REBUILDING HIGHWAY AND TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE ON THE GULF COAST FOLLOWING HURRICANE KATRINA–STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS

(109–39)

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
HIGHWAYS, TRANSIT AND PIPELINES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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REBUILDING HIGHWAY AND TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE ON THE GULF COAST FOLLOWING HURRICANE KATRINA— STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS

Thursday, October 27, 2005

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS, TRANSIT, AND PIPELINES, WASHINGTON, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:00 p.m., in Room 2167, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Thomas E. Petri [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Mr. PETRI. The Subcommittee will come to order. I would like to welcome the panel that is here before us. I will make an opening statement. Mr. DeFazio is in a busy time. There are hearings, and the House is in session on the floor.

Mr. DeFazio has a bill that is up in another hearing. So he has asked his colleague, Mr. Taylor, to fill his slot as Ranking Member on the Subcommittee. Mr. Taylor is on his way here from another meeting and will be with us shortly.

I would like, as I said, to welcome all the witnesses to today's hearing on Rebuilding Highway and Transit Infrastructure Following Hurricane Katrina—State and Local Officials. The purpose of today's hearing is to follow up on our hearing last Thursday when we heard from U.S. Department of Transportation officials regarding the transportation impacts of Hurricane Katrina.

Today, we have invited State and Local transportation officials from Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi to update the Subcommittee and, through us, the Congress on the repair and replacement of highway and transit systems and the restoration of vital transportation services following the Category 4 hurricane that devastated the Gulf Coast Region on August 29th.

Acting FHWA Administrator, Richard Capka, told us last week that they were aware that Interstate 10, U.S. 90, and other important highways in the Gulf Coast Region are the economic life blood of the hurricane-damaged region and play a central role in the economy of the entire Gulf Coast. The Federal Highway Administrator updated the Subcommittee on several projects that are currently underway and assured us that the long-term rebuilding effort will begin very soon.

The Federal Highway Administrator highlighted priorities for the upcoming months which include funding transit services in areas that have a significant number of evacuees, implementing FEMA

mission assessments in Louisiana and Mississippi, and securing FEMA emergency funding for assets damaged or destroyed, and engaging in a strategic planning process to ensure transportation options are part of future planning for cities and regions.

I and other members of our Committee and other committees in the House visited the affected areas September 18th. On a helicopter tour, we saw the tremendous damage to the area's infrastructure that was left in the hurricane's wake. I also toured the FEMA Emergency Operations Center which is about 50 yards behind the Convention Center, and it is impossible to convey the devastation that actually occurred down in that region. Only now are people moving back in and beginning the recovery process.

In light of the overwhelming work that faces each of today's witnesses in restoring transportation facilities and services in the Gulf Region, I would like to personally thank each of you for traveling here today. You can give us a first-hand view of the reconstruction process, both in the immediate future and also your views on longer term recovery plans. Your testimony will play a significant role in assessing the full impact of Hurricane Katrina.

We look forward to hearing from you, and again we thank you for your testimony.

Now I will turn over the microphone to Mr. Holden of Pennsylvania to make any opening statement he would care to make.

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Chairman, I was just promoted. So I don't have an opening statement. I thank you for holding this hearing on this very important matter and look forward to hearing from the witnesses.

Mr. PETRI. Very good. We will hold the record open, and I think Mr. Taylor may want to say something when he actually gets here.

But at this point, we will turn to our witnesses. I will begin with Mr. Johnny B. Bradbery, Secretary of Louisiana Department of Transportation.

TESTIMONY OF JOHNNY B. BRADBERY, SECRETARY, LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT; DICK HALL, CENTRAL DISTRICT COMMISSIONER, MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION; WAYNE H. BROWN, SOUTHERN DISTRICT COMMISSIONER, MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION; DON VAUGHN, CHIEF ENGINEER, ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION; WILLIAM DEVILLE, GENERAL MANAGER, NEW ORLEANS REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY; AND DWIGHT D. BRASHEAR, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CAPITAL AREA TRANSIT SYSTEMS.

Mr. BRADBERY. Chairman Petri and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me here today. I am Johnny Bradbery, Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.

I am truly honored to be here today, representing Governor Kathleen Blanco, the employees of DOTD, and the citizens of Louisiana who have shown great courage and strength throughout this tribulation. I hope my testimony and responses will help you in the important work you do for our Country's infrastructure.

I want to brief you on what my agency has done in the last two months since Katrina hit. DOTD has removed more than one million cubic yards of debris from roads and bridges, enough to fill 33,000 garbage trucks. DOTD employees have inspected roads and bridges, side by side with Federal officials, and have carefully documented damage and estimated repair costs which are included in this report to your staff. Our employees and contractors already have repaired some of the damage, but there remains much to be done.

One high profile job was the I-10 Twin Span Bridge which was severely damaged during Hurricane Katrina. Hundreds of 300 ton concrete segments were knocked from the bridge into Lake Pontchartrain. DOTD had the low bid contractor on site within two weeks. DOTD directed the contractor to establish two-way traffic by October 27th which is today.

Despite setbacks including a four day work stoppage for Rita, on October 14th, Louisiana officials and Secretary Mineta opened traffic on this vital interstate link. We finished the job ahead of schedule and $20 million under project estimate. That is the way we intend to all of our work.

DOTD is doing the most it can with the resources it has. For several months, long before Katrina and Rita, DOTD employees had embarked on a process improvement initiative to find more efficient ways to do our work. We streamlined processes, changing the way we do many of our jobs. As a result, we announced plans last spring to trim our work force by nearly 500 positions, saving about $20 million a year.

DOTD is working smarter and more efficiently, but today we desperately need our Country's help. Our $10.6 billion appropriations request is reasonable and relevant for the work that must be done. We worked closely with several agencies, including FEMA, the Federal Highway Administration, and Local officials to ensure our figures are as accurate as possible. The $10.6 billion request is divided between repair and replacement of infrastructure and critical transportation needs for future events.

While these specific amounts are documented in supporting materials, I must point out some critical issues we are facing. DOTD has requested immediate release of $100 million in FHWA emergency relief funds to pay for emergency repairs. So far, we have received $5 million. The cost just to repair the Twin Span Bridge is $31 million. Our cash flow problem soon will become acute if we do not immediately receive this funding.

Another critical issue involves timely FEMA reimbursement. We estimate that FEMA eligible repairs to roads, bridges, public ports, airports, public railroads, and transit will cost about $2.2 billion. Without quick reimbursement, much of this burden will have to be carried by local governments that have lost their tax base and are struggling to maintain their work force.

There are many other critical issues I don't have time to fully discuss. We need waivers on the amount and time restrictions for emergency relief funds. We are in a potential dispute with FHWA and FEMA over the extent of roadway damage. We must replace the I-10 Twin Span Bridge with a six lane facility. Displaced citizens from the New Orleans area have caused overnight population

surges in other Louisiana communities, stressing those already overburdened highways to a state of gridlock.

In closing, let me again thank you for your time. My request is that you provide the necessary resources we need so we can continue to rebuild.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my report. I will be happy to further discuss critical issues and answers that you may have.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you very much. I should note your full statement will be made a part of the record, and we appreciate your summary. There will be questions when we finish.

Next we have Mr. Wayne Brown, Southern District Commissioner, Mississippi Department of Transportation. Sir, thank you.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, for this opportunity to come and discuss the critical issues dealing with Hurricane Katrina in the State of Mississippi.

On August 29th, when Hurricane Katrina slammed the shore, our first estimate of the cost damage was $1.5 billion in the State of Mississippi to our road system. We later raised it to $1.8 billion, but as we got into the work and began to do the recovery, our estimate has been reduced to $695 million.

We do think that there probably should be some consideration for emerging requirements and some discovery. Much of the work that we have got to do is under water or under sand, and there will be some discovery as we go along. And I would expect that our estimate probably would go no more than $750 million.

The primary problem we had after Hurricane Katrina was a 300 foot section of Interstate 10. The eastbound lanes were destroyed. We also had some outside beams destroyed that piled in on the center span on I-110 that serves the Biloxi Peninsula which was very important.

Prior to the hurricane, Biloxi had 18 lanes of traffic serving the Peninsula. After the hurricane, there were five lanes. It went down from 18 to 5. We had three in, two out. It was real critical that we repair I-110. Also, U.S. Highway 90, the beach front part from Biloxi to Pass Christian, 26 miles, was heavily damaged.

The Highway 90 Bridge over Bay of Biloxi and over the Bay St. Louis bay were destroyed. A tremendous amount of debris, signage, traffic signals, guardrails, those five things, all together are something in the neighborhood of $700 million.

We need what Secretary Bradbery spoke of. We need time extensions, and we need money. The Mississippi Department of Transportation has a very tight budget, and we are spending that small amount of money we have. We have very limited borrowing capacity, and we are beginning to hit the wall on the money. And we need money so that we can continue with this recovery work.

The U.S. 90 Bridges are anticipated to cost $400 million, $200 million a piece. The repair of Highway 90 and the debris, with all of that together, we anticipate spending $100 million this year, 300 next year in 2006, and 300 in 2007.

Now, we have got a hard decision. Without some Federal funds, we are going to, number one, have to stop our recovery, or number two, we are going to have to look at some of our ongoing projects. Those of you know that it is very difficult to stop an ongoing

project. So we have got to make those decisions, and we need some relief and need it quickly.

Mississippi is prepared. We are ready. We have the engineers. We have the contractors. One thing that I am very proud of is that almost every contract that the Mississippi Department of Transportation has let has gone to Mississippi contractors. In other words, the contractors that are out of work because of Katrina have put back to work because of Katrina. So we have been able to bring on our regular contractors that were put out of work to continue with the Katrina work.

As we sit here now, there are literally tens of thousands of people on the Mississippi Gulf Coast living in tents, living in motels. Some are fortunate enough to have FEMA trailers, and they are coming in at a rather rapid clip, but we still have literally thousands and thousands of people without housing. We have tens of thousands of people unemployed. Just in the casino industry, there are 17,000 unemployed people on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. It is imperative that we rebuild this infrastructure so that they can effect the recovery on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

We want to express our appreciation to you, to the Congress, and to the people of the United States who have poured out their support to us in an unprecedented manner, and we appreciate that. We appreciate the report of Rick Capka and Secretary Mineta from Federal Highway Administration. We want to assure you that the Mississippi Department of Transportation has been a good steward. We have been careful with the money, and we will continue to.

But let me point out something to you. When you are standing in Biloxi, Mississippi, and there are literally thousands of trucks and hundreds of relief vehicles, and people going back through search and rescue teams, the Salvation Army, FEMA; and you have a lane out on a bridge, and you have got to repair that; and you see all that is needed there, you are more interested in time at that point and that you have money in repairing that.

So if you look back, we may have not always made the best money decisions, but we think we made the best decisions, and we are going to continue. Now that we have time, we are going to see to it, and we are going to work very hard for this recovery. We just need your help.

Thank you very much. I will be here and welcome your questions. Thank you.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you. Mr. Taylor has joined us and may want to say a word. The next witness is also from your State, and that is Mr. Hall.

Mr. TAYLOR. I just want to thank Mr. Hall, who I had the pleasure of serving with in the State Legislature, and Mr. Brown for being here. I am sorry that I wasn't here at the beginning, as we have simultaneously, I think, three hearings on Hurricane Katrina, but obviously what you do is of utmost importance.

I would hope at some point in your testimony, you would talk about what plans, or at least hopes, you have in addition to rebuilding Highway 90 and the bridges that were destroyed; on the short-term, what this Committee and what this Nation can do to help you provide some sort of ferry service across Bay St. Louis and

across Biloxi Bay so we can reestablish some sort of normal link between Harrison County, Hancock County, and Jackson County.

And the other thing that I would ask that you touch on is, again, what this Committee, what this Congress can do to improve the interoperability between the State Highway Department and the United States Department of Transportation. If there is anything that we have missed in order to help you do your job better in the wake of this tragic event, we certainly need to know about it and would welcome your thoughts.

Mr. PETRI. The next witness is Mr. Dick Hall, Central District Commissioner, Mississippi Department of Transportation. Sir?

Mr. HALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Congressman Taylor for your remarks. I, too, am pleased to be here, to participate in these hearings regarding the transportation infrastructure and the damage caused to the State of Mississippi. Commissioner Brown, my colleague, has done a good job of providing you with a report of the damage done to Mississippi's highway system and the problems we have encountered about being reimbursed for repairs. I would like to briefly discuss where we need to go from here.

First, allow me to point out that highways are not the only transportation infrastructure destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. Our ports and railroad were devastated, and the Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport was seriously damaged. Not only is the replacement of this infrastructure absolutely necessary, but how and with what it is replaced is of utmost concern.

Within days of the passing of the storm, our Governor had the foresight to appoint a bipartisan commission to evaluate our losses and make recommendations for recovery. This commission, in consultation with engineers and architects from other states and other countries along with Local officials, compiled a preliminary list of what needs to be done to repair the damage done to our State. Included in this recovery list is transportation infrastructure which must be replaced.

By the way, this commission is not a governmental agency; it is funded from private sources. This offers the advantage of not having to wait for legislative approval, which we discovered after Hurricane Camille can greatly slow down decisionmaking.

At this point, allow me to emphasize we are not here to ask for vast amounts of money to build wild ideas pulled out of the air. We are here to discuss building what makes sense. No, it won't be exactly like what was there. A lot of what was there was obsolete and, in some cases, a danger to the public. Case in point, the CSX Railroad, this railroad runs basically parallel to the coastline, sometimes less than a quarter mile from the shoreline.

There are approximately 160 at-grade crossings of this railroad between the Louisiana and Alabama state lines. One hundred ten I understand are in Harrison County alone, and that is the county where Biloxi and Gulfport are located. Obviously, this is a very dangerous situation which results in fatalities annually. You, the U.S. Congress, have already invested $4 million to begin the process of relocating this railroad.

Some people think this is a no-brainer. The present location of the railroad provided one unanticipated function when it served as

a levee against the tidal surge of Hurricane Katrina. This is obvious when one observes the complete destruction south of the railroad.

This is one of the reasons the Governor's Commission for Recovery, Rebuilding, and Renewal has recommended the height of the levee be raised and the existing right of way where the railroad now is be used for an east-west thoroughfare which is desperately needed. This could also accommodate a bus rapid transit or a light rail.

Allow me to repeat. This is not some wild idea. It is an example of rebuilding with vision and common sense.

Additional reconstruction and improvements recommended include: Planning for enhanced multi-modal access and interconnectivity among rail, truck, air, and seaports for expansion and long-term growth. Consider port expansions to include inland ports, inland terminals, or distribution centers that are not located on a water channel. The damage, the great damage done to the ports, along with everything done there, was this 30 foot surge of water.

So some think that it may make sense to put warehousing and some other things that are part of a port system inland. Plan for public transportation for citizens who need it most: the elderly, poor, and handicapped. Evaluate public transit or trolley on the beach.

Now, I didn't say build it; I said, it says evaluate it. I don't know if it is a good idea or not. Provide cruise ship port accessibility. And calm the Highway 90 traffic which is a very dangerous situation and convert it to a parkway boulevard section. All of these deserve consideration.

True, we don't have the money to do any of them, but as Jim Barksdale, Chairman of the Governor's Commission recently stated, it is the worst possible time, but the opportunity makes it the best possible time.

I would like to take just a minute or two on the subject of transit. I did not have prepared remarks because I just now got the information, but I would like to share it quickly with you. We had 50 vehicles submerged in saltwater; about half of them are now running. These are our bus, vehicle and vans transit systems along the Coast of Southern Mississippi.

FEMA has assigned MDOT a mission assignment to serve the six southernmost counties for 60 days. FEMA will pay 100 percent of the costs for 60 days.

There are two problems. These vehicles will be replaced in kind, I am told, and that means if a vehicle has 100,000 miles on it, it will be replaced with a vehicle which has 100,000 miles. That is not much improvement. The biggest problem we are going to have is what happens at the end of 60 days.

We are told that a local match will then be required. The three coastal counties of Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson have estimated they have lost half of their tax base. There is no way they are going to be able to meet this match requirement. And remember, this is transportation which serves a lot of people who have no other options.

Congressman Taylor mentioned a ferry. That is being discussed. One of the problems there, as I understand, we are talking about the ferry crossing is not deep enough to have a vehicle ferry. So if that is the case, there is even more need for public transportation to get to the ferry and on the other side. So that is just another issue to discuss and decide.

Again, I will yield to the next gentleman, and I will answer any questions you have at the appropriate time. Thank you.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you. And next we have Mr. Don Vaughn, Chief Engineer of the Alabama Department of Transportation. Mr. Vaughn?

Mr. VAUGHN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee on behalf of Governor Riley and the entire State of Alabama.

Mr. PETRI. I am sorry. I apologize. I meant to yield to my colleague who arrived in a timely fashion, Spencer Bachus, who is a very active member of the Congress and of this Committee.

Mr. BACHUS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Actually, Mr. Vaughn was doing a really good job on his opening statement. I kind of hate to interrupt.

I do want to introduce him because he is a friend of mine, and he is a very capable public servant, and I would like to give the Committee a little insight into who Don Vaughn is. He is a guy that has really come up through the ranks.

He began working for the Alabama Highway Department in 1966 in a statewide local survey party, and this was as a teenager, and he continued to work on that survey party and go to Auburn cooping; going to Auburn, then working, and going back to Auburn. So he worked for the State Highway Department while he was still at Auburn.

He graduated in 1972 with a degree in Civil Engineering, and he, at that time, became full-time with the Alabama Highway Department in the Engineering Education Training Program and as a graduate Civil Engineer.

Over the next 32 years, Mr. Vaughn has held a number of engineering positions in the department. He has been the Administrative Engineer to the Transportation Director, the Assistant Transportation Director, and the Assistant Chief Engineer.

Then in February of 2003, he was appointed not only Chief Engineer, which he is, but also Deputy Director of Operations for the Highway Department. As many of you who go through Alabama may know, we have some of the finest highways in the Country, some of the best constructed highways, and I credit our speaker today with a lot of that. Thank you.

Mr. VAUGHN. Thank you, Congressman Bachus. I was hoping you wouldn't mention Auburn sitting here at the table with LSU since they whipped us the other week.

[Laughter]

Mr. BACHUS. I am not going to mention the field goal misses, that is for sure.

Mr. VAUGHN. Right, right.

[Laughter.]

Mr. VAUGHN. As I was saying, on behalf of Governor Riley and the entire State of Alabama, we very much appreciate the oppor-

tunity to come up here before members of this Committee. My trip up here today was a little easier; I flew up on a Delta jet. And I know when you came to visit us in Mobile, you flew in on a helicopter with the doors open, and I know that was exciting in itself.

Hurricane Katrina was the third major storm along with Ivan and Dennis to directly impact Alabama in less than a year. Damage to our system was not nearly as severe as the damage to Louisiana and Mississippi, but there were a number of infrastructure challenges that presented themselves. Even though we have previously experienced several large hurricanes over the years, having three major hurricanes in such a short period of time focused attention on those operational areas that worked well and those that did not.

First, I would like to recognize the Federal Highway Administration for their support. Key personnel from Federal Highway Administration were present with Alabama DOT personnel at each meeting prior to, during, and following the storm. Questions on eligibility of emergency relief, project scopes, limits, methods of contract award, and the like were quickly answered which helped to eliminate delays and move recovery efforts along.

This level of participation import was not unusual. It was representative of Federal Highway Administration's response that we have come to expect during both disaster and non-disaster periods.

Routes that are within the range of tidal surges are susceptible to be damaged in a variety of ways. Layers of sand up to three or four feet thick are often deposited on roadways. Shoulders are often scoured or eroded during a storm or immediately afterwards when the water recedes to its source. Sections of roadway near bridges and culverts are especially susceptible to these breaches. Some of these breached sections can be several miles long.

Timely post-storm damage assessments and responses are made more difficult by these forms of damage. During Hurricane Katrina, a number of coastal routes were damaged in the ways that I have just mentioned.

