

**September 21, 2016**

Dear

We are faith and community leaders representing local non-partisan community organizations in twenty-two states and the District of Columbia. These local organizations are a partnership between local community institutions and the Industrial Areas Foundation, the nation’s oldest and largest network of organizers.

For over twenty-two years our network has been engaged in developing local citizens organizations in Louisiana. Today our sister organizations represent over 250 institutions spread across the state with over 250,000 members. Together Baton Rouge, Northern and Central Louisiana Interfaith and our state network, Together Louisiana have been assisting in the immediate response to the floods but are also working with Gov. John Bel Edwards and his staff and our congressional delegation to deal with the recovery, both immediate and long-term.

**We need your immediate assistance in seeking support for a bi-partisan request for a $2.6 billion dollar appropriation of Community Development block grant funds for Housing and Infrastructure Repair. $1.3 billion of the requests will be for Housing and $1.3 billion for Infrastructure. Gov. John Bel Edwards made this request to President Obama and it has been included in the President’s Continuing Resolution request. It has the support of the entire Louisiana Delegation. This request will need to be acted on immediately. These funds will supplement FEMA Funds that are already in motion and will allow the state to address the historic magnitude of the loss and destruction caused by these floods.**

Attached to this letter is a briefing from Gov. Edwards regarding the magnitude of crisis that has hit Louisiana. The Summary also includes other federal aid that will be needed to address these historic floods. It is important to note that some of this is already in progress.

Thank your for your consideration and support. Our leaders will be in touch with your staff immediately to follow-up on this request.

On behalf of the Industrial Areas Foundation Network of Organizations,

Rev. David K. Brawley Bishop Ronnie Crudup Sr.

St. Paul Community Baptist New Horizon Church International

East Brooklyn Congregations Working Together Jackson

Brooklyn NY Jackson MS

Rev. Lee T. Wesley Rev. Barbara Jarrell

Community Bible, Plymouth Rock All Souls Unitarian

Together Baton Rouge Northern and Central LA Interfaith

Baton Rouge LA Shreveport LA

Rev. James B. Johnson Fr. Dan O’Connor

New Light Baptist Our Lady of Prompt Succor

Northern and Central LA Interfaith Northern and Central LA Interfaith

Monroe LA Alexandria LA

Rev. Michael D. Wilker Rev. Dr. David Gortner

Lutheran Church of the Reformation Virginia Theological Seminary

Washington Interfaith Network VOICE

Washington DC Alexandria VA

Rev. Dan Smith Rev. Dr. Bette Jo Kauffman

First Cambridge UCC Episcopal Diocese of Western LA

Greater Boston Interfaith Northern and Central LA Interfaith

Cambridge MA Monroe LA

Rev. Anthony L. Bennett Fr. James C. Manship

Mount Aery Baptist Church St. Rose of Lima Catholic

CONNECT CONNECT

Bridgeport CT New Haven CT

Rabbi Joshua Caruso Rev. Richard Gibson

Ansche Chesed Fairmount Temple Elizabeth Baptist

Greater Cleveland Congregations Greater Cleveland Congregations

Cleveland OH Cleveland OH

Rev. Jessica Lambert Ms. Heather Sparks

St. Paul Lutheran President

New Jersey Together Voice Education Fund

Jersey City NJ Oklahoma City OK

Judith Trachtenberg Pastor Getulio Cruz

Congregation B’nai Jeshurun Iglesia Monte Sion

Manhattan Together Manhattan Together

New York NY New York NY

Dr. C.S. Gordon JR Rev. Shawn Moses

LA Missionary Baptist Convention First Grace UMC

Together Louisiana Together Louisiana

New Orleans LA New Orleans LA

Rev. Robert Davis Mr. Shakeel Syed,

Holy Cross Lutheran Islamic Foundation North

Lake County United Lake County United

Libertyville IL Libertyville IL

Rev. Jean Dow Mr. Bob Connolly

Immanuel Presbyterian The James Company

Common Ground Common Ground

Milwaukee WI Milwaukee WI

Ms. Maria Ibarra Rev. Mike Solberg

Downers Gove Society of Friends Union Church of Hinsdale

Dupage United Dupage United

Downers Grove IL Hinsdale IL

Ms. Kathy Pierson Mr. Michael Knight

Grace UMC St. Joseph Catholic

Lake County United Lake County United

Lake Bluff IL Libertyville IL

Rev. Alonzo Perry Sr. Rev. Herb Reynolds Davis

New Hope Missionary Baptist Nehemiah Christian Center

New Jersey Together Durham CAN

Jersey City NJ Durham NC

Rev. Susan Dunlap Ms. Mary Jo Huck

First Presbyterian St. Nicholas Catholic

Durham CAN Justice United

Durham NC Evanston

Ms. DiAne Boese Rabbi John Linder

Good Shepherd Lutheran Temple Solel

Justice United Valley Interfaith Project

Oak Park IL Paradise Valley AZ

Rev. Martha Seaman Rev. John Ogletree

Episcopal Diocese of AZ First Metropolitan Church

Valley Interfaith Project TMO

Phoenix AZ Houston TX

The Rev. Paige Getty Ms. Okolo Rashid

Unitarian Universalist International Museum Cultures

PATH Working Together Jackson

Columbia MD Jackson MS

Rev. Nancy Ladd Rev. Robert Turner

River Road Unitarian Universalist St. John Baptist Church

Action in Montgomery PATH

Bethesda MD Columbia MD

Fr. Walter D’Heedene Rev. Leah Sandwell-Weiss Episcopal

Sacred Heart Catholic St. Philip in the Hills Episcopal

COPS/Metro Alliance Pima County Interfaith Council

San Antonio TX Tucson, AZ

Mr. Ernie Lujan Ms. Karen Dorn-Steele

Santa Cruz Catholic Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane

Pima County Interfaith Council Spokane Alliance

Tucson AZ Spokane WA

Mr. Jason Benway Rev. Sarah Isakson

IBEW Local 73 St. Raphael in the Valley Episcopal-Lutheran

Spokane Alliance Southern Arizona Interfaith

Spokane WA Benson AZ

Ms. Clara Dupnik  Rev. Tom Tureman

Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Holy Trinity Catholic

Southern Arizona Interfaith Pima County Interfaith Civic Education Org.

Tucson AZ Tucson AZ

Deaconess Marjie Hrabe Ms. Delores Bailey

St. Mark’s UMC EmPOWERment Inc.

Pima County Interfaith Education Org. Orange County Justice United

Tucson, AZ Chapel Hill NC

Dr. Molly DeMarco Rev. Theron Jackson

Orange County Transit Advocates Morningstar Missionary Baptist

Orange County Justice United Northern and Central LA Interfaith

Chapel Hill NC Shreveport LA

Rev. Davis Price Ms. Delores De Avila

First Presbyterian Sacred Heart Catholic

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Fr. Albert Zanata Rabbi Samuel Rose

Assumption Catholic Congregation Beth Israel

The Metropolitan Organization Austin Interfaith

Houston TX Austin TX

Ms. Esmeralda Rodriguez’s Sr. Consuelo Tovar

St. Timothy Catholic Daughters of Charity

COPS/Metro Alliance COPS/Metro Alliance

San Antonio TX San Antonio TX

Ms. Sandra Fuentes Fr. Daniel Kelly

Sacred Heart Catholic St. Joseph Catholic

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Del Rio TX Arlington TX

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Congregation Kol Shofar Mays Chapel CME

Bay Area Organizing Committee Northern and Central LA Interfaith

San Francisco CA Ruston LA

Rabbi Malcolm Cohen Rev. Dennis Hutson

Temple Sinai Advent UMC

Nevadans for the Common Good Nevadans for the Common Good

Las Vegas NV Las Vegas NV

Reverend Anthony Hill Pastor Kari Collins

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Metro Denver/Front Range Metro Denver/Front Range

Denver CO Denver CO

Zeik Saidman Rev. Michael Fronk

B’nai Havurah First Christian Church Pomona

Metro Denver/Front Range Inland Communities Organizing Network

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Fr. Richard Edward Helmer Ms. Peggy Goods

Church of Our Savior St. Brigid Catholic Church
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Mill Valley CA Los Angles CA

Bishop Douglas Miles Rev. Glenna Huber

Koinonia Baptist Episcopal Diocese of MD

BUILD BUILD

Baltimore MD Baltimore MD

Rev. Andrew Foster Connors Ms. Martina O’Sullivan

Brown Memorial/Park Ave. Presbyterian Resurrection Catholic

BUILD COPA

Baltimore MD Watsonville CA

Mr. Barry Lachman Mr. Myron Knudson

Temple Shalom King of Glory Lutheran

DAI DAI

Dallas TX Dallas TX



**LOUISIANA CONGRESSIONAL FLOOD BRIEFING**

***Flooding Events.***

The August flooding event was the largest weather event in a generation, with the National Weather Service designating “1,000-year” rainfall levels occurring over a 48-hour period. Based on rainfall accumulations, an unprecedented 4 trillion gallons of rain fell across southern Louisiana, the equivalent to the amount of water discharged by the Mississippi River into the Gulf of Mexico over the course of 80 days. Numerous waterways reached record flood levels, with extensive flooding outside the FEMA special flood hazard zones.

Louisiana experienced severe storms and flooding events in both March and August 2016. In March, more than 29,000 homes were damaged or destroyed; damage from the August floods impacted over 60,000 homes, and that number is expected to rise as high as 150,000 as Individual Assistance registrations and inspections continue.

***Economic Impact.***

Louisiana Economic Development (LED) partnered with Louisiana State University (LSU) to conduct an assessment of economic damages resulting from the August 2016 Louisiana flooding event, with primary economic damages consisting of a loss of economic activity, property damages to residences, businesses, and damage to governmental infrastructure.

Key details are:

* At the peak, 19,900 Louisiana businesses or roughly 20% of all Louisiana businesses were disrupted by the flooding event.
* A disruption of 278,500 workers or 14% of the Louisiana workforce occurred at the peak of the flooding event.
* An economic loss is estimated at roughly $300 million in labor productivity and $836 million in terms of value added during the period immediately surrounding the flood.
* Approximately 6,000 businesses experienced flooding.
* Over 109,000 housing units flooded in Louisiana. Of these units, just over 77,000 were owner occupied homes, 22,000 were renter occupied units, and roughly 10,000 were vacant units.
* Residential property damage to structures is estimated to be between $3.5 and $7.4 billion.
* The LSU Ag Center estimates Louisiana agricultural losses of over $110 million.
* Over 90,000 automobiles were damaged with just over 60,000 insured with almost $380 million in damages.

**Federal Relief.**

I have communicated to President Obama (letters enclosed) and the Louisiana Congressional Delegation our request for assistance to rebuild Louisiana after the March and August flooding events. I ask that you carefully consider our request for assistance, which is broadly outlined as follows:

1. **Community Development Block Grant.** The sense of resiliency of the people of Louisiana is strong despite the devastation of the March and August flooding events. With a fragile state budget and millions in residential, commercial, and infrastructure damages, a significant gap will exist between available funds and the cost to rebuild. I ask that Congress support a supplemental appropriation of $2 billion in Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery **(**CDBG-DR) funds. Without an appropriation of CDBG-DR funds, many neighborhoods and communities will not be able to recover.
2. **Hazard Mitigation Funds.** This “1,000-year” flooding event will not result in the issuance of new flood maps, nor will the homes and businesses not in flood zones need to be elevated. This confirmation by FEMA Administrator Fugate will allow the state to focus on large scale and community based mitigation projects, such as the Comite River Diversion Project. I ask that Congress support the state’s request to allocate $125 million to the Army Corps of Engineers to construct this critical flood protection project.
3. **FHWA Emergency Highway Funding.** To help Louisiana respond to this disaster, the Emergency Relief funding backlog must be cleared. By clearing this $724 million backlog, Louisiana would be able to receive $14 million from the March 2016 flood and up to $25 million for this most recent flood to assist our state in addressing critical infrastructure needs.
4. **Social Services Disaster Block Grant.** The state’s historic floods are expected to take a toll on the mental health of Louisiana’s citizens, whether directly or indirectly affected by the disasters. The disruption in child care services across the state has placed pressure on the price of these services, making it more challenging for parents to secure quality child care for their children at an affordable cost. Further, hundreds of children and families served by our state were displaced as a result of having their homes destroyed or damaged due to floodwaters. The state of Louisiana will seek $100 million in Social Services Disaster Block Grant funding to support the social services needs of our local communities.
5. **Tax Relief.** I ask for your support in providing tax incentives and relief for the families impacted by the March and August flooding events. Such measures that should be considered include expanded low-income housing tax credits, increased rehabilitation tax credits to help restore commercial buildings, employer provided housing incentives, and below-market mortgages in the disaster areas, to name a few.