

Office of the Governor
State of Louisiana

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GOVERNOR



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February 24, 2017

Robert J. Fenton, Jr.
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Mr. Fenton:

The State of Louisiana cannot thank you enough for the support your agency has shown Louisiana over the past twelve (12) months as we grappled with three (3) federally declared disasters affecting over 193,000 families in 57 of our 64 parishes in the state. FEMA has given us tremendous support and we greatly appreciate your partnership, including the leadership of your regional and local team on the ground in Louisiana.

Most recently, a violent storm system with seven (7) confirmed tornadoes affected six (6) parishes across southeastern Louisiana, many of the same parishes still recovering from the devastating floods in 2016. We appreciate the quick response to our request for a Presidential Major Declaration, which authorized Individual Assistance grant funding for the parishes of Orleans and Livingston (DR-4300). We will continue to urge consideration of our request for Public Assistance grant funding for the parishes of Ascension, Livingston, Jefferson, Orleans and St. James. This recent event has compounded the difficulty of the state, parishes, and municipalities' continued recovery.

Further, we will continue to urge the consideration of Ascension and St. James Parishes for the Individual Assistance grant program. As will be stressed in our appeal, the current use of parish lines to determine eligibility causes great inequity. As evidenced by DR-4300, under the current system, neighbors were denied assistance driven by an invisible parish line even though they were hit by the exact same tornado. We encourage you to take a community approach to this decision to grant Individual Assistance.

We have also asked FEMA to consider the Direct Housing option as authorized by Section 408 of the Stafford Act and 44 CFR § 206.117(c) for the City of New Orleans in response to the recent tornado disaster. Because of the number of houses severely damaged and destroyed, and the lack of other housing options in New Orleans, this will be an opportunity to devise unique solutions to fit the needs of survivors. We encourage the use of innovative disaster recovery

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housing units (such as modular homes), which is a more long-term and fiscally responsible solution in lieu of temporary manufactured housing units (MHUs).


I have previously requested a cost share waiver for Public Assistance grant funding for DR-4263 and 4277. These recent disasters have greatly stressed this State, which is still deeply involved in the recovery from fifteen (15) Major Disaster Declarations in the last eleven years. With the new disasters, we will be managing approximately \$15 billion in Public Assistance grant funding covering roughly 37,000 PA projects across the State. In order to effectively and timely proceed with recovery, Louisiana and its local jurisdictions need your support. We again ask that you waive the state and local cost share (match) required in the March and August 2016 flood recovery Public Assistance funds approved for Louisiana.

If a full waiver is not granted, I re-urge my request for a 10% cost share for DR-4263. When you look at the totality of disasters for 2016, you will see we are well above the thresholds required by 44 CFR § 206.47. An adjustment in the Federal cost share to 90% would provide the additional assistance to devastated communities throughout the State necessary to ensure a path to rapid and successful recovery. This cost share adjustment would also significantly help us close the gap on our estimated unmet need amount, which is currently approximately 2 billion dollars. Lowering the cost share may help alleviate that gap.

For DR-4263 and DR-4277, we are urging an adjustment of the "NFIP Penalty." Under current regulation, a facility located in a floodplain is assessed a \$500,000 penalty per facility damaged in the flood event. Some eligible applicants may have a campus with numerous facilities affected by a flood. Having the Penalty imposed per facility will effectively halt any aspect of recovery for those applicants. This is especially true for schools and first responder facilities. After Hurricane Katrina, Congress gave Louisiana an exception which allowed only one deduction per campus for schools and first responders. This action greatly enhanced the recovery effort and is needed again in DR-4263 and 4277.

If I can provide further information concerning the justification of this request, please contact my Authorized Representative, GOHSEP Director, James Waskom, at james.waskom@la.gov or (225) 252-2172.

With kindest regards,



John Bel Edwards
Governor

Enclosure