The majority of our repair work was accomplished by a combination of State forces and contract forces paid on force account basis. We have been very successful in identifying and making damage assessments. Our damage, as I said, was not nearly as severe as Mississippi and Louisiana. Our emergency relief request totaled a little in excess of $18 million, and we have a little more than half of that already authorized by Federal Highway Administration.

One major issue we faced, the major east-west artery across our region of the United States is handled by Interstate Highway 10 and U.S. 90. All of these routes cross the Mobile River at Mobile. Two of the crossings are tunnels. One of the crossings is a major cable-stayed bridge.

During Hurricane Katrina, we were in danger of losing all three arteries. The Bankhead Tunnel, which was the original crossing, is at elevation approximately five, and we have to close that in anticipation of a storm surge. So it was not available to carry traffic.

The Cochrane Bridge, which was a cable-stayed bridge north of Interstate 10, was hit by an oil rig that had broken loose from dry dock and managed to hang up on the bridge, and we had to close

the Cochrane-Africatown Bridge. The tunnel along Interstate 10, because of pump failures, was in danger of flooding.

Had we lost those arteries, and this was an event, a happening that we had not anticipated in any of our scenarios, east and west would have been severed at Mobile. This would have hampered not only evacuation but the recovery and relief efforts following the storm.

So one of our greatest needs in Alabama is a new structure bridge crossing the Mobile River at Mobile. Our current estimates of that bridge are in the neighborhood of $660 million which is more than we can handle in our normal funding cycle.

One thing that we did to help during and before the storm, Governor Riley issued a waiver of enforcement laws that allowed overweight, oversized, and mobile homes to move through the State. This was something that assisted us in the recovery effort. It assisted relief and recovery, not only in Alabama but to Mississippi and Louisiana as well. It is important to note that these vehicles were not allowed to move completely unencumbered across the States. There were routing maps attached to the resolution which ensured safety during this period.

A shortage of fuel was another issue that we had not anticipated before, and loss of communications. So we are in the process of upgrading our communications system.

Gentlemen, that concludes my oral summary. Again, I thank the Subcommittee for allowing me and others to appear before you to offer information concerning the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina. Thank you.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you, Mr. Vaughn. Next, Mr. William Deville, New Orleans Regional Transit Administration. Sir, we look forward to your testimony.

Mr. DEVILLE. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

The New Orleans Regional Transit Authority, a political subdivision of the State of Louisiana, was a mid-sized transit system employing nearly 1,300 people. We operated with 372 buses, 66 streetcars, and over 80 para-transit vehicles. The RTA averaged 124,000 riders per day on its 46 buses and 3 streetcar routes. Of the 855,000 people we carried weekly, over 20 percent were considered transit-dependent.

On Friday, August 26th, Hurricane Katrina's projected path abruptly changed towards the Louisiana/Mississippi border. The next morning RTA staff reported to the City of New Orleans officials that it was prepared to carry out the City's hurricane plan. The RTA, as part of its own hurricane planning, fueled up nearly half of its fleet based at its East New Orleans facility, and moved those buses not providing regular service to higher ground on a wharf near downtown New Orleans.

On Sunday morning, August 28th, per the City's plan and request, the RTA began running special service from 12 sites across the City to take riders to the Superdome, the shelter of last resort. In addition, the RTA also ran at least 10 para-transit vehicles to the Superdome and then on to the Baton Rouge area for special needs citizens.

On Monday night, August 29th, when it appeared Katrina had finally passed, the water continued to rise up around the RTA Canal Street facility, trapping nearly 250 people. When the backup generators failed, it became quite apparent that it would be necessary to evacuate the building.

Using air mattresses and wading through unspeakable water, the group fled the building and found higher ground on an overpass. The next day, an employee was able to locate a small boat to evacuate the last of the stranded as well. Then came the difficult and heartbreaking trip out of town to evacuation centers.

Most of the RTA employees that served the City just hours before, evacuating those in need, themselves ended up in shelters in Baton Rouge and Baker, Louisiana, where many of them are still located today. Within days of the hurricane, key RTA staff set up temporary headquarters in Baton Rouge at the offices of the Capital Area Transit System. From there, the RTA executive staff with the cooperation of CATS, FTA, FEMA, and State officials proceeded to plan for the immediate future. Particularly, I thank Bob Patrick, the FTA Regional Administrator and his staff for their early assistance.

At my direction, we have begun to rebuild our transit system for the new New Orleans. I have reached out to the transit industry and have established a strike force team to assess the damage to our facilities and buses and prepare an action for the phased rebuilding of our transit service and organization. The Federal Transit Administration has already begun review of the situation, prerequisite to the flow of funds that have been made available to support this effort.

Our plans for the immediate future are fundamental: restoration of service for our customers, reemployment of our staff, and the rebuild of our organization. Our first goal, which I am happy to say is well underway, is the return of service for as many of our operable buses as possible as we repopulate our metropolitan region. Thanks to the emergency transportation contract through FEMA and FTA, the RTA has partially restored 13 of its bus lines to service in New Orleans; more are planned.

Key to RTA's recovery will be the return and stabilization of our revenue base. Our operating budget is principally funded through three sources: fare box, penny sales tax, and New Orleans hotel-motel tax. Obviously, all three are lost for the moment, particularly at the levels needed to sustain our organization. As mentioned, we are presently operating FEMA-sponsored service, and until tax revenue is restored, we will not be able to generate our normal income.

A good part of our streetcar infrastructure has been damaged including 30 streetcars which sustained serious water damage. Damage to the St. Charles line was minimal other than the overhead catenary lines. The new Canal Street line was under water and has sustained heavy damage. We estimate that we have lost as many as 200 transit buses to the storm. There are five RTA facilities, and with the exception of the Carrollton barn, four sustained extensive damage.

The lack of damage to the Carrollton barn was very fortunate. That is the site of the construction of the canal streetcars, and we

plan to rehabilitate those damaged canal streetcars at Carrollton. It is also the storage facility of the irreplaceable St. Charles streetcars, all of which remain operable.

We also plan to get the Riverfront line back in operation soon, using St. Charles streetcars. Our headquarters at Plaza Drive appears to be a total loss. Our plans are to return to New Orleans as soon as possible to a temporary office until we can establish permanent headquarters at our Canal Street facility.

I thank the EPA for performing the cleanup of water damage at the Canal Street facility. The RTA looks forward to working with Federal, State, and Local officials to plan a better and exciting new New Orleans as envisioned and promised by those officials.

I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and all of the members of the Committee for giving us the opportunity to update you on our progress in bringing transit services back to the New Orleans Metropolitan Area. I will be happy to answer questions at the appropriate time. Thank you very much.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you, and we will be turning to questions after we hear from Mr. Dwight Brashear, Chief Executive Officer of the Capital Area Baton Rouge Transit System. Sir?

Mr. BRASHEAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The late Dr. Martin Luther King once said that history is the long and sometimes tragic story of the facts. And I think it is an opportunity like this that allows us to snatch that statement out of midair and change it around so that we can say that history is the long and sometimes triumphant story of the facts.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Subcommittee, and guests, thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today on behalf of the Capital Area Transit System of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I am honored that you have requested me here today to discuss the valuable part mass transit has performed during Hurricane Katrina and as it continues to aid in the devastation and aftermath of this cataclysm.

First, let me say I bring greetings from Baton Rouge Mayor-President Melvin Kip Holden and Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco. Both were pivotal in our ability to maximize efforts in providing essential emergency services.

I must also recognize the contributions of FEMA, the FTA, and Secretary Bradbery's group over at the LADOTD for providing policy direction and technical assistance. Lastly, I would like to express the gratitude of all of the people along the Gulf Coast for the help that this great Nation has given from you, the elected officials, to the many people and organizations from every State in this Nation.

I myself am a witness to the resolve, and resourcefulness, and the commitment of people extending a hand and opening their hearts to millions of hurting displaced families, many of which have lost everything. I say to you today, we must continue to meet the short-term emergency needs, and we must commit ourselves to the long-term rebuilding and resettlement needs of our fellow sisters and brothers.

Transit in Baton Rouge, pre-Katrina, we had our eyes on a major public involvement process to put a referendum before the voters of East Baton Rouge Parish to expand transit service and to de-

velop transit infrastructure for bus rapid transit. We had a fair amount of traffic congestion and associated infrastructure issues as well. Baton Rouge was a capital city of approximately 400,000 population with an estimated urbanized area of some 600,000. It was a city excited about transit innovation and growth potential.

Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast on August 29th, 2005. I simply describe it as shock and awe of Biblical proportion. A critical crisis situation happened overnight. Within 24 hours, approximately 400,000 of New Orleans 1.3 million population were moved to Baton Rouge. The road infrastructure was over-capacitated. A 20 minute peak period commute went to almost 2 hours.

The transit system was overwhelmed. Buses simply had to pass people up along transit routes due to passenger loads. Food, water, gas, utilities, and medical became critical supplies. A logistics nightmare ensued for moving anything. Support and coordination efforts of Federal, State, and Local entities were pushed and stressed beyond endurance limits.

The physical destruction of property was beyond comprehension. Well over 80 percent of New Orleans was under water.

However, we persevered and moved to hurricane triage stage. FEMA, FTA, the military, State and Local agencies such as CATS and the New Orleans Regional Transit System began to provide emergency services. At one point, I was tapped by our Governor to assist with the coordination of evacuation transportation. School buses, transit buses, and inner city coaches from around the Country came to our aid.

CATS, NORTA, FEMA, FTA, the MPO, and State and Local Governments worked for 14 hours a day from September 8th through the 19th to develop an emergency Baton Rouge/New Orleans Project Proposal. FEMA and the FTA responded with a $47 million contract on October 1st, 2005. This is probably the largest FEMA award to a mass transit property in history.

Today, CATS and NORTA, we work side by side in our City providing emergency mass transit services to displaced hurricane victims and also providing transportation options to gridlock and traffic congestion. NORTA is operating emergency fixed route local and ADA para-transit service in Baton Rouge. We will shortly begin operation of a Park-N-Ride express service with an innovative buses only on shoulder program. The FEMA/FTA project has allowed NORTA to begin calling back some of their 1,350 displaced employees. NORTA has also begun to start up service in New Orleans.

This is a transit success story because the partners persevered and championed the mission. It required real change in State and Local policies and procedures, real change in coordination, and internal operations of both my organization and NORTA. It has required help from sister agencies relative to equipment. It has required the replacement of fear with endless possibilities and boundless opportunity.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for allowing me to tell you that mass transit is working and working well. I pray that God will continue to bless this Nation and bless this Government. Thank you.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you all.

Let us turn to questions. Mr. DeFazio has joined us and had a very bad day. He is going to have Mr. Taylor lead off on his side. I think I will defer to Mr. Bachus from ours if you care to.

Mr. BACHUS. Thank you. My first question or comment will be to Mr. Brown. As we flew over Mississippi, we did see where that rail, main line CSX track was pretty much torn up for many miles, and I am aware that you all have been trying to move and relocate that rail line which you mentioned in your statement. Have you been having success with Federal officials in basically the relocation you propose?

Mr. BROWN. Well, the study has been ongoing. And yes, they have been very cooperative in the relocation of that rail line. Yes.

Mr. BACHUS. How about the Mississippi Export Railroad, was it damaged?

Mr. BROWN. They had some damage at Pascagoula-Moss Point, but no real heavy damage.

Mr. BACHUS. Okay.

Mr. BROWN. And, of course, they would be able to feed into that area with the CSX relocated.

Mr. BACHUS. Okay. Any other members that wish to comment on that?

Mr. HIGGINS. Yes, I mentioned that.

Mr. BACHUS. That is right. You also mentioned it.

Mr. HIGGINS. I mentioned that you guys have already appropriated $4 million to pursue the study of that and the feasibility of it.

Mr. BACHUS. Yes, I would just hate for us to rebuild it right where it is when the long-term plan is to move it.

Mr. HIGGINS. Amen.

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Vaughn?

Mr. VAUGHN. Some of that would involve Alabama, and Alabama is cooperating with Mississippi in that effort as well.

Mr. BACHUS. We have an opportunity. I mean it is destroyed. It has to be moved back, but if you can also move it back and utilize the old road bed for a dike.

Mr. BROWN. I will point out that they are having to rebuild across the Pascagoula River Basin because when Katrina came in, they had a train parked in Gautier. So they are having to rebuild to bring that train back out of there, and they do have one customer there, the—

Mr. BACHUS. And I think that could either be a spur or secondary track later.

Mr. BROWN. Yes, yes.

Mr. BACHUS. Not built back.

Mr. BROWN. And it was not a difficult bridge to build back. It wasn't a span or anything, steel span; it was a wood span.

Mr. BACHUS. I am going to ask another question of Mr. Vaughn.

Before I do, Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce a letter that I wrote October 21st to Mr. Ken Burris who is the Acting Chief of Operations of FEMA, and this deals with the relocation of The Holiday, our cruise ship. There were two cruise ships at New Orleans, and they were originally to be redeployed to Mobile. That is what we were told by Carnival officials within a day or two of the hurricane.

Then two days later, FEMA actually told us that not only would that not happen but that the cruise ship that was located in Mobile, which is a mainstay of our economy, would be used to house refugees from the storm, or evacuees. The cost of that ship is $1,300 per occupant if they filled it up, and it is about half full where the average cost of a cruise is half that. So they paid twice what it cost.

If they filled that ship up and sent it out on a cruise, they would have made half the money they contracted for. They never notified anybody in Mobile they were taking it. The University of Alabama has just done a study that says that is going to negatively impact Mobile's economy by $12 million a year annually, and it has already run for four or five months.

I and other members of the Alabama delegation keep writing FEMA, asking them to reconsider this, and as of yet, although we were promised in a hearing before this Committee on October 6th we would receive an answer, we have not. We have a parking deck that is $4,000 a day we are losing money on in Mobile.

So think how ironic it is that a hurricane hits Mobile County, that was the county that suffered the damage, and within four days FEMA comes in and takes away our cruise ship which is our number one source of revenue to the City, which is absolutely absurd. And yet, they did that without consulting with anybody in Mobile and not only that, they paid an exorbitant price to do it. Then they will not respond to our inquiries asking for reconsideration.

Having said that, Mr. Vaughn, you have had to deal with three hurricanes: Ivan, Dennis, and now Katrina. In working with the Federal Highway Administration's Emergency Relief Program and FEMA's Emergency Assistant Program, what challenges has the State of Alabama had with using both these programs to address road and bridge damage caused by the storms?

Mr. VAUGHN. Congressman, I think our biggest challenge is the misunderstanding of the roles that Federal Highway's ER program and FEMA's relief program have when it comes to debris removal. The DOT with Federal Highway Administration ER money will go through and make a first pass following a storm, and clear the road for traffic, and then remove the storm debris from the right of way with ER participation. Following that, what we get into is adjoining landowners will bring their debris to the State right of way which is eligible for FEMA funding.

The landowners don't understand, and the Local Governments don't understand the difference, and we start getting calls about the DOT failing to remove the debris from the State highway. We have recognized this. It is something that has occurred in every storm, and we have recognized this. We are working with our local EMA, FEMA, and Federal Highway Administration, and we are going around developing an educational seminar, if you will, to try to explain the differences between these two programs.

Mr. BACHUS. All right. Thank you.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you. Mr. Taylor.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I want to thank all of our participants for being here. I am going to limit my remarks just to the guys from Mississippi. A couple things, in looking

at the short range efforts to get some sort of traffic across Bay St. Louis and Biloxi Bay, as someone who lives in Bay St. Louis and spends a lot of time on the bay, Mr. Hall, I am very aware that it is a very shallow body of water, and that is going to complicate things.

But there are assets out there such as the Navy Construction Battalion, such as an outfit in Poplarville that actually makes dredges. The Corps of Engineers could provide dredging for the parts that are necessary. So again, I think it is great that you have plans on from the day you let the contract to the day we cut the ribbon on the bridge, that it is 18 months. It is still going to be months before you let the contracts. So we are looking for those folks, which is a lot of people, at a two year delay.

I would really encourage you, and particularly since I think our Nation is going to end up paying for this, and it is not going to come out of the State's budget, to do everything possible to provide some sort of ferry service. And include, amongst your options, looking at some form of rail transport of getting those cars across the bays because I spoke with the CSX folks yesterday.

They are expecting the Bay St. Louis Bridge to be completed in less than six months. They are a bit luckier in that all they have to do is pick up the pieces of the old bridge and spot them back in place, rather than the undertaking that you have which is to replace the bridges. So I would really ask that you consider that for the sake of the folks who live down there.

The second thing is this Committee was good enough to pass under the 109th Congress Public Law 109-59 Section 1805, which requires that when a bridge is destroyed and removed, that we do something good with it. In Coastal Mississippi, doing something good with it means either building a barrier to protect our islands, building a barrier to break water for a harbor, or building a fishing reef with it, as Secretary Brown and your commission had been so helpful on when the Interstate Bridge over the Jordan River was replaced a couple years ago.

We have two great opportunities to do a lot of good with what will be the debris of the Biloxi Bridge and the Bay St. Louis Bridge. I had a conversation with the head of our Department of Marine Resources, Dr. Bill Walker, last week. They have already signed on to be the local sponsor to pick the sites to take the responsibility for the debris.

Once it is put overboard, it becomes their responsibility if there is any liability, and they are a very willing participant in this. Since I have two of my three commissioners here, I would really encourage you to do good things with that and seize this once in a lifetime opportunity. I hope those bridges aren't destroyed again in my lifetime.

That is why I am saying, a once in a lifetime opportunity to do something good with that. And again, this is going to be paid for with Federal dollars. So as a Federal Congressman, I am going to ask that you all try to make that happen.

The third thing is kind of parochial, but I do think important for the sake of future generations of Mississippi, and this falls in the very small request category. I would hope you would put a marker on Highway 603 at the high water mark where the waters of

Katrina left that debris lying. I think future generations would be well served by knowing just how bad that storm was, just like I think my generation is well served by the great book written about the flood in Louisiana and Mississippi in 1927.

Again, I am with you in the replacement of those bridges. I have had the opportunity to cruise Highway 90 a couple of times in the past couple of weeks. I want to compliment the crews that are out there trying to get it up and running.

But I think it is also important to have people from Jackson County get to Harrison, and people from Harrison get to Hancock without having to jump up to the interstate because what used to be a 2 mile drive for people from Bay St. Louis to attend school in Pass Christian or the other way around is now more like a 20 mile drive. Given the fact that Cowan and Lorraine, Highway 49, and many of the other north-south roads have really become bottlenecks, anything that we can do to get Highway 90 up and running as quickly as possible would be important.

The last thing I would ask, and I fully support your efforts to try do something with the CSX line, keeping in mind that even the folks from CSX are saying, if we could do this as quickly as possible, we are still looking at six years. Anything that is done along what was the CSX roadbed, if it is not limited entry, if you don't have some sort of interstate style limited entry, where you don't have a traffic light every block, if we don't have some sort of limited entry, you have accomplished absolutely nothing. If all we do is build an overpass road at great expense of moving that railroad and building another road, we really have accomplished nothing for the citizens.

So I would encourage you up front, before anything else happens, to get a commitment from each of the cities, and that means Biloxi, Gulfport, Long Beach, and Pass Christian. Get a commitment from them up front that they will be willing to live with the political heat that would come from making that limited entry because in your testimony you mentioned the 100 plus rail crossings.

We have not seen the local community step forward to even stop rail crossings, which is just for one customer. So if they are not going to be willing to step forward and limit rail crossings, it is really important that they be willing to step forward and limit the north-south crossings there would be to this future road. Again, if you don't do that, we really haven't accomplished much. But I would like to hear your thoughts on that.

Mr. BROWN. Congressman, number one, I am 100 percent in favor of that. You could accomplish what Commissioner Hall spoke of. You can also make a higher levee and keep the ocean from washing in.

Mr. TAYLOR. That would be great.

Mr. BROWN. I think you are absolutely right, and then that would allow us to do some really, really nice things on U.S. 90. In other words, as Mr. Hall said, you could calm it; you could make it a parkway; you could make it something attractive and attract people to the Coast.

But you would have a people mover in the old CSX line and probably to have to elevated, to build it to interstate quality, and limited access is a way to do it. I would like to see some type of transit

included in that. I think it is important. Transit is hard to get going, but we need more transit on the Coast.

I really like your idea of the marker. Let me back up to that. I think I can guarantee that will be done. On the rubble, we have provisions in the contracts on U.S. 90 to put to use the rubble or to make it available, not necessarily use it. But we run into some things, some obstructions. We won't clean with steel protruding. I think there is a piece of steel protruding from every piece of that rubble.

Mr. TAYLOR. If I may, Commissioner Brown?

Mr. BROWN. Sure.

Mr. TAYLOR. If you take the time to look at the success story that you already have which was the key at Telegraph, at Square Handkerchief.

Mr. BROWN. Yes.

Mr. TAYLOR. There was some steel protruding. What the contractor did was for the visible steel, he went there with something as simple as a settling torch and cut that off. Below the water line, there is a lot of steel which actually became the first safe haven for the fish and the first oysters, clams, algae; it actually attached to the steel before it attached to the concrete. And then what happens is because it is steel and because it is salt water, over time that stuff is going to go away anyway, but it isn't the eyesore, and really we have not had any complaints from the way that was done which still left the steel on it.

Mr. BROWN. It would be a shame if we did not use that rubble to improve our fisheries in our Mississippi Gulf Coast, and we, the Commission, are going to do what we can to make that happen.

Mr. TAYLOR. Great.

Mr. BROWN. And the ferry, we are working with. FEMA is now in the lead on that. We were working with Federal Highway, but FEMA came in, and they are in the lead on the ferry, and they are working with our Public Transit Division and Maritime.

Mr. TAYLOR. Again, just to throw out the rail idea, I know that Amtrak at one time had passenger trains that touted that you could bring your car along. Now, I know that was a long haul, say from New York or Washington down to Florida, but somebody out there has got to have a mechanism for a quick way to get cars onto a flat car and get them off again on the other side.

Again, Mr. Hall correctly pointed out that putting a ferry across Bay St. Louis is not a simple task, but this at least gives you another option to look at, and I have to believe that somebody in the world is already doing that.

Mr. BROWN. I would like clarification. It is my understanding that after the 180 days or some period, that somebody is going to pick up 20 percent of the cost of that ferry.

Mr. TAYLOR. Well, as you know Governor Barbour is up here. We have the great fortune of having two very senior Senators, including the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. If that is the only hindrance, please let them know about that. I think that can get fixed.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you very much.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you very much.

Mr. HALL. Mr. Chairman, may I make a remark or two in response to Congressman Taylor, and I will try not to say the same things that my colleague did. One I will mention is I think I agree with him that Highway 603 high water mark is a very good idea, and I am sure we will do that.

You mentioned repairs on Highway 90. We awarded how many contracts Tuesday? Three. Three contracts at our Commission meeting last Tuesday, so they will be underway immediately. There won't be any more delay getting that started.

You mentioned the limited access on that CSX right of way. Absolutely, and it won't be easy politically, but there is no reason to do it if we don't do that. I mean the whole point is to do away with these 100 plus at-grade crossings. If someone had the suggestion that you make it, or they had the idea of something like St. Charles in New Orleans, have the highways and the trolley.

All that is a possibility, and that is still yet to be determined. But I agree with you. Certainly, we have to do it in a way that does away with the at-grade crossings.

And the ferry, we will continue to pursue that. It reminds me that I can understand. I am an old Coast Guard guy. You were in the Coast Guard, weren't you, if I remember correctly? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you.

I wonder if I could ask all of the panelists, the last panel represented the Federal Transit Administration, I think, and FEMA discussing this aspect of reconstruction with Transportation and Infrastructure. If you could, sort of in a positive way if possible, there was some controversy because of what happened in New Orleans with the double blow and finger-pointing.

My own personal view is that we want to get the job done, and then we can go back and figure out what worked and what didn't work and how to do better next time, but to try to put all of this in a positive context.

Are there things that we can do right now? Are there areas where improvement, or support, or communications between Federal and State could be improved? You have alluded to sort of getting some better framework for the flow of funds or commitments so that you can proceed. It is pretty clear that you are going to have enough real world delays. They have responsibilities to be good stewards, and to make sure things are well thought out, and that there is not unnecessary waste.

But on the other hand, we want to get this economy up and moving, and people paying taxes and paying their bills, and earning something, and taking care of their families as quickly as possible down there. A lot has to be done in terms of infrastructure for that to really happen.

So if you could comment on any things, concerns you have, or things we might highlight, or things we might do at the Federal level to make sure that we are supporting your efforts. You are on the front line. I appreciate hearing of it.

Mr. BRADBERY. Mr. Chairman, on behalf of Louisiana, our situation with and our critical issue, around FEMA in particular, has to do with the timeliness of their reimbursements. We have had a very poor history with FEMA performance as relates to reimburse-

ment. This year, I can't look at you and tell you that they are untimely yet.

However, given the past track record, we are fairly leery. I can tell you that the process that we go through to prepare a project worksheet for FEMA is very arduous, very difficult, very complex. There are a lot of steps to it, and we better get it right the first time or it is coming back, and it goes through the cycle again and again.

So my point is from Louisiana's perspective, we have a real cash flow problem. In the middle of next month, we are going to run out of money. If we don't get reimbursed on a timely basis on the money we are spending now by FEMA, it will be very serious in our State.

So any encouragement, any process improvements we can recommend, and any sort of discussion with FEMA would benefit this whole thing. Again, we are about ready to turn in about 30 to 35 PWs by the end of this week, and we are going to see very shortly what kind of response we get. But if it is not timely, we are going to be in a world of hurt.

Mr. PETRI. Can you flesh that out? What magnitude of money are you talking about, and what kind of things would happen if you didn't get it handled quickly? I mean even if there is a problem, if they work with you to solve the problem, that is one thing. If you get bureaucratic runaround and delays, that is quite a different thing.

Mr. BRADBERY. All right. Well, we will take debris cleanup as an example. We are paying those invoices now. If we don't get that money back, we are taking money out of our trust fund, and come December, our operations budget is going to go negative on the cash flow side. We will have to consider taking money from the rest of our program and put Federal dollars at risk and the regular highway program at risk because we are not getting reimbursed fast enough. I don't know if that answered your question or not.

But again, to me, it is a process thing with FEMA. It is how efficient they are. I mean we see cases to where in one week, they will have a person sitting at a desk to go through a process with you. In two weeks that same person is not there anymore, and you kind of have to go through the process again with another individual. It is sort of a learning curve issue.

I like to use the analogy that when FEMA gets into an area, FEMA is almost us. They hire consultants. They hire people in and around the area and from other States to come in, and these people have to go home. They work just like the rest of us. When they do that, you bring somebody else in. It just, again, exacerbates the problem, and they have to go through a learning curve as well.

So again, I think our issue with FEMA is process-driven. I hope that I can report back to you in a month or so and tell you that it is working fine, that we are getting timely reimbursement, but I can't say that at this moment. It is a critical issue for us.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. Chairman, we have had very little involvement with FEMA. I will say that three or four days after the hurricane passed, they were there with fuel. So I can put a feather in their cap for that, and they have been very helpful in providing fuel.

But with Federal Highway and the ER funds, I would like to see more of the authority shift further down, that somebody on site be able to make decisions. As I stated earlier, when you are in the middle of Biloxi, and all of that is going on around you, you need somebody by your side there. Generally speaking, Federal Highway has been, but sometimes that answer has to come to Washington or something, and there is a delay in it.

We would like more authority right there on the ground so that we can make decisions at the time that they need to be made. For the most part, it has worked very well, but we have had some stutter steps in that process.

Mr. PETRI. Anyone else? Mr. Hall?

Mr. HALL. I agree with what Director Bradbery touched on and Commissioner Brown both, the cash flow situation. Get the money moving. We are spending money we don't have, and we are just exactly what Director Bradbery said. We are at a point where we have to start making decisions. Do we start a job down in Tupelo or somewhere else, or spend the money on the Coast which doesn't leave us a lot of options? So whatever can be done to make that happen.

And one other thing, and I don't need to get into this with a lot depth and don't intend to, but the possibility of expediting some environmental resolution. In other words, when those bridges were built, Congressman Taylor, they were built a long time ago and put in that particular place. Well, that might not be the best place for them right now. Maybe we ought to move them over here, or move them over there, or budge it a little bit.

But then somebody says, oh, it will take us five years to go through the environmental process to do that. Well, that is not acceptable. If there is a better place to put it, we need to put it where it needs to go, the best place, and we need to be able to somehow expedite that.

I always use the example that the last runway they paved at Atlanta Airport took APAC Construction 30 days to pave it, took 14 years to permit it. We are not in a position that we can do that. We have got to get stuff built. So we have the pressure of, well, do you go in there and build it just right where it is because that is the quickest thing to do, or do you build it where it ought to be?

Mr. VAUGHN. Mr. Chairman, our involvement with FEMA at the Department of Transportation level is limited, but I can say that prior to the storm, FEMA was at the table. They helped with evacuation planning, evacuation decisions, preplanning of relief efforts, and I felt them to be a very, very good partner in our efforts. One thing we have identified post-storms this year is the ineligibility of reimbursement from the ER program for our evacuation efforts.

The efforts to reverse lanes or contraflow on I-65 to help with the evacuation is an expensive undertaking. The Federal Highway Administration has recently issued a ruling that ER funds cannot be used to pay that because it occurred before the storm. So that might be an opportunity to look into to maybe provide some additional assistance to the States.

Mr. DEVILLE. Mr. Chairman and all the members of the Committee, I have six things that I can list right off the top that we would really appreciate if you would help us advance the cause here. First

is temporary housing. We have lost over 1,300 employees. Many, as I said earlier, were dispersed throughout the State and other areas of the county.

In the process of reestablishing the Transit Authority in the City of New Orleans, thank God that FEMA, and FTA, and Congress are coming forth with funding, but due to time constraints and time lines, sometimes we lose that window of opportunity in getting people back. Some employees have their kids in school. Some have gotten FEMA grants in other places, and it becomes more of a challenge to get them back.

But there are many, many willing to come back and want to come back, but there is no place to put them. So that impacts our attempt to be successful in moving things quickly, in terms of restoring the transit part as well as the City itself.

Secondly, we have worked very hard. When this first happened, I got calls from the Federal Transit Administration as well as Mr. Jamison and others offering help and promising relief as soon as possible. And in that process, they wanted to know what the numbers were. So the numbers that were requested came at a time early on when we weren't even allowed to go back to New Orleans.

So what we have done since then is we have gone back. We are there now, and we are refining our numbers, and we have good numbers. And the strike team that I told you about earlier, we are prepared to move quickly, but I would ask you to encourage those who are involved to get the numbers back to us that we worked so hard to provide and get together as well.

Additionally, there is the 9/11 precedent in New York whereby investment grants were used, using FEMA funds that could be used for capital and operating. That would help us greatly because once the FEMA funds run out here in this contract, we are right back where we started.

Additionally, waiving of match requirements is critical. We have no economy right now. So certainly, if we were to waive that match requirement, it would go a long way in helping us get started. The grant for FTA and DOT authority to enhance, as well as rebuild, is important so that we are not restricted in that regard. We have worked with the City, State, and Federal officials, APTA, and other transit associations trying to organize and formulate these strategies, and we certainly could use your help in moving them forward.

Finally, holding harmless on formula funds due to a population effects for at least 24 months. I mean we have lost everybody practically, and so our formula funds are going to drop right off the table very, very soon. So if you could help us in that regard and at least extend it 24 months, that would go a long way in helping us in that area.

Mr. PETRI. Just before you respond, those bells mean that we have got a vote on the floor. We have been informed by BlackBerry it will probably be about 45 minutes worth of votes. We have about eight minutes or so before we have to run over. I thought we could hear Mr. Brashear and then if Mr. Boozman has some questions.

Then if it conforms with your travel schedules, we would like to adjourn. Mr. Baker, a member of the Committee, can't be here until a bit later but will be back after the votes to ask some questions, particularly for the Louisiana people. Why don't you respond

as succinctly as you can? And then, Mr. Boozman will have a chance to ask questions.

Mr. BRASHEAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, share Secretary Bradbery's concern relative to FEMA. My agency started to provide emergency services the Sunday before Katrina hit and continued up until recently. We have put in initial requests with FEMA.

I have met with them on a number of occasions, and to my dismay found out that the vehicles that we were providing, they did not cover the cost of the fuel nor the wages to pay the drivers. So in a recent newspaper article, I was quoted as saying that I am draining the fuel out of all of my buses and won't provide a driver in the future.

And I say that tongue in cheek, but there is a real serious situation going on relative to what is reimbursable. It is almost like walking through a maze. We give them our price; they counter. We give them another price; they counter.

I think at some point, we are going to get to the point where we settle on what is reimbursable, and it has become very frustrating. So whatever assistance this Committee can be in helping us navigate that maze would certainly be appreciated.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Deville, in your testimony, you mentioned the strike force. Can you tell us what the makeup is of the strike force?

Mr. DEVILLE. Certainly. The strike force is made up of, it is really a public-private group encompassing the Local, City, Federal, and State key departments, as well as industry leaders who have experience in catastrophe recovery such as ACNTB, AUCOM, and others in that particular industry, and additionally the Regional Transit Authority employees that would compose that group of a strike team.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Cummings?

Mr. CUMMINGS. Yes, Mr. Bradbery, I was reading somewhere in the New York Times that road crews were being dismissed, in other words laid off. Is that true?

Mr. BRADBERY. To my knowledge, I have not heard that, and as far as I am concerned, with respect to DOTD crews, it is not true.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Okay. When we were down there on the Gulf Coast a few weeks ago, I remember you were really very concerned about money running out. I guess it has gotten far worse now.

Mr. BRADBERY. Yes, sir, it has. Again, as I mentioned previously, from our perspective in Louisiana, we are going to go into negative cash flow in December, about the middle of December. And it is going to get critical for us if we don't get an influx of money in pretty quickly.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Well, we are running out of time, but I am hoping and praying that the Congress will do the right thing. There are many of us who really want to see the funds flow, and all of you have been very clear, all of you, about the use of Federal funds in an effective and efficient way.

I am just praying that we can get through some of this, what we are going through, so that we can help people and get things on the right path. But I want to thank all of you for what you are doing. I know it is tough. It has got to be. I just want to say, thank you.

Mr. BRADBERY. Thank you, Mr. Cummings.

Mr. BOOZMAN. We are going to need to recess now. When we come back, let me give you a question you can think of, okay? In September, Congress passed an emergency supplemental appropriations bill providing $62 billion for Katrina-related relief activities. What we would like to talk about how much Federal funding your States received thus far for the repair and reconstruction of roads and bridges damaged by the hurricane.

So again, let us pursue that in just a little bit.

The hearing is recessed until 10 until 4:00.

[Recess.]

Mr. PETRI. The Subcommittee will resume. I would first like to thank our panel for indulging us. The interruption was due to business on the floor of the House, a number of votes on important legislation.

I would now like to recognize my colleague from Baton Rouge, Representative Baker, for questions.

Mr. BAKER. I thank the Chairman and certainly the members of the panel for your courtesy in extending your stay. I also appreciate the difficult task each of you have ahead of you, facing an inordinate amount of cataclysmic recovery. I was not able to participate in the hearing earlier, so I hope I do not plow new territory.

Mr. Brashear, do you think that in the Baton Rouge area, with the 150,000 or 200,000 folks, we are not sure, that are now in the metropolitan area, that there are adequate resources to provide the types of transit services that will really facilitate enhancement in the traffic flows of the community? What is your outlook on, say, an 18 to 24 month picture of what our transportation plan looks like?

Mr. BRASHEAR. Thank you, Congressman. I think the quick answer is, no, there aren't adequate resources right now to address the increase in population, not only from a congestion standpoint but from a passenger load standpoint on our system.

We are, in the short-term, seeking assistance from all over this great Nation of ours from transit properties, looking for assistance relative to equipment, and then, of course, working with Bill Deville and the folks over at the New Orleans Regional Transit authority, trying to get the personnel to drive those buses.

So right now, we are struggling to meet the demand. I think, long-term, we have a goal—myself, Mr. Deville, and others—of creating a true regional transit system, tying the Crescent City into the capital city henceforth and forevermore. So we have a plan that we are working on, that we are developing. I think, ultimately, what you will see is a model system for the rest of this Country. So we are excited about the future.

Mr. BAKER. Thank you very much.

Secretary Bradbery, one of the things that is of concern to me is, operationally, what is the effect on the agency, on your department, in the Orleans Metro Area with regard to employees that would normally be available to you to conduct simple maintenance activities? Where are we in relation to those concerns?

Mr. BRADBERY. Yes, we have about 200 workers, 200 people and their families that are affected by this storm, that don't have homes in that area. So it has put a strain on our work force there, trying to get them some place to stay.

Mr. BAKER. Excuse me. Are those 200 families and the respective employee reporting for work now, or are they just not available?

Mr. BRADBERY. No. We have about 135 reporting to work. In total, we have about 200 families that need to get some homes and need to get back on their feet. We are getting some help from the other districts in trying to make things happen there so we can keep our operations moving.

It is a problem for us. We are working very closely right now with FEMA to try to get housing on DOTD property to house some of our people, and that has been a difficult task. We have been trying to do that now for the last six weeks. We are making some progress, but it is not as fast as I would like.

Mr. BAKER. To what extent are State transportation resources deployed to help with debris removal? Are you significantly engaged or partially? How does that work?

Mr. BRADBERY. Our initial effort is about over. We have turned it all over to the contractors.

Mr. BAKER. Okay, great. Is there any scope yet or estimate of what that total debris removal charge might look like?

Mr. BRADBERY. We are probably looking at a figure anywhere from $40 to $60 million.

Mr. BAKER. Are sites acquired for the disposition of that material?

Mr. BRADBERY. Well, DEQ is working with us there. We do have sites, and so that is being worked heavily. Yes, we do have sites. I can't tell you exactly where they are, but we do have some.

Mr. BAKER. One of the things you and I have talked about is the need for enhanced evacuation routes. We all know, regrettably, these events are going to reoccur. I believe in the plan you submitted for consideration, there were significant additional capacity projects to get people up north to Baton Rouge and then east-west.

If I am understanding the earlier discussion properly, the earlier funds made available, the $60 billion plus by the Congress, those resources aren't available to the department for that type of work?

Mr. BRADBERY. They are not, the $62 billion. The Stafford Act fundamentally does not provide dollars to be put in FHWA relief fund. As it relates to Federal Highways, there is no money being deposited or directed to the emergency relief pot. So I must respectfully really say that Congress simply has not funneled the money in the proper pot.

Mr. BAKER. What has happened with gasoline tax receipts as a result of the effects of Katrina in the Orleans area? Has it had yet a measurable impact on your ability to conduct your business?

Mr. BRADBERY. At the last assessment we did, gasoline income was fundamentally flat. We anticipate a reduction, not only due to Katrina but to high gas prices. So we anticipate a hit and thus reduce revenues from gas taxes.

Mr. BAKER. Do you have in hand today a plan to facilitate the infrastructure problems in Baton Rouge, and what is the scope of that?

Mr. BRADBERY. We have been talking with the City of Baton Rouge. Very early on, we knew that we had a congestion problem, a severe congestion problem. We have got an infrastructure there that can handle 350,000 to 400,000 people; we now have about

700,000 people that we estimate. So we worked with them on their plan. The status of that is we have included in this package almost $1 billion to help relieve congestion and enhance commerce and evacuation routes in and around the Baton Rouge area.

Mr. BAKER. I don't know that it has been discussed. I am sure each State representative would go to their own delegation for their assistance. But it really might be quite helpful, given the magnitude of the problem, and there is Katrina-Rita fatigue and soon to be Wilma fatigue I bet up here, if we had some sort of regional transportation response to kind of help us all work together.

Not knowing the conditions or the requirements in our neighboring States, I know you have them, I know it is important that the requests be storm-related and warranted, not necessarily just increasing capacity because there is an opportunity.

But if we can work together as a Gulf Coast coalition and come up with a transportation plan that is a consolidated ask, I think our opportunities to get—I know the Chairman is favorably disposed, and I am speaking really to those not on Transportation who are ultimately going to have to vote on the floor and would probably be encouraged to see some sort of regional expression of cooperation in making that ask. Specifically, like on the Twin Spans and the interstate, we are all connected.

It is essential for that interstate to function that it function across the entire South, not just through our own State. That is just one of the things that I wanted to suggest to the group.

Mr. Chairman, I don't want to take extraordinary time, but I did feel it important to come and make that request to the Secretaries. If there is a way for us to get together, I think it would helpful for all of our respective interests. With that, I will yield back, unless somebody has a comment.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you. I suspect Mr. Bachus may have some additional questions.

One area I was going to ask a question of, but maybe I can do it as a comment. There was talk earlier about difficulty in perhaps relocating some facilities to more desirable locations, and the need for environmental approvals, and how this might create a Catch 22 situation where you need to get the infrastructure in, but if you do it right, it is not going to be right for the long term; it is not going to be ideal. We have had hearings on this before.

I believe that the Secretary of Transportation under the authority of the President working with States, there are a number of instances where they do give expedited environmental and other approval processes. It has been done in the case, maybe at the State level, but it was done with Federal cooperation after the earthquakes in California where they went ahead and redid the transportation infrastructure. Also, in the case of Salt Lake City preparing for the Olympics, they ended up getting together and expediting a lot of things.

Mr. BAKER. Mr. Chairman, on that point, I failed to raise it in my time and just to put an emphasis on it, Baton Rouge and the surrounding area is under significant ozone non-attainment problems, and there is considerable question about our ability to construct new capacity projects unless we get some regulatory assistance. The Secretary may want to comment about that. But your ob-

servation about assistance with environmental constraints is hugely important to us.

Mr. PETRI. I can understand there is basic problem which many people have, which is how much you rebuild in the flood plain and how much you redeploy assets to try to make the situation as environmentally sensitive and as resistant to the future. Weather is weather, and the world is the world. We don't want to keep rebuilding infrastructure every couple of years if the weather is going to recur, which we have to expect it will. So let us adapt and build smart, but we are going to have to build.

But leaving that aside, something is going to have to be built somewhere, and it needs to be done sooner rather than later. In that connection, certainly, this Committee would be eager to work with you on any effort that would be needed to help, not set aside but to telescope that process, so that there was adequate review, but it wasn't delay. It was an expedited planning process to get the job done right as quickly as possible.

It has been done. There are examples for it. There is a procedure where I think the President can designate a high priority to five or ten areas or projects. But this is sort of a mega-project which would probably require working with the State Departments of Transportation in order to define and facilitate. But I think it is probably worth taking a look at it in any event.

Mr. Bachus?

Mr. BACHUS. Thank you. I want to ask a few questions of Mr. Deville and Mr. Brashear. The New Orleans Regional Transportation Authority had 372 buses, is that correct?

Mr. DEVILLE. Yes, sir, that is correct.

Mr. BACHUS. At one time, I read where 200 of them were lost. Did that come down?

Mr. DEVILLE. There were close to 200 RTA buses that were flooded at our Canal Street Station. We have two major bus facilities, East New Orleans and Canal Street. Traditionally, our hurricane plan, evacuation plan calls for us to remove the East New Orleans buses to a safer site because it floods there more often as opposed to Canal Street where in history, modern history, had not flooded. So we put a little over 200 buses or close to 200 buses on the wharf out of East New Orleans, and we operated out of the Canal Station with just under 200 buses for the regular service as well as those we needed to evacuate with.

Mr. BACHUS. Were all of them lost from flooding, or any from vandalism, or anything else?

Mr. DEVILLE. You see, once the storm was over, we were in pretty decent shape. But once the levees became a problem, and the flooding got to be a problem, between the night of the storm and that, there were a number of lay people, so to speak, that commandeered buses to evacuate themselves. They saw the buses, found out how to start them up and get them running, and took off. We found some in different parts of the State over the last few weeks. I witnessed that myself.

The other thing was that the military, the FEMA, and National Guard that were in New Orleans when nobody else could go in, they used the buses themselves to transport themselves, the police, the firemen, etcetera. What happened was that many of those, once

they either ran out of gas, or the battery went down, or they busted an oil pan in the street, they left it there and went and got another one.

So we do have a lot of damaged buses as a result of that combination of efforts. There are the flooded buses on Canal Street, just under 200. Then the buses that we had saved on higher ground at the wharf, a lot of those were commandeered by what I just said.

Mr. BACHUS. Do you have a new plan now for locating them, say, out of New Orleans if another hurricane were to approach?

Mr. DEVILLE. Absolutely. First of all, we want to make sure that we know what kind of protection we are going to have with the levee system. Secondly, we have a team we put together that is doing strategic planning in that regard. For instance, there is no sense in locating back at Plaza and East New Orleans because we know it is going to flood.

So we are going to move our headquarters to maybe the top of the Canal Street building where it is safe, or the Napoleon area where it didn't flood at all. Plus, the strategy is to move those five days ahead of time. Once the storm hits the Gulf, like this particular storm that came, we didn't know until Friday night that it would actually come to New Orleans.

Mr. BACHUS. There are specific plans that would avoid a lot of what happened?

Mr. DEVILLE. Yes. Absolutely.

Mr. BACHUS. That rolling stock in the transportation facilities, was that insured?

Mr. DEVILLE. Yes. Yes, sir.

Mr. BACHUS. So you will receive reimbursement from insurance for that?

Mr. DEVILLE. We have started to receive some reimbursements, yes. We are in that process now. In fact, we are trying to get the FTA and the Congressional folks to release the reports that we are working together on so that we can get it to the insurance companies.

Mr. BACHUS. So you will get a certain amount of insurance funds, and then anything above that, you will seek reimbursement?

Mr. DEVILLE. Precisely. We have already applied to FEMA, and we are waiting for those numbers.

Mr. BACHUS. Now presently, in Baton Rouge and New Orleans, you all are not charging fare on buses, is that right?

Mr. DEVILLE. I will let Mr. Brashear talk about Baton Rouge. In New Orleans, we were completely wiped out, not only the buses and the streetcars but the facilities to operate from.

Mr. BACHUS. Right.

Mr. DEVILLE. So as the military cleared things up, and the National Guard and FEMA are starting to allow people back, then of course we lost over 180 vehicles in that area as well as homes. Transportation is needed. People have a lot of things, their personal belongings.

Mr. BACHUS. Sure, and I am not questioning. I guess my question is, you are not presently charging fares?

Mr. DEVILLE. In New Orleans, no, we are not.

Mr. BACHUS. Do you know, is there any thought to when you will resume charging fares?

Mr. DEVILLE. Well, that is a tough question. Initially, FEMA has agreed to do it for 6 months, 24 weeks to be exact. And of course, as we proceed and get closer to that deadline, we will reevaluate. Under the program management plan, we will constantly reevaluate it on a weekly basis.

Mr. BACHUS. Will you be reimbursed for that, for the lost fares?

Mr. DEVILLE. No, we are not being reimbursed for lost fares at this point in time.

Mr. BACHUS. Okay. Now, the streetcars, you just made reference to that. Of course, the streetcars are absolutely essential, I think, to restore the tourism.

Mr. DEVILLE. It is a structure.

Mr. BACHUS. Anybody who has been to New Orleans knows how important they are. Can you give us a time frame on when the trolley streetcar lines will be back in operation, say to as they were before Hurricane Katrina?

Mr. DEVILLE. We have currently one of our contractors evaluating the trucks, that is, the components and their circuitry and electronics that are below the seating under the vehicle itself. That process is not completed, but we think that within several months, we can probably have an answer and a response, and get it fixed.

But in the meantime, we found out that the St. Charles streetcars were not flooded, were not damaged, and are operable. However, the line, the St. Charles streetcar line, the overhead wiring that powers them was destroyed pretty badly.

Mr. BACHUS. Sure.

Mr. DEVILLE. Fortunately, FTA had already awarded us a grant to restore and replace. So we can begin that immediately, to restore that, and it will probably take about a year or so. The plan would be, if the Canal Street cars were all flooded in the Canal area, we are asking for permission to use the St. Charles cars on the line that is still the Canal line. The challenge is that they are not ADA accessible.

So what we would like to do is run parallel service with buses and para-transit vans and utilize that streetcar. So people can see that the City is coming. The infrastructure is starting to come back. And this would be for a short term, temporarily.

Mr. BACHUS. Will you need waivers to do that?

Mr. DEVILLE. That is what we are seeking. Yes, sir.

Mr. BACHUS. Okay. Would that be a Federal waiver?

Mr. DEVILLE. Yes, sir.

Mr. BACHUS. Okay. I guess this will be my last question in that regard. You mentioned the need for a waiver in that case. I think Mr. Bradbery mentioned the need for waivers. Well, let me say this. If you recall, New York City received a number of Federal relief from a lot of regulatory red tape and regulatory relief, and I think the gentleman from Mississippi mentioned the need for some of that today.

Have you all looked at what New York was offered and the different regulatory relief that they were granted? Do you maybe have a list, or could you supply us a list of what Federal regulatory requirements you need relief from, and why you think it is nec-

essary? I want to ask you. You might just mention one or two, but I think a listing of those. And also, were you all aware that New York Metropolitan Area was given a substantial number of Federal regulatory waivers?

Mr. BRADBERY. We will do our best to put a list together and get it to you. The one that is of most interest to us is a waiver on the conformity determination as to the Clean Air Act. For us, it is particularly critical because of the surge of population into Baton Rouge, in particular. The projects that we want to do to try to relieve some of that congestion are going to require that we receive this waiver. The City of New York was granted that waiver after 9/11, and we believe that we can get it granted as well.

Mr. BACHUS. Have you been granted those waivers yet?

Mr. BRADBERY. No, we have not.

Mr. BACHUS. All right.

Mr. BRADBERY. Congressman Baker has introduced a bill in the House to address this.

Mr. BACHUS. Okay, good. Well, Congressman Baker thinks of a lot of things. He is very ahead of the curve on these things. So that is very good.

We appropriated $62 billion in early September. Of that, I would ask the highway officials, of the amount of expenditures you have had, maybe what percentage have you been reimbursed, and what is the total amount of Federal dollars that you have been reimbursed? Now, all that $62 billion was not highway money for bridges and roads, but we were told, obviously, that was on of the major appropriations within that bill.

Mr. BRADBERY. On the Emergency Relief Fund side by Federal Highways, none of that $62 billion. The Stafford Act does not allow any of that money to be put into that fund. Consequently, Federal Highways had $10 million in that fund, and they gave $5 million of that $10 million to Louisiana and $5 million to Mississippi.

To date, that is all that we have received relative to monies from the Emergency Relief Fund. Louisiana has a need of $1.1 billion that has to come from the Emergency Relief Fund, unless it is appropriated in a different way.

Mr. BACHUS. Okay. So I guess you have to pay these out of the State coffers, the money, and then just hope for reimbursement.

Mr. BRADBERY. Yes, sir, that is what we are doing now. That is why I am saying our cash flow is going to become a critical issue here fairly soon. On the FEMA side, the $62 billion side, to date, our department, our agency has only gotten $1.1 million back. We have exposed out there. We are going to have exposed on debris cleanup and so forth, at least $360 million.

Mr. BACHUS. What pressures has that put on both the State of Mississippi and the State of Louisiana? I am not leaving Alabama out, but it is a much smaller scale.

Mr. BRADBERY. For us in the State of Louisiana, it puts a lot of pressure on us because it jeopardizes the normal transportation development program. If I have to take money from those pots, then I don't do anything else in the State. That whole program is now at risk. I also have the risk of losing Federal dollars because I don't have State monies to match. So it is a real critical issue for us.

Mr. HIGGINS. We are in exactly the same boat in Mississippi. We spent $26.1 million. So far, we have gotten $5 million back. Also, another thing that my colleagues asked me to pass on to you all. I forgot to mention it earlier with Mr. Brown's testimony. We have been told for the eastbound lanes of Highway 90, we would be reimbursed 100 percent, but for the westbound lanes, we won't be. We haven't figured that one out yet.

Mr. BACHUS. Okay.

Mr. BROWN. We haven't been reimbursed for any of it yet.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Baker, anything else?

Mr. BAKER. Mr. Chairman, I wanted to get clarification. I think I heard you say that eastbound would be reimbursable, but westbound lanes on the same route are not reimbursable?

Mr. HIGGINS. That is what they told me.

Mr. BAKER. And they have not given a written explanation as to why?

Mr. HIGGINS. No, not yet.

Mr. BAKER. May I inquire who said this to you?

Mr. HIGGINS. The FHWA folks.

Mr. BAKER. Was this I-90 or I-10?

Mr. HIGGINS. This is 90, Highway 90 down on Beach.

Mr. BAKER. Okay, Highway 90.

Mr. HIGGINS. Yes, right.

Mr. BACHUS. I guess if we are going north-south, it is just a guess whether that will work.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HIGGINS. I don't know. It is very frustrating.

Mr. PETRI. I thank you all very much for coming here and discussing this. I really want to, again, underline how appreciative of the time you have taken to come up here and how much we understand the strain that not only you but your employees in your departments, as well as the citizens of your states, have undergone. It has been a traumatic time.

As you know, the Congress as a whole has responded twice with two large appropriations of money. It is causing a certain amount of turmoil up here in the budget process because there is this perception somehow that we are ladling tremendous amounts of money out without figuring out how to pay for it, and really just sort of putting it on the tab without people really understanding that very little of this money and a percentage of the $72 billion that has been appropriated has actually spent.

Secondly, unless we do spend money, obviously prudently but quickly and reasonably, to get infrastructure and to get the economy moving again, it is going to be costing us a lot more money in terms of economic loss because the people cannot have jobs if they don't have roads and other infrastructure. If they don't have jobs, they can't pay the taxes, they can't pay their other obligations, and so it goes.

So we are not going to really save any money or anything by not moving as quickly as possible to spend what it takes up front to get the economy back on its feet so that you have revenue flowing, we have revenue flowing. People aren't going to be paying Federal taxes in that region if they don't have jobs. So some of it will be paid back just because people will be paying in once the economies

are restored. We shouldn't ignore that part of the equation, though it has been ignored largely in this discussion.

In any event, we are obviously eager to work with you and with your delegation members to do whatever needs to be done at this end of the Hill to make sure that there are as few glitches as possible in terms of actually getting money flowing to solve some of the problems you are talking about.

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PETRI. Yes.

Mr. BACHUS. One thing I might add that Mr. Vaughn mentioned, as I understand it, FEMA does not reimburse for evacuation-related expenditures.

Mr. VAUGHN. That is correct. The emergency relief funds that come through Federal Highway are only available after the disaster. They are not available to help us in pre-disaster preparation.

Mr. BACHUS. And it doesn't provide any funding for that?

Mr. VAUGHN. It does not.

Mr. BACHUS. Which is what we ought to really encourage. We ought to encourage as much evacuation as we can get. That appears to be a pretty penny-wise and pound-foolish thing to do, particularly when like in the case of Mississippi, a lot of the evacuation was people from Louisiana. We have people going from one State to another. In cases, you have people coming from Alabama and Mississippi into Louisiana.

We certainly ought to fund something like that. That would avoid this and encourage those things to happen, and to be adequately funding so we can not only save lives and property, but encourage people to get out and allow them to get on their way. If you saw all the films, all of us did, a tremendous amount of frustration from people being caught on the roads and the delays that were taken. If we are going to encourage orderly evacuations, it is certainly something we need to reconsider.

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Chairman, if I may, the good news out of that is that this is the first time we have tried contraflow in Mississippi, and from our side, it worked well. I understand, Secretary Bradbery, it did in Louisiana. So it is something that yes, we absolutely need to do it every time now that storm like this threatens, and it is expensive.

Mr. BRADBERY. It is expensive. I think the relationship that we have with Mississippi to do that is working great. It is a sign of partnership and learning from each other, and it was really successful in terms of evacuation this last time.

Mr. PETRI. Very good. We thank you again for your testimony and for your response to the questions today. The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:50 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

Testimony provided to
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
Subcommittee on Highways, Transit, and Pipelines
Thomas E. Pitre, Chairman

Submitted By:
Johnny B. Bradberry, Secretary
Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
October 27, 2005

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, on behalf of the State of Louisiana Department of Transportation, I am honored to submit this written testimony to the United States House of Representatives' Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Highways, Transit and Pipelines. It means a great deal to me to testify before the highest level of government and to represent the citizens of Louisiana. This testimony is in response to the need for Congress to appreciate the state's perspective on the rebuilding of Louisiana after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Appropriations Request

LA DOTD offers to the Congress a reasonable and relevant request for $32.6 billion in special appropriations to help rebuild Louisiana's transportation infrastructure and hurricane protection systems to meet the needs as redefined by Katrina and Rita. This request addresses the components needed to restore our infrastructure and better prepare the state for future events through key transportation and hurricane protection investments.

We have separated the request into three categories: (1) requests specific to the recovery effort from Katrina and Rita; (2) critical transportation needs in preparation for future events; and (3) critical hurricane protection/flood control needs in preparation for future events. For the purposes of this testimony, I have removed the specific details of the items in this request, but the details and methodology used to determine the needs and costs are available upon request.

The first category, "Hurricane Recovery," refers directly to damage resulting from the hurricanes, such as repairing or replacing damaged roads, bridges, public ports, airports, railroads, the maritime and transit systems. It also includes services that have been interrupted or permanently affected because of the damage. This section also addresses the gridlock that has formed in other areas of the state as a result of the relocations of evacuees. Projects in this category are vital to the rebuilding effort and are estimated at $5.5 billion.

"Critical Transportation Needs for Future Events" includes projects to ensure the state is adequately prepared to address future hurricanes or natural disasters. Capacity projects such as road widening, interstate elevation, and development of additional evacuation routes are included in this category. Total "future events" are estimated at $5.1 billion.

The final section is the funding of "Critical Hurricane and Flood Protection Needs for Future Events," which includes levee protection and pumping capacity. This category is the most complicated and most expensive component of this request, but it also is the best investment to ensure the widespread damage caused by unmerciful floodwaters does not happen again. The total estimate is $22 billion, and the work is expected to take many years to complete. The state would like to work collaboratively with the federal government to develop a long-term plan for spreading this cost over the next 10 to 15 years.

Critical Issues for Congress to consider

Immediate Release of Emergency Relief Funds

As important as the funding is to the rebuilding process, there are some imperative, critical issues that must be addressed if we are to be successful. The first issue involves an urgent need for an

immediate appropriation of $100 million in emergency funds. The cost of emergency repairs is rapidly approaching a rate of approximately $1 million per day, and LA DOTD simply does not have the cash flow to continue this spending pace for an extended period of time. We do not even have sufficient funds to pay for the emergency repairs already underway.

Because of the numerous short-term extensions of TEA-21, it was necessary to advance construct many projects to maintain a consistent, stable highway program. Consequently, our cash reserves are substantially diminished, necessitating immediate access to federal funds. We have requested the quick release of $100 million in FHWA Emergency Relief funds to address this issue. However, it is our understanding that the FHWA Emergency Relief account has been nearly depleted by previous events and was never replenished by Congress, which may explain why FHWA has only allocated $5 million thus far. Our cash flow problems will become acute in December 2005.

Timeliness of FEMA Reimbursement

Damage to road and bridge infrastructure not normally eligible for federal aid is $360 million, according to our current estimate. Some of this infrastructure is owned by the state; much of it is not. It is imperative that FEMA reimburse both LA DOTD and local governmental transportation agencies in a timely manner. With damage of unprecedented magnitude, cash flow will become a critical issue for state and local governments if reimbursement of eligible expenses is not prompt. Without swift reimbursement, we cannot pay our bills nor can we conduct business. These first two issues are of the utmost importance to the reconstruction effort.

Waiver of Maximum Limit on FHWA Emergency Relief Funds

Federal law limits FHWA Emergency Relief funding to $100 million per state for each natural disaster or catastrophic failure event. The destruction from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita is unprecedented. The cost to repair and replace the Twin Span Bridge far exceeds $100 million. Our current estimate of damage repair costs to federal-aid highways in Louisiana is $1.1 billion. A waiver of the $100 million limit on FHWA Emergency Relief funding is critical to the recovery.

Waiver of 180-Day Limit for 100 Percent Reimbursement with Emergency Relief Funds

Under current Federal law, costs incurred within the first 180 days of a disaster are reimbursed fully. Upon expiration of the 180-day period, the federal share is reduced to 90 percent for interstate highway repair work and 80 percent for all other federal-aid routes. Due to the magnitude of the disaster and the fact that some areas were not immediately accessible, it will not be possible for LA DOTD to complete emergency repair work on all qualified projects within 180 days. For these reasons, a waiver of this provision or an extension of the deadline is needed. Furthermore, without an extension, our regular highway program will be in jeopardy due to a lack of state matching funds.

Potential Dispute with FHWA and FEMA over Extent of Roadway Damage

Estimates of permanent repairs to highway infrastructure are being prepared in the parishes comprising the New Orleans Metropolitan Area. In Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines and St. Bernard parishes, much of the roadway network was submerged for at least several days and in

many cases for weeks. Many of the roadways may appear undamaged and thus may appear as though no permanent repairs are required. However, it is our opinion (as supported by technical information) that the base of the submerged roadways has been undermined or otherwise substantially weakened because of saturation. Once traffic, particularly truck traffic, returns to these roadways, pavement failures (e.g. potholes, ruts, etc.) will become evident. Removing the surface to effect base repairs and then repaving will be expensive but necessary. The FHWA and FEMA may resist recognizing these pavement failures as disaster-related damage since they will not be immediately apparent. The FHWA already has indicated it will not accept any type of testing to determine damage in advance of actual pavement failure. This damage could potentially affect nearly 500 miles of federal-aid roads (FHWA) and approximately 1,500 miles of non federal-aid roads (FEMA). The funding at stake is estimated at $557 million ($340 million for federal-aid routes and $217 million for non federal-aid routes).

Replacement of the I-10 Twin Span Bridge

Although LA DOTD is repairing the I-10 Twin Span Bridge to re-establish interstate traffic, it is prudent to replace the bridge with a structure that is not susceptible to the kind of damage experienced during Katrina. The bridge was constructed more than 40 years ago and was originally intended to be a six-lane facility with no shoulders. It was striped for four lanes with shoulders due to safety concerns. The roadway on either side is six lanes; thus, the Twin Spans are a bottleneck in the Interstate highway network. For bridges that require replacement, the Emergency Relief program provides for the upgrade of the facility to meet projected 20-year traffic demand. Therefore, we are requesting inclusion of a specification for six lanes in a direct appropriation, which is what Florida received last year after Hurricane Ivan left similar damage on its I-10 bridge. It is essential that we start the bridge replacement project early next year. We cannot afford any delays.

Population Surge in Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Houma and Hammond

The mass evacuation and relocation of the New Orleans Metropolitan Area has resulted in a surge in population, particularly in the Baton Rouge area, but also in Lafayette, Houma and Hammond. Consequently, many of the highways and streets in these areas are in gridlock. While some of the evacuees already are returning home, others will remain for years; some will stay permanently. Immediate transportation improvements are needed to cope with this population influx. Most of these improvements are short-term, stopgap measures that can be (and already are being) implemented quickly. We are not concerned with whether the money is appropriated through the FHWA or FEMA as long as reimbursement is timely. We are already incurring costs in dealing with this issue.

Waiver of Air Quality Conformity Requirement for Transportation Projects

The Baton Rouge area, which absorbed the largest number of evacuees, is presently in "lapse" status for transportation under the Clean Air Act, meaning that we cannot proceed with any regionally significant highway projects. Because of the recent surge in population, we are unable to conduct an accurate air quality analysis to demonstrate air quality conformity. Therefore, we need EPA to accept an analysis based on pre-Katrina socio-economic conditions and travel patterns, or we need Congress to provide a conformity determination waiver for four years, similar to the waiver granted to New York City after the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001.

A bill (H.R. 3946) to provide a waiver for Baton Rouge has been introduced by Congressman Baker in the House of Representatives.

Critical Flood Protection Needs

It is our understanding that the Corps of Engineers has already been appropriated $1.3 billion for repairs to the flood protection system, including repairing levee breaches, strengthening weak points in the levees, and repairing damaged control structures. This repair work will restore the levee system to the previous level of protection by June 1, 2006 (the beginning of the next hurricane system). It is imperative that these repairs be made promptly. It is also crucial that the entire levee system in coastal Louisiana be completed and upgraded to withstand a Category 5 hurricane. Our current estimate for this work is $22 billion from Morgan City, Louisiana to Slidell, Louisiana. We are evaluating the section of coast from Texas to Morgan City to determine the level of protection needed and the associated cost.

Anticipated Increases in Construction Costs

Prior to the hurricanes, construction costs were increasing significantly, primarily because of the demand for materials. The massive reconstruction effort along the Gulf Coast will undoubtedly magnify this problem. While it is not possible to quantify the cost increase at this time, those involved in the recovery need to be cognizant of the impact this will have on repair projects as well as already-planned construction projects. Based on the results of a few recent bids and internal discussions regarding the vastness of the devastation, the potential strain on contractors (materials, equipment, and labor), and soaring fuel costs, a contingency of 15 percent is recommended for budgetary purposes.

These critical issues must be addressed if Louisiana is to recover from this devastation.

The People of DOTD

The focus of this testimony has dealt primarily with facts and figures, but I also must take a moment to tell you about the men and women of my department and the examples they displayed of individual leadership in the immediate moments following the disaster. The employees of LA DOTD, many of whom lost all of their worldly possessions, were as shocked as everyone else in America to see the destruction and feel the heartbreak that resulted from these cruel storms. The difference is that, during those first weeks, the employees of LA DOTD didn't get to see those scenes of devastation on television. We were working. We were clearing the roads of literal mountains of debris that included wood, metal, automobiles, fast food signs, playground equipment and pieces of houses. We were inspecting and repairing the roads and bridges. We were helping plug the levee breaches and pump the water out of the city. We did the hard work that needed to be done, and we continue to do it today.

LA DOTD employees work with an almost desperate sense of urgency. To us, those aren't just damaged roads and bridges – they are part of our neighborhoods. Those mountains of debris are pieces of what used to be our friends' lives. LA DOTD actually has no statutory responsibility to fix levee breaches or help pump canal and lake water from New Orleans, but we had a higher responsibility. This is our home, and we have no choice but to do the work.

I want to tell you about Mike Stack, an LA DOTD engineer who works in our New Orleans district. Mike was in Baton Rouge on Monday, where he had evacuated his family to safety before Katrina hit, when he heard that the 17th Street Canal levee had been breached. At daylight on Tuesday morning, Mike was back in New Orleans, standing on the levee, watching 15 to 20 feet of water rush through a 500-foot opening. Water was everywhere. Everything was underwater – the roads, vehicles, buildings and homes – except for one bridge that crossed the canal about 1000 feet north of the breach. Mike began coordinating a sandbag drop into the breach to stop the water from destroying any more homes. The process was very inefficient, mostly because Mike only had access to one helicopter. Mike came up with another plan - build a road from the bridge to the breach so trucks and heavy equipment could reach the site. By begging and borrowing equipment, supplies and volunteers, Mike organized a "scavenger plan" to take broken concrete and other fill material on the west side of the canal and use it as a base for a road on the east side. Knowing that it would take a while to build the road, Mike devised an interim measure – drive sheet piling into the canal bed from one side to the other to block the flow of lake water.

Communications were very poor; cell phones and radios weren't working, and most landlines had been knocked out. The only way Mike could talk with emergency officials in Baton Rouge was to go to a nearby building in Metairie that still had a landline phone, call his wife on her cell phone, who then could contact the emergency operations center. Through this process, Mike was able to line up a contractor, who eventually worked directly with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to stop the lake water flow.

Within 48 hours, Mike's makeshift road was a reality, and trucks and equipment moved in to help fix the breach.

A few weeks later, the watermarks showed the flood had reached the roofline on Mike Stack's house. Mike wasn't surprised. He lived just a few blocks from the breach, and he knew that first day that his home was gone. Mike worked on that levee breach day and night, even though he knew it was too late to save his own house. No one ordered Mike to work on the levee. It wasn't his job, and it wasn't LA DOTD's job. He did it because that is what he does. He sees a problem, he fixes it. He was working to save other people's homes and other people's lives.

Mike didn't fix the breach. He was one person working with other dedicated people from different agencies, including the Orleans and Jefferson Parish Levee Boards and the Corps of Engineers. But if Mike had not put aside his personal situation to help others, that breach would not have been fixed as quickly. Mike Stack didn't pull people from rooftops into a helicopter, but his actions helped save countless lives by giving those rescuers just a little more time by stopping the flood waters just a little sooner. I am proud to work with Mike Stack.

That kind of can-do attitude was on full display when LA DOTD began an ambitious project to repair the I-10 Twin Span Bridge that connects New Orleans to Slidell over Lake Pontchartrain. Katrina shoved an enormous storm surge from the Gulf of Mexico directly into the lake. That surge ravaged the 42-year-old bridge, tossing 300-ton concrete segments into the water like so many dominoes. Both spans of the 5.4-mile bridge were severely damaged, with nearly half of the concrete segments either misaligned or destroyed.

LA DOTD engineers quickly assembled a team to assess the damage and develop a strategy on repairing the bridge. With the generous help of engineers from the Florida Department of

Transportation, our team put together a plan that seemed impossible: We would advertise for bids, approve a contract and re-establish two-way traffic on one span of the bridge within 45 days of awarding the contract.

Work started on Sept. 12, exactly two weeks after Katrina hit. This was not an easy job. A barge carrying a huge crane had to be re-positioned continuously around the spans to pick up fallen concrete segments. Some of the segments were too badly damaged to be re-used. All had to be inspected. Some of the concrete segments had hit the pilings as they fell from the bridge, so the pilings had to be inspected before new segments could be re-mounted. Work stopped while a communications cable that crossed the lake was re-positioned. Then, Hurricane Rita hit. All work ceased on Thursday, September 22 so workers could get to safety. After Rita passed through, the water level in Lake Pontchartrain was too high to keep working. It was Monday afternoon before the contractor could get back on the job. To outsiders, that 45-day schedule was starting to look like wishful thinking.

If you count 45 days from September 12, that takes you to today, October 27. Today was the original deadline for getting two-way traffic re-established on the bridge. That did not happen today. It happened on October 14, almost two weeks ago. U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta joined Governor Kathleen Blanco and me that warm day as we took down the barricades and let the traffic come through. We did it ahead of schedule because we set the bar high and found a great partner in our Louisiana contractor, Boh Brothers, who worked around the clock to get that bridge repaired. That's the kind of commitment LA DOTD has to rebuilding Louisiana. Not only did we finish the job early, we did it nearly $20 million under our original estimate. I want you to know that every dollar we receive from the federal government to restore our infrastructure will be spent with the same care and diligence we displayed by saving $20 million on that bridge repair. That's the kind of commitment LA DOTD has to spending those tax dollars wisely.

There are many other areas in which LA DOTD is making an impact and working to get citizens' lives back to normal. We are still picking up debris – so far, LA DOTD and its contractors have removed more than 1 million cubic yards of debris – enough to fill more than 33,000 standard garbage trucks.

Our customer service call center, which did not even exist before Katrina hit, has received more than 10,000 calls from citizens who are looking for every kind of information imaginable, from road closures to disaster relief help to shelter information.

LA DOTD is on the ground every day, repairing and replacing traffic signals and signs to make sure travel is safe once people return to their communities. Our inspection teams are in the affected areas, assessing damages to the infrastructure and working side-by-side with federal officials to document storm damage and estimated repair or replacement costs. We also are working closely with local officials, helping them assess damage and estimate repair costs to their infrastructures.

LA DOTD is not only working hard, it is working smart. Long before Katrina and Rita hit, our employees began working on a process improvement initiative, a detailed analysis of the processes that drive our work and how we can improve them. Through employee-driven process improvement teams, we began finding more efficient ways to do our work, ways to get more done within existing resources.

As a result of this initiative, we announced last Spring that we would trim our workforce by about 500 positions, primarily if not exclusively through attrition. We estimate this action should save Louisiana taxpayers an extra $20-Million Dollars each year. We intend to use that extra money to keep a robust statewide program moving forward in the face of increasing costs and the declining value of the gasoline tax.

LA DOTD employees continue to share a commitment to work hard and work smart for our citizens, but the truth is that we cannot do it alone. That is why I am here today, to tell you how you can help my state, our citizens, in this darkest of times.

In closing, I acknowledge that rebuilding south Louisiana is personal for me. I was born and raised in Grand Isle, Louisiana's only inhabited barrier island. My hometown was hit pretty hard by Katrina and Rita, and a lot of my friends and family members took a beating. Louisiana is home for me, and I take what happened very personally. But you don't have to be from Louisiana to fully appreciate what rebuilding this wonderful state means to the rest of the country.

The Mississippi River is why New Orleans is where it is. New Orleans is one of the busiest ports in the world, thanks in no small part to America's farmers. Without a viable port near the mouth of the river, the pain will be felt by more than a few thousand dock workers. The whole country will experience the economic impact as markets dry up, trading partners look elsewhere for goods and our citizens have a hard time getting goods they always had taken for granted. Private industry is playing a large role in the recovery, but the scale of destruction demands federal action.

Other Louisiana transportation needs have national impact. Louisiana is one of only two states that has six Class One railroads. New Orleans is a major railroad gateway, and as members of Congress involved in our country's infrastructure challenges, you know how important the rail business is. Without it, truck traffic would dramatically increase on our interstates, clogging an already overburdened road system and prompting calls for increased spending on highways. Louis Armstrong International Airport is a major commercial airport for business and personal travel. Interstate 10 is one of this nation's most important highways, linking some of the state's largest population areas and passing through the heart of the affected areas in Louisiana. LA 1, the two-lane road through South-Central Louisiana, is the only way in or out of Port Fourchon, the nerve center for the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port (LOOP) and oil and gas production. Almost 20 percent of the nation's energy supply is serviced by this two-lane road, making it a national economic asset. Imagine what will happen to gasoline prices if our ability to fully utilize this strategic infrastructure is compromised because we delayed rebuilding a sub-standard road.

In closing, I want to reiterate that the request we put before you is a valid, reasonable and relevant request for federal help. It is specific in its scope and is supported by data. I am not asking for a blank check. I am asking that you join us as full partners in what can be an exhilarating experience of turning tragedy into triumph. We have the opportunity to work side-by-side to accomplish one of the greatest feats ever. I hope you will join us on this journey and give serious and thoughtful consideration to our requests.

Thank you for your time.

Statement of
Dwight David Brashear, Chief Executive Officer
Capital Area Transit System, Baton Rouge, LA

Before the
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Subcommittee on Highways, Transit, and Pipelines

Hearing on
"Rebuilding Highway and Transit Infrastructure on the Gulf Coast Following Hurricane Katrina"
October 27, 2005

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee and guest, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Capital Area Transit System (CATS) from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I am honored that you have requested me here today to discuss what a valuable part mass transit has performed during hurricane Katrina, and as it continues to aid in the devastation and aftermath of this cataclysm.

First, let me say I bring greetings from Baton Rouge Mayor-President Kip Holden and Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco. They were pivotal in my and CATS ability to maximize efforts in providing essential emergency services. I must recognize the contributions of FEMA and FTA in providing policy direction and technical assistance. I would also like to recognize all the agencies that worked so tirelessly for many weeks to assist in the needs

of displaced citizens and the delivery of goods and services, and they include the Mayor-Presidents Office, the City-Parish employees, the Governors staff, the metropolitan planning organization, state police, local fire and police, and the many public and private agencies and organizations. Lastly, I would like to express the gratitude of all the people along the Gulf Coast for the help that this great nation has given, from you the elected officials to the many people and organizations from every state in the nation. I am a witness to the resolve, resourcefulness, and the commitment of people extending a hand and opening their hearts to the millions of hurting displaced families, a lot that have lost everything, everything. I say to you today, we must continue to meet the short term emergency needs and we must commit ourselves to the long term rebuilding and resettlement needs of our fellow sisters and brothers.

Transit in Baton Rouge Pre-Katrina had CATS eyes on a major public involvement process to put a referendum to the voters of East Baton Rouge Parish to expand service and to develop a transit infrastructure for Bus Rapid Transit and light rail. We had a fair amount of traffic congestion and associated infrastructure issues. Baton Rouge was a capital city of

approximately 400,000 population with an estimated urbanized area of 600,000. It was a city excited about transit innovation and growth potential.

Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005. I describe it as shock and awe of biblical proportion. A critical crisis situation happened overnight. Within 24 hours approximately 400,000 of the New Orleans 1.3 population were moved to the Baton Rouge area. The road infrastructure was over capacitated. A 20 minute peak period commute went to almost 2 hours. The transit system was overwhelmed. Buses simply had to pass people up along transit routes due to passenger loads. Food, water, gas, utilities and medical became critical supplies. A logistics nightmare ensued for moving anything. Support and coordination efforts of federal, state, and local entities were pushed and stressed beyond endurance limits. The physical destruction of property was beyond comprehension. Well over 80% of New Orleans was under water. We persevered and moved to the hurricane triage stage.

FEMA, FTA, the military, state and local agencies such as CATS and the New Orleans Regional Transit System (NORTA) began to provide emergency services. At one point I was tapped by the governor to assist

with the coordination of evacuation transportation. School buses, transit buses and inter-city coaches from around the country came to assist in our needs. FEMA, state and local emergency plans were implemented. Some may say it could and should have been done better. I simply say, my shoulders are broad. As we have more time to reflect and assess how the emergency operation was implemented, these discussions will result in new protocols, new processes and programs; and this is good. Real change requires real change and that is exactly what we are doing in Baton Rouge.

CATS, NORTA, FEMA, FTA, the MPO, state and local governments worked 14 hour days from September 8-19 to develop an emergency Baton Rouge-New Orleans project proposal. FEMA and FTA responded with a 47 million dollar contract on October1, 2005. This is probably the largest FEMA award to a mass transit property in history.

Today CATS and NORTA work side by side in our city providing emergency mass transit services to displaced hurricane victims and also providing a transportation option to gridlock and traffic congestion. NORTA is operating emergency fixed route local and ADA paratransit service in Baton Rouge. We will shortly begin operation of Park-N-Ride

express service with an innovative "buses only on shoulder" program. The FEMA/FTA project has also allowed NORTA to begin calling back to work their 1,350 displaced employees. NORTA has also begun start up service in New Orleans. This is a transit success story because the partners persevered and championed the mission. It required real change in state and local policies and procedures, real change in coordination and internal operations of CATS and NORTA. It has required help from sister transit agencies for equipment. It has required the replacement of fear with endless possibility and boundless opportunity. Mr. Chairman, I thank you for allowing me to tell you that mass transit is working and working well and I pray that God will continue to bless this nation and to bless this government. Thank you

Statement of
Wayne H. Brown, P.E., P.S., Southern District Commissioner
Mississippi Transportation Commission
Before the Subcommittee on Highways, Transit and Pipelines
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
United States House of Representatives
Hearing on Rebuilding Highway and Transit Infrastructure on the MS Gulf Coast
Following Hurricane Katrina – State and Local Officials
October 27, 2005

Mr. Chairman, members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the Mississippi Department of Transportation's (MDOT) actions resulting from the impact of Hurricane Katrina on our Gulf Coast. Our response to Katrina began before the storm and has continued on a 24 hour, 7 days a week basis since then. Our goals have been to help Mississippi survive the storm and to speed our state's recovery by restoration and rebuilding of its vital transportation systems.

Hurricane Katrina caused an estimated $695,000,000 in damage to federal aid highways maintained by MDOT. Sixteen hours after Katrina passed all MDOT state maintained routes were open with the exception of the 26-mile stretch of beachfront highway on U.S. 90 and the two major bridges on that route that were destroyed as well. A 312 foot section of east-bound I-10 over the Pascagoula River in Jackson County was destroyed thus closing the interstate in that direction. Within seven days the interstate was open to two-way traffic in both directions. By using contracting procedures previously used in emergencies we were able to repair the damaged bridge and restore the interstate to its full capacity 32 days after Katrina. During the storm the I-110 bridge across the Back Bay of Biloxi was damaged resulting in closing all but one outbound lane. I-110 serves the Biloxi peninsula and prior to Katrina was served by eighteen lanes of traffic (nine in/ nine out). After Katrina this was reduced to five lanes of traffic (three in/ one out). MDOT negotiated a contract with the contractor that was performing the I-10 bridge repair to expedite the repair to the I-110 bridge. After a delayed start due to the advance of Hurricane Rita, the repairs were made and the bridge was fully operational just 38 days after Katrina and access to Biloxi improved to six lanes (three in/ three out). Three force account (no bid) contracts were entered into to repair and open the south (eastbound) lanes of U.S. 90 from Biloxi Bay to the Bay of St. Louis – a distance of 26 miles. This work will be completed by October 29 – two months after Katrina. The cost of restoring these two lanes of traffic is estimated at $14,000,000. Three contracts have been advertised and competitively bid to restore and open the north (westbound) lanes of traffic. The overall cost for these three

projects was bid at $11,316,004 and will likely be more than this amount when the work is completed as the bid quantities were roughly estimated. These two efforts were comparative in nature, yet in contracting for this work through force account we are not paying a premium for it. This is evidence that the taxpayer can be well served by force account contracts when they are properly administered as we have demonstrated.

Obviously, an effort of this magnitude takes not only time but also money. At the urging of FHWA and other federal partners, we have moved quickly and dramatically in our efforts. On the assurance of FHWA and others that we would be quickly and fully reimbursed, we have diverted millions of dollars previously targeted to other critical projects into the accelerated Katrina effort. In order for MDOT to continue funding emergency repairs to federal aid highways in the affected areas, we are in desperate need of an appropriation from Congress of FHWA Emergency Relief (ER) funds. MDOT cannot continue to fund its existing program of work that is already under contract and also fund critical emergency repairs in South Mississippi with only its regular funds.

MDOT's budget consists primarily of state fuel taxes and reimbursements from FHWA with federal aid funds for monies spent on federal aid projects. Our current budget is committed to an existing program of work that is already underway and under contract. MDOT's current FY06 Budget was already extremely tight and challenging due to the legislative transfers of MDOT funds that occurred in FY 2003-2005. We are diligently trying to keep that existing program of work on track and to meet our existing contractual obligations.

Even with our challenging budget year, MDOT immediately began debris removal from state highways when Katrina's winds died down. MDOT quickly let emergency contracts to repair damage to bridges and highways in the impacted areas. A miniscule amount of this work went to out-of-state contractors. Restoring immediate access to the impacted areas was vital such that search and rescue operations could commence and emergency workers could reach those in the impacted areas that chose not to leave before the storm. MDOT is currently paying for this ER related work with its regular funds while also attempting to meet our financial obligations for our regular program of work already let to contract. In December, we will let emergency design-build contracts to replace the two U.S. Highway 90 bridges washed away by Katrina. The estimated total cost for these structures is $400,000,000. The bridge contracts will be tied to a completion date that could be as short as 11 months. In the next 12 months we anticipate spending up to $100,000,000 on the roadway section and a good portion of the estimated $400,000,000 on the two highway bridges in order to have transportation along U.S. Highway 90 even partially restored.

Without an immediate appropriation from Congress of additional FHWA ER funds, MDOT will be forced to make a hard decision in the next few weeks. We will either stop work on our regular construction and maintenance program that is already underway or delay the letting of critical emergency repair projects for U.S. Highway 90. This is not a time for slow repayment. It is not a time for government red tape. MDOT is up to the challenges before us but we must be armed with resources and freed of unnecessary red tape and delay. In summary, we have and continue to keep our commitments. It's time now for our federal partners to keep their promises as well. Our critical need at this moment is money in the form of supplemental appropriations and the full reimbursements which have been promised but not

yet delivered. Our state legislature has also approved concurrent resolutions urging the Congress to support the president's waiver of time limitations in federal assistance programs relating to the devastation created by Hurricane Katrina.

MDOT and its partners in the construction industry and engineering professions are ready, willing and able to continue our existing regular program of maintenance and construction under contract. We are also ready, willing and capable of designing and constructing the emergency repairs needed to rebuild Highway 90 and its two bridges, but we can't fund both regular works under contract and emergency repairs.

As we stand here today, thousands of Mississippians still live in tents next to piles of debris which were once their homes. Many still await word from employers that they can come back to work. Roads leading south toward the Gulf Coast are clogged with mobile homes and a wealth of construction materials targeted to address the critical needs these people face. The people behind these recovery resources are sleeping in cars, tents, and on the floors of good samaritans due to the housing crisis in the affected area.

We need flexibility in the form of extended authority and discretion in creating a process which is accountable but also nimble and able to quickly respond to the unfolding challenges as we focus on rebuilding our systems in record time. We ask that more authority be given to us, the state highway agency and the FHWA Division office during the early days and weeks of a disaster. When you see the thousands of trucks, emergency vehicles and relief workers backed up in long delays decisions are based upon the circumstances that are at hand. We in Mississippi are convinced that overall we have made good decisions and have been careful in our actions. In hindsight, we know that each and every action we have taken may not pass muster. But, on a whole we have and will continue to be conservative and careful in our actions.

We know that you want to help and we thank you for the substantial help already being provided. We pledge to be good stewards of the resources we have. But in all candor, they are not sufficient for the enormous task before us. We seek your leadership in arming MDOT with the resources necessary to restore our transportation systems. In turn, we promise a supreme and successful effort in reaching that goal. We appreciate the help of FHWA through Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta and Acting FHWA Administrator Rick Capka, who have been most helpful along with their employees at the Division level.

Mr. Chairman, members, thank you for this opportunity to come before you and express our situation and our needs. I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have for me.

Impact of Hurricane Katrina to MDOT
Damage to Federal Aid Highways -- $695 Million
Breakout by Fiscal Year

	FY06	FY07	Total
US Hwy-90 Roadway	$70 million	$30 million	$100 million
US Hwy-90 Bridge at Bay St. Louis	$100 million	$100 million	$200 million
US Hwy-90 Bridge at Biloxi/ Ocean Springs	$100 million	$100 million	$200 million
Debris Removal State Hwys	$60 million	$40 million	$100 million
Debris Removal County Routes (Federal Aid Eligible)	$30 million	$5 million	$ 35 million
Contingencies and Miscellaneous (lighting, guard rails, signals, etc.)	$30 million	$20 million	$ 50 million
Restore I-10 and I-110	$10 million	--	$ 10 million
TOTAL	**$400 million**	**$295 million**	**$695 million**

Congressman Russ Carnahan (D-MO)
House Transportation Committee
Subcommittee on Highways, Transit, and Pipelines
Hearing on Rebuilding Highway and Transit Infrastructure on the Gulf Coast
Following Hurricane Katrina--State and Local Officials
Opening Statement
October 27, 2005

- Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for scheduling this hearing on the current status of the Gulf Coast transportation infrastructure.

- As transportation infrastructure repair and reconstruction continues in the areas of the Gulf Coast that were devastated by Hurricane Katrina, it is vital that this committee continue to stay abreast of the progress being made there.

- Regular updates regarding the status of the transportation infrastructure in the Gulf Coast will help ensure that federally funded projects are on schedule and that vital roads, bridges and transportation services are restored as quickly as possible.

- I look forward to hearing testimony from all of the distinguished witnesses. Thank you all for being here today.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
Subcommittee on Highways, Transit, and Pipelines

"Rebuilding Highway and Transit Infrastructure on the Gulf Coast Following Hurricane Katrina"

October 27, 2005
2:00 p.m.
2167 Rayburn House Office Building

OPENING STATEMENT

Mr. Chairman:

I thank you for calling today's hearing to enable us to hear from officials with the Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama Departments of Transportation and with local transit authorities regarding highway and transit system reconstruction activities in the Gulf Coast Region.

Our Subcommittee has previously heard from officials with the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration, who have reported on the

restoration of major arteries in the Hurricane-affected regions, particularly in New Orleans.

Today's hearing will give us the opportunity to hear local officials present both their assessments of the challenges they face on the ground as well as the plans they are beginning to develop for the renewal of the broader transportation network in the region.

Having toured the Gulf Region with my colleagues from this committee, I have seen first-hand the stunning devastation caused by the hurricanes. I appreciate the enormity of the reconstruction effort that must be undertaken and I am convinced that the federal government must play a central role in that effort.

On September 15, the President unveiled an ambitious plan to rebuild the Gulf Coast region. At that time, I commended the President for the commitment he expressed to the region and for acknowledging the poverty and indifference that left so many of the region's residents so vulnerable to the blows inflicted by the storm.

While we now await the release by the Administration of detailed plans and proposals for supporting the reconstruction of the Gulf Coast region, I commend our Committee for remaining focused on this region and on the challenge of rebuilding the basic transportation infrastructure that will be needed to support the revitalization of this devastated region.

Local officials in the Gulf Coast face the unprecedented challenge of rebuilding basic infrastructure at a time when local tax bases have been destroyed and when many local governments have had to lay off significant numbers of their employees – including road crews.

I am eager to hear from today's witnesses regarding their assessment of the assistance they will need to meet this challenge and to complete permanent reconstruction and replacement projects as quickly as possible.

I hope that the assessments these officials give us will be heard not only by our Subcommittee, but by the House leadership and by the Administration and will keep our nation focused on meeting our responsibilities to our fellow citizens in the Gulf.

I also hope that we will appreciate where our priorities lie when we consider how we are providing aid to rebuild in the Gulf Region and compare it to how we are funding reconstruction in Iraq where, according to the Congressional Research Service, we will have spent more than $11 billion by the end of this month to support reconstruction activities without requiring any repayment.

I thank you and I yield back.

Statement of
William J. Deville
General Manager
New Orleans Regional Transit Authority
Before the
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Subcommittee on Highways, Transit, and Pipelines
Hearing on
"Rebuilding Highway and Transit Infrastructure on the Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina"
October 27, 2005

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) of New Orleans and Jefferson Parish after Hurricane Katrina.

INTRODUCTION

Prior to Katrina, the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority, a political subdivision of the State of Louisiana, was considered a mid-sized transit system employing nearly 1300 people. We were the largest system in Louisiana and the largest between Houston on the west and Miami on the east, and Atlanta towards the north. We operated with 372 buses, 66 streetcars, and over 90 paratransit vehicles. Our operating budget for CY 2005 was set at $111,218,000. The RTA averaged 124,000 riders per day on its 46 bus and three streetcar routes. Of the 855,000 people we carried weekly, over 20% were considered "transit dependent", that is, they have no other way to get around to work, the doctor, shop, or school. And then Katrina came.

LANDFALL

Late during the day on Friday, August 26th, Hurricane Katrina's projected path abruptly changed from going into the panhandle of Florida, towards the Louisiana/Mississippi border. The next day, RTA staff reported to City of New Orleans officials that it was prepared to carry out the City's RTA hurricane plan that its Office of Emergency Preparedness was planning to implement. The RTA, in the meantime, as part of its own hurricane planning, fueled up all of its fleet based at its Eastern New Orleans facility and moved those buses not providing service to higher ground on a wharf near downtown New Orleans. Those buses that were providing regular service were also eventually moved to the wharf as well. The RTA would run regular service until conditions prohibited it due to safety considerations as described in the hurricane plan.

The other half of the fleet, based on Canal Street, was also in regular service but prepared to respond to the City's needs. On Sunday morning, August 29th, per the City's plan and request, the RTA began running special service from twelve (12) sites across the city to take riders to the Superdome, the "shelter of last resort". In addition, the RTA also

ran at least ten (10) paratransit vehicles to the Superdome and then on to the Baton Rouge area for "special needs" citizens. Those vans made at least two trips. All service ceased at approximately 7:00PM Sunday night as Hurricane Katrina came in and conditions worsened. At that point a number of paratransit van operators were told to stay with their vans in Baton Rouge out of harm's way while the remaining regular fleet, operators, a few essential administrators (me included), and their families based themselves at the A. Phillip Randolph facility on Canal Street to sit out the storm's passing.

As the storm wracked Southeastern Louisiana and the Mississippi Gulf Coast during late Sunday and through Monday, it was apparent that the New Orleans area had taken a powerful hit, that all power was lost, communications crippled, trees and structures downed, but that it could have been a lot worse, and it did, in fact, become incredibly worse.

On Monday night, August 29th, as it appeared Katrina had finally passed, a report was received that a number of canals had been breached and major flooding had already begun in the City. What no one knew was how much or how extensive would be the flood, how fast it would flood, and despite many attempts, that the Army Corps of Engineers would be unable to plug up the breaches in time to slow the water. As water continued to rise around the RTA Canal Street facility, now trapping nearly two hundred and fifty people, the back-up generators failed and it became quite apparent that it would be necessary to evacuate the building. A task much easier said than done.

Using air mattresses and wading through unspeakable water, a group of about one hundred and fifty soon fled the building. They waded, or floated on air mattresses, for blocks until they found higher ground, an overpass. Soon, an employee was able to locate a small flat boat to evacuate the last of those stranded. Then came an arduous, difficult, lengthy, heart-breaking trip out of town to evacuation centers now finally being established in other parts of the state. Many of the RTA employees that served the City just hours before, evacuating those in need, themselves ended up in shelters in Baton Rouge and Baker, Louisiana. Many are now housed in trailer facilities in Baker, Louisiana. While we have not been able to determine the full extent, but through the information received to date, it is apparent that a vast majority of the RTA staff has either suffered extreme damage to their homes or has lost them and their personal belongings outright, as is my case. Unfortunately, we are also aware that one operator and his family, including his wife and two children, were lost at their home as floodwaters swept through their neighborhood. We also understand that several employees lost friends and relatives as well.

POST-STORM

Within days of the hurricane and the exodus to Baton Rouge, key RTA staff, once getting employees settled into shelters, set up temporary offices in Baton Rouge and at the offices of the Capital Area Transit System (CATS). FTA Region IV leadership quickly contacted us to reassure us that they would d everything they could to assist in RTA's immediate recovery. I even received a call from Deputy Secretary Robert Jamison offering the same. From there the RTA executive staff located in Baton Rouge, with the

cooperation of CATS, FTA, FEMA and ESF1 officials, proceeded to plan for an immediate future that would ensure that there will be a New Orleans Regional Transit Authority after Katrina.

In addition, at my direction and already in place, staff took actions that will start to rebuild our transit system for a rebuilt New Orleans. I have reached out to the transit industry and have assembled a Strike Force Team to assess the damage to our facilities and buses. This 45-day effort will lead to the development of an action plan and priorities for the phased rebuild of our transit service and organization. This Strike Force Team will include representatives from NORTA, officials from other peer transit agencies, local area transportation agencies, local area planning experts and key business and community leaders. The Federal Transit Administration has already begun their review of the situation, prerequisite to the flow of funds that are becoming available to support this effort.

A brief overview of that damage includes:

- Administrative Offices @ Plaza Drive: Severe water and roof damage
- A. Phillip Randolph Bus Facility on Canal Street: Flooded first floor & maintenance bays, tools & related equipment.
- Canal Streetcar Storage, Inspection & Service Facility: Flooded first floor & maintenance bays, pits, tools, & related equipment.
- East New Orleans Bus Facility & Maintenance/Training Building: Severely flooded w/mud & mold in bays, pits and building. Tools & equipment severely impacted.
- Carrollton Streetcar Facility: Wind damage to doors and roof. Relatively minor.
- Entire fleet of 24 Canal Streetcars: Flooded – running gear inoperable.
- 6 of 7 Riverfront Streetcars: Flooded – running gear inoperable.
- 35 St. Charles Streetcars: Undamaged.
- Estimated 197 buses lost to flooding. Final count being determined. 80 stationed at Algiers Park & Ride another 50 based in Baton Rouge. Remaining fleet being recovered after use by National Guard, others.
- St. Charles Streetcar Catenary System: Severe wind damage.
- Canal Streetcar Catenary System: Wind damage appears repairable.
- Riverfront Streetcar Catenary System: Appears undamaged.
- Yet to be determined number of LIFT and Paratransit Vans damaged but many still operable.
- Numerous Service Vehicles, i.e. tow trucks, cherry pickers, vans, etc. severely flooded.

IMMEDIATE FUTURE

Our plans for the immediate future to overcome the greatest catastrophe in modern US history are pretty basic: restoration of service for our customers, reemployment of our staff, and the rebuild of our organization.

Our first goal, which I am happy to say is well underway, is the return to service for as many of our operable buses as possible as New Orleanians return to our city.

Thanks to a an Emergency Transportation Contract through FEMA and FTA, the RTA has partially restored 13 of its bus lines to service in New Orleans. More are planned, but we still do not have anything more than rough estimates of how much of the city will return to normal as the cleanup continues. However, we do plan to meet the demand as it arises, but housing for our employees is a huge hurdle we are working with FEMA to overcome.

Currently, employees are bused each day to their stations in New Orleans from Baton Rouge. Finally, we will need new buses but it is taking longer than anticipated to submit accurate estimates of how many, at this early stage of recovery.

As stated earlier, we are also very much concerned with getting our employees back to work earning a living once again and as soon as possible. We were able to retrieve our payroll servers from the Plaza Building in East New Orleans by helicopter immediately after the storm and issue a system wide payroll for the last weeks worked. After a month of no payroll for any of our employees, we have been able to pay some drivers and emergency administrative staff utilizing funds from an advance insurance payment and FEMA.

Our employees are now scattered all over Louisiana and in many cases the entire country. Our family of RTA employees number over 1300 and, because of their skills, they will be difficult to replace. We know that many have found jobs elsewhere, their children are in other schools, and are probably lost to the RTA for some time if not forever.

A major key to RTA's continued survival and recovery will be the return and stabilization to our revenue base. The great majority of our operating budget is funded through three sources, the farebox, a penny sales tax and the New Orleans hotel motel tax. Obviously, all three are academic for the moment, particularly at the levels needed to sustain the organization. As mentioned, we are presently operating FEMA sponsored service and, until tax revenue is restored, we will not be able to generate our normal income.

And this is where we can truly use the support of Congress, this Subcommittee and Committee. Just as it did for the New York MTA, we urge Congress to consider a number of policies being put forward by APTA and others in the industry to ensure the recovery of Gulf Coast transit systems:

- **Funding for "Investment Grants" to be distributed by FTA for capital and operating expenses, potentially from FEMA funds.**
- **Waive State & Local matching requirements for DOT /FTA assistance.**
- **Grant DOT/FTA the authority to enhance, as well as rebuild, the systems.**
- **Communicate the need to bring the "levy" system up to standards for Category 5 hurricane for our protection of life and property.**

But, in the meantime, we must continue the recovery of the RTA.

As you know, a good part of our streetcar infrastructure has been damaged. We are presently making assessments and preparing a rehabilitation plan for the damaged Canal Streetcars and track infrastructure. At this point some 30 Canal and Riverfront streetcars have sustained serious water damage. Two of those streetcars have been sent to Pennsylvania for a damage and rehabilitation assessment. We will be working to compile accurate damage costs and will submit them to this Committee as soon as they become available.

On a good note, there was little damage to the famous St. Charles Streetcar line other than to the overhead catenary system. Further good news is that FTA had already approved an extensive rehabilitation project for the St. Charles overhead electrical system and a contractor was preparing to get started when the storm hit. We are reevaluating the construction costs of the project and we are pushing to get the program underway as soon as possible while the system is closed. Construction on this project now should be far easier and may cost less than originally planned because there is no active service to work around. However, there is additional work required as the storm did more damage than the original work scope envisioned.

An assessment of bus damage is also underway and preliminary estimates are that approximately 200 transit buses may have been lost.

There are five RTA facilities and, with the exception of the Carrollton Barn, four sustained extensive damage. The lack of damage to the Carrollton Barn was fortunate. That is the site of the construction of the Canal Streetcars and we may be able to rehabilitate those damaged Canal Streetcars at Carrollton. It is also the storage facility for the irreplaceable St. Charles streetcars, all of which remain operable. We even hope to get the Riverfront Line back in operation soon.

The EPA has been of great assistance to us and has begun performing the cleanup of water damage at the Canal Street facility (A. Philip Randolph) to make it usable as a working facility. This cleanup process will take four weeks and will be completed by the end of the third week of November 2005. Our present plans are to return to New Orleans as soon as the EPA completes their environmental cleanup, if not sooner, and establish the Canal Street facility as our headquarters.

Of the other facilities, our present headquarters at Plaza Drive is extensively damaged by flooding and wind and may be a complete loss. The Napoleon Facility sustained heavy wind damage. The ENO, or East New Orleans, facility sustained water damage and the EPA cleanup operations will move on to ENO upon completion of their work at Canal Street.

Over the course of the past several weeks we have worked closely with the FTA and their PMO to compile an accurate early assessment of damage to work from in putting together our action plan. We do not have access to that report and are in the process of doing our own updated assessment at this time. We will submit our assessments to the committee as they are completed.

The RTA looks forward to working with federal, state, and local officials to plan a better and exciting New Orleans as envisioned and promised by those officials.

I would like to thank you Mr. Chairman and the members of the Committee for giving us the opportunity to update you on our progress in bringing transit services back to New Orleans.

If you have any questions I will be happy to answer them.

Attachments for the Committee:

Current RTA Update

For: 10/25/2005

RTA UPDATE

The RTA continues to operate on the following 13 routes, re-employing 78 operators, and using 28 buses:

5 – Marigny – Bywater (French quarter, Marigny & Bywater)
10 – Tchoupitoulas (CBD - Uptown)
11 – Magazine (CBD - Uptown)
12 – St. Charles (CBD – Uptown - Carrollton)
14 – Jackson (Limited: Central City – Garden District –Wal-Mart)
27 - Louisiana (Uptown – Central City)
32 - Leonidas (Uptown – Hollygrove)
101 - Algiers Loop – (Algiers)
102 – General Meyer (Algiers)
103 – Pace Boulevard
#106 – Aurora Express
108 – Algiers Local (Connects to JET West bank terminal)
114-115 – General DeGaulle (Algiers - CBD)

The service, runs about every thirty minutes or less, and allows New Orleans area residents access to the open neighborhoods and to both sides of the river. Currently, the hours of operations are from 8am – 6pm, 7 days a week. The service will be adjusted as conditions permit. All buses are accessible to the disabled and there will be **no fare** (***FREE***) as FEMA through the FTA is funding this emergency service. Check www.norta.com for schedule information.

- RIDERSHIP: For the first time since Katrina, RTA ridership exceeded the 1500 mark with 1534 riding on Monday. Last week's high was on Wednesday, October 19th at 1481. Weekly totals for RTA was 8419, or 3012 over the previous week's total of 5407.
- PLEASE check our website www.norta.com for details on all routes and hours of operation.
- STREETCARS: RTA continues to work towards the use of a number of the undamaged St. Charles Streetcars on the Riverfront Streetcar line as it appears undamaged. Entergy recently energized the line's rectifier, which will allow for a full safety and electrical inspection of the line to be conducted soon. The FTA, LA DOTD, & SHPO offices have been notified of our intent and are cooperating. Considering the extraordinary situation, the RTA expects that those agencies will continue to be cooperative in clearing any ADA, safety, or historic issues involved.
- CONNECTIVITY: Jefferson Transit's (JET) W-2 Westbank Expressway and the W-3 Lapalco lines are now running into the New Orleans CBD daily. They join the RTA #108 Algiers Local from the Wilty Terminal by crossing the Crescent City Connection into the CBD. Already running is JET's Kenner Local bus from Jefferson Highway to

Claiborne @ Carrollton and its Airport bus to Tulane @ Carrollton which provides two transfer points to/from Jefferson Parish via the RTA's St. Charles and Louisiana bus lines, respectively.

- AMTRAK: The Union Passenger Terminal (UPT) is served by the # 101 Algiers Loop and the # 102 General Meyer bus lines. Inbound stop – that is "towards Canal Street" – is across street from the UPT on Loyola Avenue. Corresponding outbound stop – towards & across the river – is on South Rampart, a block away.
- BATON ROUGE: Per the FEMA/FTA agreement and in cooperation with the Capital Area Transit System (CATS), 27 RTA operators, RTA vehicles, and vehicles donated by other transit systems, began supplemental and new transit service in the Baton Rouge area on Sunday, October 16. Baton Rouge has seen large increases in its service needs as its population has grown exponentially due to the relocation of Katrina and Rita evacuees. Initially, RTA is assisting CATS by:
    - Supplementing 8 regular CATS lines with additional buses, providing more frequent service to relieve overcrowding.
    - With CATS, initiating a new bus line to Baker to serve one of the new FEMA trailer communities that also houses many RTA operators & their families.
    - Supplementing CATS' ADA Demand Response paratransit service.
    - Providing operations, maintenance and administrative personnel.
    - Leasing a maintenance building to operate & maintain the vehicles to be used, including those provided by the RTA and other systems from across the nation.
    - Providing a management team to administer the RTA side of the program.

> KENNER: Riders on the RTA operated # 201 - Kenner Loop on Monday was 145. The past week's total of 1469 exceeded the previous week of 1187 by 282.

Additional lines and service are under consideration as buses, fueling, and maintenance services can be secured. Temporary housing continues to be a critical need for RTA operators, maintenance, and administrative staff.

RTA DAMAGE OVERVIEW: (To be Updated)

- Staff of 1300: Dispersed over wide geographic area – many homeless.
    - Temp. housing being sought through FEMA w/hotel and trailer accommodations.
- Administrative Offices @ Plaza Drive: Severe water and roof damage
    - Temporary roof repairs and securement: COMPLETED.
- A. Phillip Randolph Bus Facility on Canal Street: Flooded first floor & maintenance bays, tools & related equipment.
    - Evaluated by FEMA & EPA for remediation.
- Canal Streetcar Storage, Inspection & Service Facility: Flooded first floor & maintenance bays, pits, tools, & related equipment.
    - Evaluated by FEMA & EPA for remediation.
    - EPA remediation now underway.
- East New Orleans Bus Facility & Maintenance/Training Building: Severely flooded w/mud & mold in bays, pits and building. Tools & equipment severely impacted.
    - Evaluated by FEMA & EPA for remediation and securing.
- Carrollton Streetcar Facility: Wind damage to doors and roof. Relatively minor.

- Electric service restored on 10/8.
- Entire fleet of 24 Canal Streetcars: Flooded – running gear inoperable.
  - A Canal Streetcar shipped to Pennsylvania 10/10 for damage assessment.
- 6 of 7 Riverfront Streetcars: Flooded – running gear inoperable.
  - A Riverfront Streetcar sent to Pennsylvania for evaluation on 10/17.
- 35 St. Charles Streetcars: Undamaged.
- Estimated 197 buses lost to flooding. Final count being determined. 80 stationed at Algiers Park & Ride another 50 based in Baton Rouge. Remaining fleet being recovered after use by National Guard, others.
- St. Charles Streetcar Cantenary System: Severe wind damage.
  - RTA staff & Boh Brothers reviewing line for probable scope changes.
- Canal Streetcar Cantenary System: Wind damage appears repairable.
- Riverfront Streetcar Cantenary System: Appears undamaged.
  - Entergy powered-up rectifier for future electrical testing & safety check.
- Yet to be determined number of LIFT and Paratransit Vans damaged but many still operable.
- Numerous Service Vehicles, i.e. tow trucks, cherry pickers, vans, etc. severely flooded.

- Patrick Judge
RTA Public Affairs
504.390-3650
patjudge@att.net

November 2, 2005

Honorable Don Young, Chairman
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2167 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Young:

On Thursday, October 27, 2005, I testified before the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Highways, Transit and Pipelines on "Rebuilding Highway and Transit Infrastructure on the Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina".

My testimony described the damages to our infrastructure including severe water and wind damage to four of our transit facilities, the loss of up to 200 transit buses and the severe damage to 30 of our 66 streetcars and the track and electrical infrastructure. We are in the process of documenting the damage to these systems and will provide a follow-up report on the actual costs of the damage to be submitted upon its completion.

Regional Transit Authority

To restore our transit infrastructure in New Orleans, we implore the Subcommittee's serious consideration of the following:

1. Create "Investment Grants" that would be distributed by FTA, funded through FEMA that would allow for capital and operating expenses to be covered that will allow transit systems to begin operating immediately after an event. Flexibility should be stressed as needs will vary as recovery progresses.

2. Waive local match on FTA grants to areas affected. The local economies along the Gulf Coast have been severely impacted, thus transit systems local revenue sources are either non-existent or drastically reduced and likely targeted for recovery efforts. For the RTA, we have lost both our service area's fare box and our sales tax base revenues.

3. Grant FEMA and the FTA the authority to enhance, as well as rebuild, the public transportation systems in the affected areas. As was accomplished in NYC after 9/11, two subway stations were remodeled that were not affected by the attacks. For the RTA, we would like to replace the damaged diesel buses with hybrid or other alternative fuel vehicles to enhance air quality and fuel efficiencies.

4. Very importantly, hold harmless those formula revenues based on population or other affected factors in those areas impacted by the disaster or event.

5. Assist FEMA in expediting temporary housing for displaced employees and their family members.

Any assistance you could provide in achieving these goals would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,
REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

William J. Deville
General Manager

Statement of
Dick Hall, Central District Commissioner
Mississippi Transportation Commission
Before the Subcommittee on Highways, Transit and Pipelines
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
United States House of Representatives
Hearing on Rebuilding Highway and Transit Infrastructure on the MS Gulf Coast
Following Hurricane Katrina - State and Local Officials
October 27, 2005

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to participate in your hearings regarding transportation infrastructure on the Mississippi Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina. Commissioner Brown has done a good job of providing you with a report of the damage done to Mississippi's highway system and the problems we have encountered being reimbursed for repairs. I would like to briefly discuss where we need to go from here.

First, allow me to point out highways were not the only transportation infrastructure destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. Our ports and railroads were devastated, and the Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport was seriously damaged. Not only is the replacement of all this infrastructure absolutely necessary but how and with what it is replaced is of utmost concern.

Within days of the passing of the storm our Governor had the foresight to appoint a bipartisan Commission to evaluate our losses and make recommendations for recovery. This Commission, in consultation with the engineers and architects from other states and other countries, along with local officials compiled a preliminary list of what needs to be done to repair the damage done to our state. Included in this recovery list is transportation infrastructure which must be replaced.

By the way, this Commission is not a governmental agency. It is funded from private sources. This offers the advantage of not having to wait for legislative approval – which slowed down decision making after Camille.

At this point allow me to emphasize we are not here to ask for vast amounts of money to build wild ideas pulled out of the air. We are here to discuss building what makes sense. No, it won't be exactly like what was there. A lot of what was there was obsolete and in some cases a danger to the public. Case in point – the CSX Railroad.

This railroad runs basically parallel to the coastline sometimes less than a quarter mile from the shoreline. There are approximately 160 *at-grade crossings* intersecting this railroad between the

Louisiana and Alabama state lines – 110 in Harrison County alone. Obviously, this is a very dangerous situation which results in fatalities annually. You have already invested $4 million to begin the process of relocating this railroad. This is a no brainer.

The present location of the railroad provided one unanticipated function when it served as a levee against the tidal surge of Hurricane Katrina. This is obvious when one observes the complete destruction south of the railroad.

This is one of the reasons the Governor's Commission for Recovery, Rebuilding and Renewal has recommended the height of the levee be raised and the existing right of way be used for an east – west thoroughfare which is desperately needed. This could also accommodate a bus rapid transit (BRT) or light rail.

Allow me to repeat. This is not some wild idea. It is an example of rebuilding with vision and common sense.

Additional reconstruction and improvements recommended include:

- Plan for enhanced multi-modal access and interconnectivity among rail, truck, air, and seaports for expansion and long-term growth.
- Consider Port expansions to include inland ports – inland terminals or distribution centers that are not located on a water channel.
- Plan for a new north – south corridor that will improve evacuation routes.
- Plan for public transportation for citizens who need it most – the elderly, poor, and handicapped.
- Evaluate public transit or trolley on the beach.
- Provide cruise ship port accessibility.
- Calm Highway 90 traffic; convert to parkway boulevard section.

All of these deserve consideration. True, we don't have the money to do any of them but as Jim Barksdale, Chairman of the Governors Commission recently stated: "It's the worst possible time. But the opportunity makes it the best possible time."

Thank you.

U. S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Highway, Transit and Pipelines Subcommittee

Rebuilding Highway and Transit Infrastructure
on the Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina – State and Local Officials

Mr. Don Vaughn, PE
Chief Engineer - Alabama Department of Transportation

Introduction

Hurricane Katrina was the third major storm, along with Hurricanes Ivan and Dennis, to directly impact Alabama in less than twelve months. While the damage to Alabama's highway system was not as severe as in Mississippi or Louisiana, there were a number of infrastructure challenges that presented themselves. Even though ALDOT had previously experienced several large hurricanes over the years, having three major hurricanes in such a short period of time focused attention on those operational areas that worked well and those that did not.

Lessons Learned

Benefit of Expedited Purchasing Procedures

Sections 41-16-23 and 39-2-2(e) of the Code of Alabama permit state agencies to streamline the purchasing process by waiving the requirement for public advertisement for bids. Provided that the requirements of these two sections are satisfied, there is no need to delay emergency contracting actions until an Emergency Declaration has been issued. During Hurricane Katrina and prior storms, this provision has repeatedly proven to be a very valuable tool for obtaining materials, equipment and contract services in a very short amount of time.

Close Participation with FHWA Division Office

During and immediately after Hurricane Katrina, key personnel from the FHWA Alabama Division office were present with ALDOT at each meeting in which major decisions were being made. Questions on eligibility for Emergency Relief (ER), project scopes and limits, methods of contract award and the like were quickly answered which helped to eliminate delays and move recovery efforts along. This level of participation and support was not unusual – it was representative of FHWA's response that ALDOT has come to expect during both disaster and non-disaster periods.

Susceptibility of I-10 to Disruption

As outlined later in this document, there was a time during the storm when the Cochrane Bridge was out of commission, US-90 across Mobile Bay was closed due to flooding the and I-10 tunnels were subject to being closed due to the imminent risk of flooding. Prior "worst-case" plans did not include the possibility that a single event could close the I-10 corridor and all of its existing detour routes. Given the volume of evacuation and relief traffic that used the I-10 corridor before and after the storm, loss of that route would have had a crippling regional effect.

Proclamations for Oversize and Overweight Vehicles

At the request of Mr. Kenneth Burris of FEMA, Governor Riley issued a letter on September 3, 2005, that waived the enforcement of laws governing the movement of mobile and modular homes and all requirements for escort vehicles for ninety day period. A very limited number of routes were identified in that letter for which the waiver did not apply. The waiver facilitated the transport of mobile and modular homes through Alabama into areas of Louisiana and Mississippi where housing was desperately needed. If such waivers are required again, it is very important that state DOTs are able to safely route the movement of these vehicles (e.g., issuing no-cost permits) and to specify that certain route segments require escort vehicles.

Governor Riley also issued a proclamation on September 9, 2005, which expedited the movement of vehicles transporting emergency equipment, services and supplies, tree and debris removal equipment, damaged timber, storm-related debris, building and construction materials or temporary emergency buildings and their components. Depending on the total number and grouping of axles, these vehicles could weigh up to 95,000 lbs except on restricted routes as identified in an accompanying letter and set of maps from ALDOT. Governor Riley extended this proclamation by reissuing it for an additional thirty day period beginning October 7, 2005. Being able to issue a "routing map" with the proclamation was very helpful in keeping overweight vehicles off posted and deficient bridges around the state (see Exhibit 3).

Fuel Shortages

The shortage of fuel after Hurricane Katrina caused a series of problems not experienced before. ALDOT had long supplied fuel to many of the other state agencies by providing access to fuel pumps at district and division offices around the state. When storm-related shortages drove up prices so quickly, fuel suppliers who had delivery contracts with ALDOT elected to break them. ALDOT could still buy fuel at market prices but only if suppliers could be found. A district whose tanks were approaching empty but had not yet scheduled a shipment of fuel found themselves unable to keep their own equipment running, much less provide fuel to agencies such as Corrections,

Public Safety, Environmental Management, etc. It became necessary for ALDOT to identify the few agencies that could be supported and notify the remaining agencies that they were now responsible for securing their own fuel sources. In addition, ALDOT was forced to restrict many of its routine operations in order to conserve existing fuel stockpiles.

As a result of this storm, ALDOT identified three major needs concerning fuel. The expansion of storage capacity at district and division fuel stations is imperative. Improving the distribution of fuel at the pump, especially the ability to specify the agencies and the individuals within those agencies who have access to fuel, is extremely important. Lastly, ALDOT's fuel contracts are being restructured such that suppliers do not have a financial incentive to break those contracts when fuel prices spike.

Communications

ALDOT operates a two way radio network that has traditionally been used for all operational communication in the field. Over the last several years, the availability of cell phones and "push to talk" phone units have reduced the reliance on the traditional radio network to the extent that many ALDOT vehicles no longer possess two way units. Cellular based communications have a number of advantages over two way radios as long as the cellular network is functioning. ALDOT's experience during Hurricane Katrina illustrated that cellular network problems in a specific area could create significant communication problems in a much larger portion of the state. ALDOT has identified the development of a backup communication network as a high priority.

Debris Removal Policies

Hurricanes generate large volumes of debris. The removal of that debris has increasingly become a matter of contention between state, county and municipal agencies. Programs such as Emergency Relief (administered by FHWA) and Public Assistance (administered by FEMA) have different rules regarding the type of debris removal that is eligible for reimbursement. ALDOT's infrastructure is almost entirely covered by ER. Debris removal on some county routes is covered by ER and by FEMA on others. Within municipal limits where state, county and city routes often coexist, determination of coverage (e.g., ER vs FEMA) is often problematic. At times the effort required to resolve coverage issues is significant enough to impact the ability of key personnel to manage ongoing recovery issues. ALDOT, FHWA and Alabama EMA have identified the need to cooperatively educate local governments and agencies regarding the appropriate roles of ER and FEMA public assistance programs. ALDOT and FHWA will jointly establish and publish policies that allow local agency representatives to more easily resolve coverage and eligibility issues.

Summary of Damage

Roadways

Routes that are within the range of tidal surges are susceptible to being damaged in a variety of ways. Layers of sand, up to three or four feet thick, are often deposited on roadways. Shoulders are often scoured or eroded during the storm or immediately afterwards when the water recedes to its source. When tidal surges are sufficiently large, roadways are often partially or completely breached. Sections of roadways near bridges and culverts are especially susceptible to these breaches. Some of these breached sections can be several miles long. Timely post-storm damage assessments and responses are made more difficult by these forms of damage.

During Hurricane Katrina, a number of coastal routes were damaged in the ways that were previously described. Among these routes are the following:

- SR-182 (Beach Road), Baldwin County.
- SR-180 (Fort Morgan Road), Baldwin County.
- SR-193 (Dauphin Island Parkway), Mobile County.

Traffic control devices are frequently damaged by high winds during storm events. In Hurricane Katrina, road signs and traffic signals were damaged over several counties in ALDOT's Eighth and Ninth Divisions, some of which were well inland (see Exhibit 1).

Downed trees along and across roadways represent the most widely spread form of storm damage. ALDOT's Second, Fifth, Eighth and Ninth divisions, covering fifteen counties, reported debris that was restricting traffic on the roadways or was limiting the availability of recovery zones.

Division personnel are dispatched to key areas to monitor conditions as the storm strength increases. When the winds become too strong, typically around 40 mph, for these personnel to operate safely, they are pre-positioned in safe locations until the storm has sufficiently subsided so they can begin damage assessments and report their findings to their supervisors who prioritize needs and dispatch crews and contractors as needed.

The majority of the emergency repair work was accomplished by a combination of state forces and contract forces paid on a force account basis. These work crews go from site to site reopening roadways and performing emergency repairs. This work includes clearing debris, filling in washouts, removing sand from the roadway and replacing essential signs and signals.

The contractors used for the emergency repairs are selected by the local county and state officials based upon needs and resource availability of the contractors.

Bridges

Cochrane Bridge. The Cochrane Bridge is a cable-stayed bridge that carries US-90 (SR-16) over the Mobile River in Mobile County. An offshore platform was in drydock at a local shipyard, approximately one-half mile away. The platform broke free during the storm and was driven upriver by the wind. It hit the western end of the main span of the bridge and was held there for a number of hours until the water level fell sufficiently to allow the platform to move.

ALDOT positioned structural engineers on site within hours, even before the storm had completely abated, and an immediate inspection was performed on those portions of the bridge that could be accessed safely. The remainder of the bridge was inspected the next morning. The resulting damage was in the form of spalled and broken concrete (most significantly in the high stress area around two of the cable anchor blocks), broken and misaligned main bearings, damaged cable systems and damaged pier protection cells. It was determined that one lane in each direction could be reopened to traffic. However, permitted oversize and overweight loads were deemed unable to cross the bridge and were diverted onto a sixty-five mile detour.

A consultant was selected for the design of the repair work and for the construction inspection services. The design agreement both design and construction inspection services. The construction project was awarded as a low-bid contract for the amount of $1,740,000. Repairs are expected to be completed by February 2006.

Mid Bay Crossing Ramp Bridge. The bridge carrying the ramp from eastbound US-90 to eastbound I-10 had five spans damaged by the storm. These spans were repeatedly lifted up and dropped by the combination of storm tidal surge and wave action. During the course of these lift/drop cycles, the girder ends were severely damaged and the girders were significantly overstressed at their mid-span point. These five spans were damaged to the point that they are not repairable and will be replaced.

The design of the replacement spans is being accomplished by state forces. The construction project will be awarded as a low-bid contract. The current estimate for the construction project is $400,000.

Tensaw River Bridge. The bridge carrying US-90 over the Tensaw River was out of service for several days after the storm. Both end slabs were undermined and required grouting to be restored to their proper position. Approximately 700 ft of shoulder and one lane of the roadway was lost due to tidal surge.

Bayou La Batre Lift Span Bridge. This structure carries SR-188 over Bayou La Batre in Mobile County. The lower floor of the control room was flooded to a depth of five feet which submerged several transformers. The bridge was not operable until those transformers were replaced. The computer that the

bridge operator uses to raise and lower the bridge was damaged from electrical surges generated during the transformer failure.

Tunnels

Bankhead Tunnel. Three of the pumps at the Bankhead tunnel failed during the storm. Due to the high head created by the storm surge in Mobile Bay, water infiltrated the tunnel at numerous locations which overwhelmed the pumps and caused their failure. Due to the low elevation of its entrance portal, the Bankhead Tunnel had already been closed to minimize the impact of the expected flooding from the tidal surge.

Wallace Tunnel. The Wallace Tunnel carries I-10 underneath the Mobile River. The discharge line on one of sump pumps at the west portal of the tunnel ruptured and acted as a drain line that allowed water from Mobile Bay to pour into the tunnel sump. When the sump overflowed, the pump motor room became inundated and all the pumps at that portal stopped operating. During the remainder of the storm, ALDOT personnel from the Ninth Division worked very hard to keep the tunnel open to traffic. With the Cochrane Bridge being out of service at that time, losing the Wallace tunnel would have meant that I-10 traffic could not pass through Mobile.

Miscellaneous

Ft. Morgan Ferry. ALDOT operates the M/V Ft. Morgan as a ferry across Mobile Bay. Passengers are transported between Fort Morgan in Baldwin County and Dauphin Island in Mobile County. Prior to the arrival of Hurricane Katrina, the M/V Ft. Morgan was moved to a shipyard berth in Mobile. Nevertheless, the storm surge was high enough to cause the ferry to be deposited on land, damaging it in the process. The landing at Fort Morgan was also damaged due to storm-induced scour.

ITS system on I-10 bridges

An ITS system was in place and operational on the I-10 Bayway bridge. During the storm, a number of variable message signs, cameras, fiber optic lines, weather stations and visibility sensors were severely damaged. Several permanent changeable message signs, cameras, and a significant length of fiber-optic cable was damaged and destroyed. The design work is being accomplished by a consultant. The construction project will be awarded as a low-bid contract. The current estimate for the construction project is $6,100,000.

Please also refer to Exhibit 2.

End of Statement

Exhibit 1

Department of Transportation Divisions

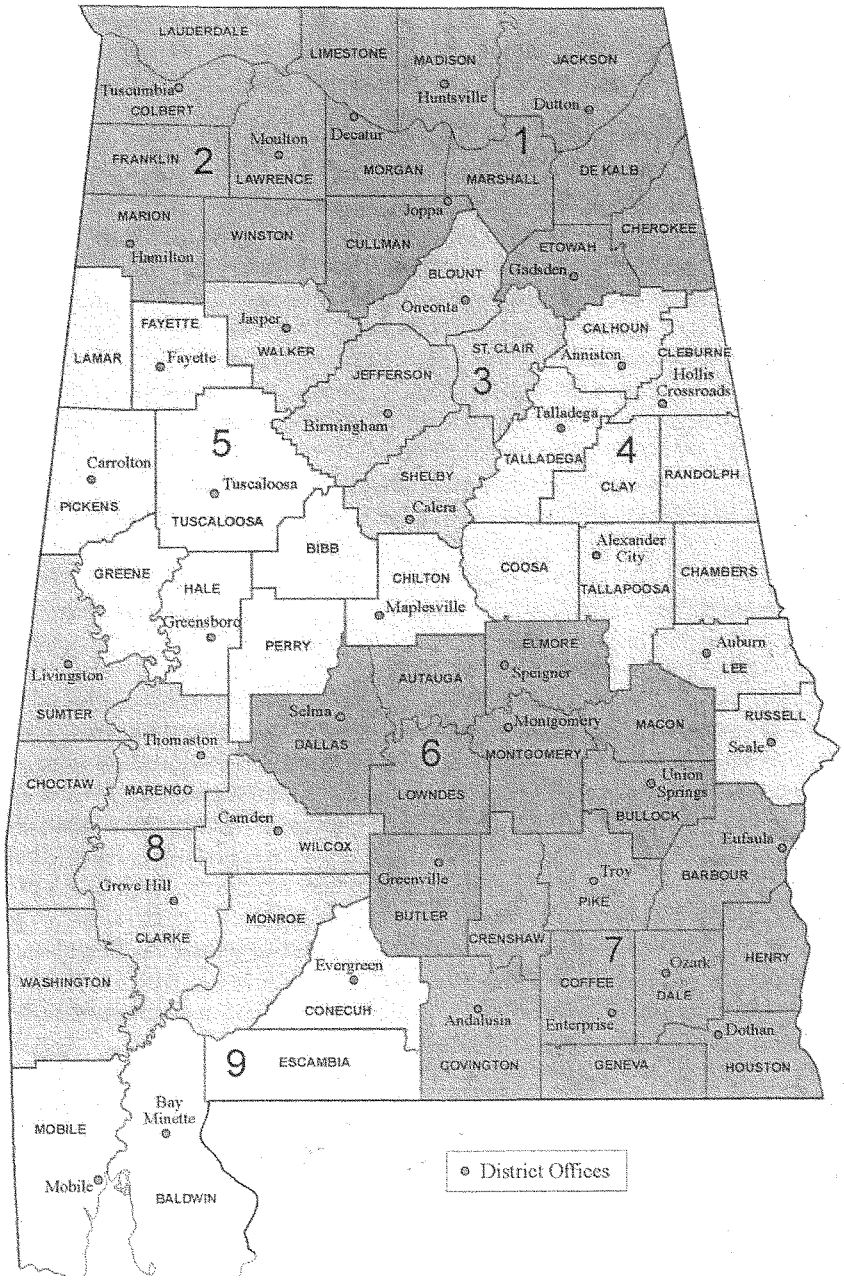


Exhibit 2

Div 2 Damage Summary for Emergency Relief - Hurricane Katrina

Congr. District	County	Report	Location	Damage	Estimated Total	Totals
5	Colbert	1	County Federal-Aid Routes	Trees and Debris Down	$11,395	
	Colbert County Total					**$11,395**
5	Lawrence	1	County Federal-Aid Routes	Trees and Debris Down	$49,253	
	Lawrence County Total					**$49,253**
4	Franklin	1	County Federal-Aid Routes	Trees and Debris Down	$9,743	
	Franklin County Total					**$9,743**
	Div. 8	8-1	Federal-Aid Routes	Trees and Debris Down	$97,000	
5				Colbert	$5,500	
4				Franklin	$20,000	
5				Lauderdale	$5,500	
5				Lawrence	$25,000	
4				Marion	$23,000	
4				Winston	$23,395	
	2nd Division Total					**$167,391**

Div 5 Damage Summary for Emergency Relief - Hurricane Katrina

Congr. District	County	Report	Location	Damage	Estimated Total	Totals
7	Greene	1	County Federal-Aid Routes	Trees and Debris Down	$22,050	
	Greene County Total					**$22,050**
4/6/7	Div. 5	5-1	Federal-Aid Routes	Trees and Debris Down	$400,000	
	5th Division Total					**$422,050**

Div 8 Damage Summary for Emergency Relief - Hurricane Katrina

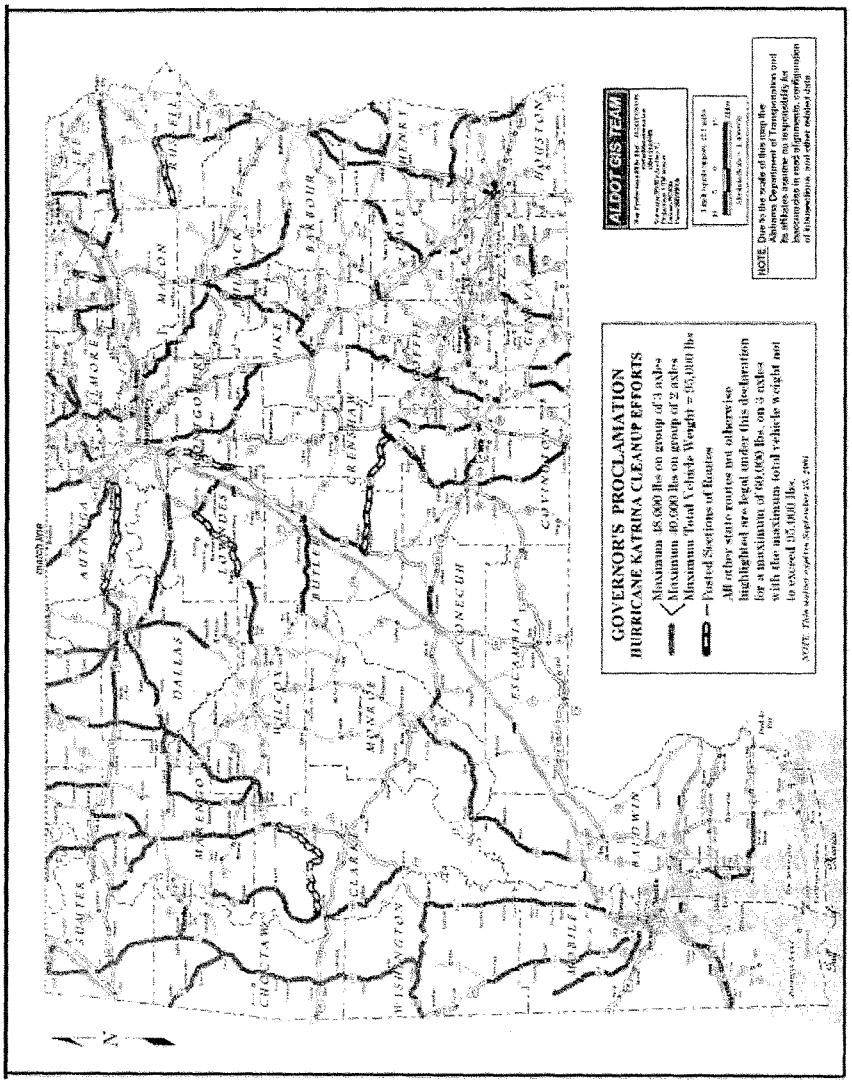
Congr. District	County	Report	Location	Damage	Estimated Total	Totals
1/7	Clarke	1	County Federal-Aid Routes	Trees and Debris Down	$36,000	
	Clarke County Total					**$36,000**
7	Choctaw	1	County Federal-Aid Routes	Trees and Debris Down	$200,000	
	Choctaw County Total					**$200,000**
7	Marengo	1	County Federal-Aid Routes	Trees and Debris Down	$57,600	
	Marengo County Total					**$57,600**
7	Sumter	1	County Federal-Aid Routes	Trees and Debris Down	$200,000	
	Sumter County Total					**$200,000**
1	Washington	1	County Federal-Aid Routes	Trees and Debris Down	$141,416	
	Washington County Total					**$141,416**
	Div. 8	8-1	Federal-Aid Routes	Trees and Debris Down	$271,325	
7				Choctaw	$54,637	
1/7				Clarke	$13,785	
7				Marengo	$32,500	
1				Monroe	$18,500	
7				Sumter	$135,800	
7				Wilcox	$6,500	
1				Washington	$10,503	
1/7	Div. 8	8-2	Federal-Aid Routes	Signs and Signals Damaged	$35,000	
	8th Division Total					**$941,341**

Exhibit 2

Division 9 Damage Summary for Emergency Relief - Hurricane Katrina						
Congr. District	County	Report	Location	Damage	Estimated Total	Totals
	Baldwin	1	SR-182 from MP 0.0 to MP 9.0 east of SR-59	3'-4' of Sand, Roadway & Bridge Approach Washout, Guardrail, Signals & Signs Damaged	$1,264,141	
	Baldwin	2	SR-180 from MP 0.0 to MP 8.0 and at MP 23.0 to MP 25.0	Shoulder Washout, 3'-4' of Sand, Ferry Dock damaged	$281,664	
	Baldwin	3	US-90 at Tensaw River Bridge, approx MP 37.3	Roadway Bridge Approach washed out on East end, Bridge End Slab Undermined on West end, Guardrail destroyed	$350,050	
	Baldwin	4	I-10 at Middle Bay Crossing Eastbound On-Ramp at MP 30.22	Four Bridge Spans Displaced by Storm Surge	$402,500	
	Baldwin	5	US-90 in Lillian at the State Line	Storm Surge Caused Erosion/Scour at Abutment #1	$6,297	
	Baldwin	6	US-90 at MP 46.0	Washout at Box Culvert	$14,231	
	Baldwin	7	I-10 at MP 53.5 WBR	Washout at Box Culvert	$7,332	
	Baldwin	8	Federal-Aid Routes	Trees and Debris Down	$15,000	
	Baldwin	9	County Federal-Aid Routes	Damage to Traffic Signs	$34,500	
1	Baldwin County Total					$2,375,725
	Mobile	1	SR-193 from MP 4.0 to MP 6.0	Roadway and Shoulder Damage on both sides of Heron Bay Bridge	$643,150	
	Mobile	2	Dauphin Island, Bienville Blvd approx 4.0 miles	3'-4' of Sand, Roadway Washout, Outfall Piping from Roadway Ditches Damaged	$1,519,150	
	Mobile	3	SR-163 at the Bridge Over Dog River	Erosion and Scour Damage	$22,836	
	Mobile	4	Tunnell Maintenance Building	Roof, Ceiling and Insulation Damage to Portion of Building	$91,540	
	Mobile	5	I-10 Tunnell (Wallace)	Flood Damage to Pump Motors, Electrical Circuits and Devices, Emergency Pumping Services	$107,720	
	Mobile	6	SR-188 Draw Bridge	Flood Damage to the Central room Transformer, Impact Damage by Large Boat	$19,883	
	Mobile	7	US-90 Tunnell (Bankhead)	Flood Damage to Pump Motors, Electrical Circuits and Devices	$11,857	
	Mobile	8	Interstate and State Routes	Trees and Debris Down	$777,945	
	Mobile	9	County Federal-Aid Routes	Trees and Debris Down, Damage to Traffic Signals & Signs	$1,829,595	
	Mobile	10	I-10 Byway & Wallace Tunnell	Repair Traffic Management System; Signs & Fiberoptic Circuits	$6,111,799	
	Mobile	11	Cochrane Bridge on US-90 over the Mobile River	Structural Damage from Impact when Oil Derrick Moored Nearby Broke Free	$2,000,000	
1	Mobile County Total					$13,135,475
1	Div. 9	9-1	Federal-Aid Routes (in Baldwin & Mobile Counties)	Signs, Signals & Lighting Damaged	$1,128,910	
1	Div. 9	2-Sep	Federal-Aid Routes (in Baldwin & Mobile Counties)	Damage to Denied Access Fence and Guardrail	$34,500	
9th Division Total						$16,674,610

Grand Total:	$18,205,392

Exhibit 3


GOVERNOR'S PROCLAMATION
HURRICANE KATRINA CLEANUP EFFORTS
Maximum 18,000 lbs on group of 3 axles
Maximum 40,000 lbs on group of 2 axles
Maximum Total Vehicle Weight = 65,000 lbs
Posted Sections of Routes
All other state routes not otherwise highlighted are legal under this declaration for a maximum of 60,000 lbs. on 5 axles with the maximum total vehicle weight not to exceed 95,000 lbs.
ALDOT GIS TEAM
HOUSTON
HENRY
BARBOUR
PIKE
MACON
ELMORE
AUTAUGA
DALLAS
MONROE
CHOCTAW
WASHINGTON
CLARKE
WILCOX
MONROE
BUTLER
CRENSHAW
COVINGTON
CONECUH
ESCAMBIA
BALDWIN
MOBILE

Statement of Rep. Jon Porter (R-NV)
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Subcommittee on Highways, Transit and Pipelines
Thursday, October 27, 2005

Mr. Chairman I thank you for holding this very important hearing today and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on the progress of the repair, restoration, and replacement of highway and transit infrastructure and services along the Gulf Coast.

Mr. Chairman, all of us in this room today are well aware of the damage that Katrina delivered to the Gulf Coast in late August. I was in Mississippi immediately following Katrina and saw the damage first hand. The destruction was stunning to say the least.

Earlier this month during a briefing with the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration we were told that substantial progress had been made towards reopening most major highways in the region to traffic, however, significant roadways remained closed.

Because of the ongoing nature of the assessment of the effects of the hurricane on both highway and transit infrastructure, the complete picture is slowly becoming apparent to us.

I expect that assessing the full impact of the Hurricane will require much more time and I am glad to be here today to gain a clearer understanding of the current state of affairs.

I thank the Chairman again for holding this hearing and look forward to hearing from our witnesses. I yield back.

Heavy & Highway construction prevailing wage rates (from DOL Office of Wage and Hour) in Hurricane Katrina impacted counties.

	Ironworker	Laborer	Carpenters	Operating Engineers	Truck Drivers	Highest to Lowest Wages paid
AL – Heavy (Baldwin & Mobile)	$12	$6.77 - $8.21		$8.25 - $11.45		$6.77 - $12
AL – Highway (Mobile)	$11.35	$7.35 - $10.08	$11.18	$7.61 - $13.57	$7.61 - $8.56	$7.35 - $13.96
MS – Heavy (about 80 counties)	$8.15	$5.15	$6.23			$5.15 - $9.84
MS – Highway (Hancock, Harrison, Jackson)	$13.89	$5.77 - $7.50	$8.67	$5.50 - $10.75	$6.14	$5.15 - $13.89
LA – Heavy (8 counties)	$16.71 ($4.40 fringe)	$7 - $11.24	$13.75 ($2.60 fringe)	$10.03 - $16.50 (one with fringe of $3.30)	$11.01 - $12.25	$7 - $22.09 (with $6 fringe)
LA- Highway (8 counties)	$18.05 (with fringe of $5.52)	$8.39 (with $1.80 fringe) - $10.13 (with $0.18 fringe)	$13.42 (with $3.04 fringe)	$11 - $17.20 (with $3.30 fringe)	$10.60 - $13.24	$8.24 (with fringe of $1.20) - $22.09 (with fringe of $6)

Most of these wage rates have no fringe benefits. It is noted where there are fringe benefits.

○