

United States Senate

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September 4, 2012

Mr. Matt Erskine
Acting Assistant Secretary for Economic Development
Economic Development Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
HCHB, Room 7816
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Acting Assistant Secretary Erskine:

Let me take this opportunity to thank the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for your numerous investments in Louisiana's communities over the past couple of years. EDA's funding truly has been there for Louisiana in the good times and the bad. Your agency was especially helpful in spurring recovery following the 2005/2008 hurricanes and the *Deepwater Horizon* disaster in 2010. I write to request your assistance as we face similar challenges from Hurricane Isaac.

In particular, I am aware that EDA provided numerous investments to Louisiana groups following the 2010 oil spill. For example, EDA provided \$315,000 for technical assistance for fishermen in Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes that were impacted by the disaster. EDA has also provided funds for infrastructure improvements, economic development studies, and support for programs assisting start-up companies in Louisiana. As such, I believe that EDA can be extremely helpful to the State of Louisiana in its recovery from this storm. Therefore, I would like to work closely with your agency in the coming days and weeks to identify possible funding sources that may assist Louisiana communities impacted by Hurricane Isaac.

I would like to also request your response to a series of questions about eligible uses of EDA funds. Louisiana has several critical areas of need, and it would be helpful to determine whether post-disaster EDA funds can be used to meet those needs.

1) Disaster Recovery Planning

After past disasters, EDA has been helpful in providing funds to assist local officials and economic development groups with technical assistance on disaster planning efforts. Can EDA funds be used to hire a Disaster Recovery Coordinator and fund disaster recovery plans for impacted communities?

2) Incubators and Accelerators

EDA has long been active in supporting successful incubator and accelerator programs nationwide to help diversify local economies and spur entrepreneurship. As some of these local communities impacted by Isaac begin to look at long term

recovery, there will likely be interest in bringing in new business sectors and economic development opportunities. Can EDA funds be used to fund local/regional incubators and private sector accelerators to help spur disaster recovery?

3) Tourism

Tourism is Louisiana's largest industry, and millions of Louisiana citizens depend upon it for their livelihood. Restoring this sector of the economy after a disaster has been critical to the state's recovery. Can EDA funds be used to restore and promote tourism for the economic well-being the state and local communities?

4) Levees

Several non-Federal levees failed during previous disasters and Hurricane Isaac, and other parishes were flooded because they still do not have levee protection from tidal surges and other flooding threats. Can EDA funds be used for the design and construction of new non-Federal levees, and/or the repair of existing non-Federal levees?

5) Assistance to Farmers, Ranchers, and Fishermen

The 2008 hurricanes caused almost \$700 million in agricultural damage in Louisiana alone. While some Federal programs are available for certain agricultural groups, some of these programs often take considerable amounts of time to disburse funds. Can EDA funds be used to provide grants and loans or technical assistance to individual farmers, ranchers and fishermen, as well as processing facilities?

Thanking you in advance for your consideration and with warmest regards, I am

Sincerely,



Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator