

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 8, 2016

The Honorable John Bel Edwards
Post Office Box 94004
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Dear Governor Edwards:

Thank you for your hospitality during my visit to Baton Rouge on August 23rd. While my visit came during difficult times for the residents of Louisiana, witnessing the flood damage firsthand and meeting Louisianans affected by the historic storm reinforced the magnitude of resources that Louisiana will need to recover from this storm. I continue to be impressed by your leadership of the flood response and am heartened by the resilient spirit of the survivors.

Please know that I continue to be fully committed to ensuring that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other Federal agencies do everything they can to get Louisiana the assistance it needs. The Federal Government stands with Louisiana in our response, and my Administration has expended, to date, over \$660 million to help the State of Louisiana manage the aftermath of the historic floods.

Thank you for your letters that convey specific requests for additional Federal assistance and relief, and I appreciate your views on where else the Federal Government can provide assistance. FEMA Administrator Fugate will provide you with a more detailed response to each of your requests on behalf of our Federal agencies. Regarding Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding, I know you have been in contact with Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Castro to coordinate needs assessments and to develop a path forward, and I have also asked him to respond directly to you on CDBG-DR funding. As you have noted, a number of your requests require Congressional action, but the Federal Government will continue to move forward aggressively in the meantime to provide all possible forms of assistance that are currently available to the State of Louisiana.

The Federal Government's most effective way to assist the State of Louisiana is through my major disaster declaration and the Federal assistance available under the Stafford Act. Regarding your request for an adjustment to the State portion of the Stafford Act cost share, FEMA's disaster-related obligations for the flood disaster have exceeded the \$621 million threshold identified in regulation for the State of Louisiana for a cost-share adjustment, prompting Administrator Fugate to recommend to me an increase in the Federal cost share for all categories

of Public Assistance to 90 percent, which includes funding for the National Guard involved in this disaster. Therefore, I amend my declaration of August 14, 2016, to authorize Federal funds for all Categories of Public Assistance at 90 percent of total eligible costs.

I applaud your leadership in establishing a recovery task force to coordinate and implement an effective and efficient recovery effort. Your diligence in setting clear priorities and the excellent coordination of all disaster efforts will benefit the residents of Louisiana over the weeks and months to come in the recovery. Likewise, as requested in your letter, FEMA implemented the National Disaster Recovery Framework shortly after I approved the major disaster declaration. As you know, FEMA is on the ground coordinating with the Departments of Commerce, Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, and the Interior, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, among others, to lead the Federal recovery efforts in support of Louisiana. Our AmeriCorps teams are on the ground helping to clean up homes and debris alongside other volunteers. In addition, I have directed the Federal Government to proactively find opportunities to incorporate resilience into the rebuilding process so that our efforts help Louisiana build back better.

Louisiana is all too familiar with responding to and recovering from major disasters. We know that the road ahead will be long and challenging, and we are proud of the "Louisiana Strong" citizens who have endured so much. As we continue this partnership, you should know that the Federal Government is behind you and the Louisianans impacted by this disaster. I look forward to continuing our efforts together during the long recovery ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be Barack Obama's signature, consisting of a large 'B' and 'O' with a horizontal line extending to the right.