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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

January 29, 2021

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The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

I write to respectfully ask for your assistance as the State of Louisiana continues to recover from the devastation brought forth by the 2020 hurricane season. As you know, Louisiana was struck by five named storms last year, the most of any single state during any single hurricane season in recorded history.

Hurricane Laura, of course, was by far the most damaging of any of these storms. Its sustained 150+ mph winds were the strongest to hit Louisiana since 1856, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration now estimates the disaster recovery costs for Laura alone will top \$19 billion.

In any ordinary year, these costs would be nearly impossible to meet without federal assistance. As we all know, 2020 was far from an ordinary year. The additional expenses incurred by the state to respond to the pandemic and other storms during the 2020 hurricane season make recovery from Hurricane Laura all the more difficult. Recognizing this extraordinary situation, President Trump approved a 100% federal cost share for Category A and Category B work for a 30-day period to be set by the State of Louisiana.

While we are truly grateful for this limited-duration increased federal share for Hurricane Laura, I believe there are two simple actions you could take to greatly improve the disaster recovery process and hasten the return to normalcy for countless Louisianians. First, I respectfully ask that you extend the 30-day time period for the increased federal share to 45 days. This would be consistent with previous cost share waivers issued by the federal government, such as the one that was granted to the State of Florida for Hurricane Michael.

Second, because the landfall of Hurricane Delta interrupted Hurricane Laura recovery efforts in certain areas, I am concerned there is insufficient flexibility in the existing waiver to cover the needs of individual parishes in the most efficient and effective manner. As such, I respectfully ask that each individual parish, rather than the State of Louisiana, be allowed to set its own time period for which the 100% federal cost share will apply. This will avoid any disparate treatment of parishes based upon arbitrary factors such as subsequent storms or the timing of when recovery operations first began.

Thank you for your consideration of these time-sensitive requests. I look forward to working with you to ensure the needs of Louisianians are met during this difficult recovery process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Johnson".

Mike Johnson
Member of Congress