

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1804

February 16, 2011

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. President:

I was pleased on August 29th, 2010 when you spoke at Xavier University on the fifth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina about the will to keep up the fight to recover from that catastrophic event. During the speech, you spoke right to the survivors of the disaster and said, "My administration is going to stand with you — and fight alongside you — until the job is done. Until New Orleans is all the way back, all the way."

I am asking you to stand with me now. Based on the latest estimates from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Disaster Relief Fund is expected to be exhausted in June. I understand that a minimum of \$1.565 billion is needed just to meet the costs of eligible projects for the balance of this fiscal year. This shortfall is largely the result of past catastrophic and major disasters, such as Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike, the Midwest floods of 2008, and the Tennessee floods of 2010.

In the absence of an emergency supplemental request from you, the House Republican Leadership has decided to include \$1.565 billion of non-emergency funding in H.R. 1, now pending before the House. In order to pay for this funding, H.R. 1 reduces funding for the Coast Guard, FEMA, and State and local first responders and emergency managers, the very agencies that are responsible for preparing for and responding to future disasters. It is true that in these tough economic times, it is critical that we make disciplined funding decisions, but it makes no sense to strip agencies of the resources they need to prepare for future disasters in order to pay for the costs of past disasters. We simply cannot return to the days when FEMA could not do its job. Therefore, I ask you to submit, without delay, a request for emergency supplemental funding.

Without your request for the needed amount of funding, I am concerned that history will soon repeat itself. Last year, FEMA was forced to stop making payments for over five months to my State and States across the Nation for recovery efforts from past disasters. In addition to the \$1.565 billion that is necessary to continue disaster recovery this year, FEMA estimates that \$6 billion will be required in FY 2012-2014 to pay for the recovery costs of past catastrophic disasters. Such funding simply cannot be accommodated within the existing budget of the Department of Homeland Security. I am concerned that if only the amount to cover known costs for FY 2011 is requested, \$1.565 billion, then FEMA and OMB will once again have to stop

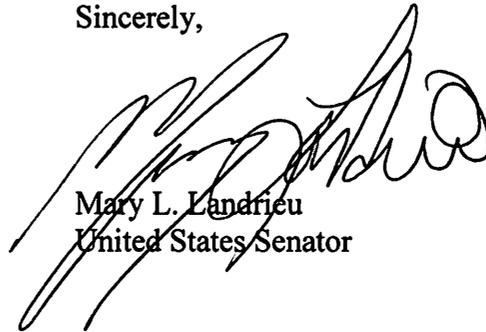
The President
February 16, 2011
Page 2

making payments to States. There is no reason for this to happen again. It is imperative that in this and future budgets you request a sufficient amount of funding for both the known costs of past disasters and the estimated costs of future disasters.

In your August 29th speech, you said, "I wanted to make sure that the federal government was a partner — not an obstacle — to recovery here in the Gulf Coast." Unfortunately, the budget process applied to the Disaster Relief Fund is an obstacle to recovery in Louisiana and the whole Nation. Your Administration has done a lot to help my State of Louisiana recover. I ask for your renewed commitment to continue that effort.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary L. Landrieu", written over the typed name and title.

Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator