freeze and historic May flood, Tropical Storm Cristobal, and Hurricanes Laura, Marco, Delta, Zeta, and Ida – all of which struck Louisiana in an 18-month period. The cumulative impact of these multiple disasters occurring in close geographical and chronological proximity has necessitated a robust federal response. We appreciate the opportunity to work with the Committees on Appropriation to secure \$5 billion in the September Continuing Resolution for disaster relief funds for natural disasters in 2020 and 2021. However, Louisiana is only eligible for a fraction of these funds, and we believe that the needs of our constituents significantly exceed what has been appropriated and allocated thus far.

Of the \$2 billion presently allocated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Louisiana received \$600,131,000 for areas impacted by Hurricanes Laura (DR-4559) and Delta (DR-4570) to use for unmet housing, infrastructure, and mitigation needs. The State of Louisiana estimates that the housing needs for Hurricanes Laura and Delta alone exceed \$510 million, leaving a nearly \$300 million shortfall to help house disaster survivors in Southwest Louisiana. These communities are exceptionally vulnerable: Hurricane Laura made landfall 18 months ago and many survivors still lack permanent housing solutions. Additionally, the Port of Lake Charles suffered over \$240 million in damages. If economic drivers like the Port cannot recover, this will also hinder recovery efforts throughout the region.

The same is true for victims of Hurricane Ida, who have yet to receive an allocation of Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds. The State of Louisiana has estimated that

unmet housing needs for victims of Hurricane Ida will exceed \$1.5 billion. We can anticipate other necessary funds for public infrastructure, resilience measures, future flood mitigation, hardening critical infrastructure, and numerous other categories that are historically funded in emergency supplemental appropriations. In the meantime, thousands of Louisianians are living in tents or have found other means of temporary housing and still do not have access to critical unmet needs dollars.

Finally, in addition to providing funds to the CDBG-DR program to get disaster survivors back on their feet, the Congress must match that investment in recovery with an equally critical investment in pre-disaster mitigation and protection from future flooding events. In particular, we would highlight the need for additional funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in areas impacted by Hurricane Ida, including Morganza-to-the-Gulf, Grand Isle, Lower Jefferson Parish project or other efforts to protect the Lafitte, LA area, to provide full federal funding for the Comprehensive Lower Mississippi Study authorized by the Water Resources Development Act of 2020, and continued investments in the Hurricane Storm Damage Risk Reduction System and other vital flood protection projects.

While Congress waits for FEMA to finalize damage estimates, thousands of Louisianians are trying to decide whether to stay and rebuild or move on. This is an urgent crisis: families across Louisiana are struggling to house people and meet their basic life-sustaining needs today. We respectfully request swift action to make good on the promise of the down payment in the September Continuing Resolution and appropriate additional supplemental funding dollars for unmet needs in Louisiana. South Louisiana has been hit by unprecedented disaster and needs the support of the Congress to put them on the path to a full recovery.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent request,

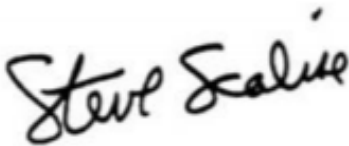
Sincerely,



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



John Kennedy
U.S. Senator



Steve Scalise
Member of Congress



Garret Graves
Member of Congress



Clay Higgins
Member of Congress



Mike Johnson
Member of Congress



Julia Letlow
Member of Congress



Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress