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RECOVERING FROM HURRICANE KATRINA: THE NEXT PHASE

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

SEPTEMBER 14, 2005

Printed for the use of the
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

24–244 PDF WASHINGTON : 2006

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512–1800; DC area (202) 512–1800
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RECOVERING FROM HURRICANE KATRINA: THE NEXT PHASE

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2005

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:06 a.m., in room SD–342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Susan M. Collins, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Collins, Voinovich, Coleman, Coburn, Chafee, Domenici, Warner, Lieberman, Levin, Akaka, Carper, Dayton, Lautenberg, and Pryor.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN COLLINS

Chairman COLLINS. The Committee will come to order.

Today the Committee begins an inquiry into the Hurricane Katrina disaster. I would like to thank my colleagues and our witnesses, and particularly my Ranking Member, Senator Lieberman, for their prompt cooperation on a matter of such urgency.

In the months ahead, this Committee intends to conduct a thorough, deliberate, and fair review of the preparation for and response to this devastating hurricane—at all levels of government.

We will ask the hard questions about the adequacy of planning efforts for this long-predicted natural disaster. We will explore the coordination among local, State, and Federal emergency management officials before and after the hurricane's landfall. And we will critically examine the legal structures and authorities that define who is in charge of assets that must be brought to bear in such a catastrophic event.

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, America has worked hard and invested billions of dollars to create an emergency preparedness and response structure that would bring together local, State and Federal authorities into one cohesive and effective unit. In its first major test since September 11, however, this structure failed to meet our expectations.

At this point, we would have expected a sharp, crisp response to this terrible tragedy. Instead, we witnessed a sluggish initial response that was characterized by a confusing lack of unity of command, a lack of coordination among different levels of government, and a lack of communication—sometimes even an inability to communicate at all—among government entities, first responders, utilities, health care providers, and other emergency workers.

Some have said that these problems have been caused by the Federal Government's post-September 11 focus on terrorism. Our Committee will look at that issue, but I will tell you at the outset that I really doubt that is the problem. Much of our preparations for a terrorist attack are equally applicable whether the cause of the incident is a natural disaster, fire, or accident.

For example, if the levees in New Orleans had been breached by a terrorist attack instead of a hurricane, we would still be faced with very similar evacuation, rescue, and recovery challenges.

Another issue that we will examine is whether FEMA should be part of the Department of Homeland Security. Again, I will say at the outset that my inclination is that it should be part of DHS. Whether it is a terrorist attack or a natural disaster, FEMA plays a key role in the response.

DHS includes offices that support preparedness at the State and local level as well as Federal agencies like the Coast Guard that play critical roles in planning and response. Including FEMA as part of DHS should promote better coordination with these agencies.

Another question that is being debated is whether or not an outside commission should be formed to investigate Katrina. The answer to that question really has no bearing on our work here. Regardless of whether an outside commission is established, it is essential that Congress conduct an aggressive inquiry. We would be remiss if we ignored our clear responsibility to conduct oversight to identify why the preparation and initial response were so woefully inadequate. We must identify problems so that we can change the laws and institute reforms that only Congress has the power to implement.

The purpose of our work here is not simply to place blame. Such an inquiry would be unproductive and misguided. Without a single human error, Katrina still would have been a natural disaster on an order of magnitude rarely seen on earth. But our inquiry must lay bare the painful evidence of human errors that added to the suffering. We must learn the lessons from Katrina, so we can better protect our people the next time a disaster strikes.

In conducting this inquiry we are determined not to divert resources from the recovery efforts that are still at a critical stage. Ensuring that Federal, State, local, and private emergency efforts have the resources and the leadership needed must remain our first priority and our highest obligation.

In that spirit, this first hearing will focus on how we can best assist the victims of Katrina, the 450,000 families that require long-term housing, the newly unemployed, the shuttered small businesses, the overwhelmed school systems, and the obliterated communities.

We have with us here today witnesses who have led with distinction when faced with natural disasters. We will seek their advice on what we can do now, right now, to assist and comfort the victims of Katrina, to stabilize the economy of the Gulf Coast, and to plan for the reconstruction.

Let me close with a word of thanks. Despite the failures and shortfalls of the response, there have been many more acts of courage and compassion. Many first responders and medical providers,

the Coast Guard, the National Guard, active duty troops, private citizens, and, yes, FEMA employees have worked heroically and tirelessly. Neighbors have reached out to neighbors.

One incredible fact that I learned last week from the Coast Guard briefing of this Committee, 70 percent of the Coast Guard employees based in the Gulf Coast who were heroically rescuing tens of thousands of people over the past 2 weeks, had lost their own homes in Hurricane Katrina. Yet they carried on and they did their job helping others.

And throughout our Nation, Americans have done what they always do in times of crisis: They have opened their hearts, their wallets, and even their homes. Katrina has raised serious and troubling questions about how our governments respond to catastrophic events, questions that we will answer over the course of this investigation. But Katrina has also shown, once again, that the spirit and character of the American people give our Nation a resiliency to recover from any catastrophe.

Senator Lieberman.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR LIEBERMAN

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks very much, Madam Chairman, for that excellent opening statement.

The fact is that fate has given this Committee a very important responsibility. I suppose I would say fate and the Senate Rules have given this Committee a very important responsibility to investigate the conduct of the Federal Government, also to look at the State and local governments, in preparation for and in response to Hurricane Katrina.

And what is required now clearly in the national interest is an independent-minded, open-minded, nonpartisan, no-holds-barred investigation to see what worked and what did not work, what we have to be grateful for and what we ought to be angry and unsatisfied with in the governmental response. I know that our leaders are still negotiating here in the Senate and in the House the exact contours of that debate, but the fact is, one way or the other, this Committee, as you have said, has a responsibility to proceed because we are the Committee with oversight responsibility over the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and we will proceed.

I am confident that under your leadership we will proceed in exactly the nonpartisan, independent manner that the seriousness of this hurricane and what it revealed about government's incapacity, at least in this case, to respond to protect the American people in crisis.

When I express my confidence in you and this Committee it is the result of experience, not just faith. We will do it because we have done it, and we will do it the right way because I am proud to say we have as a Committee done it the right way, most recently in the response to the 9/11 Commission Report, when we had a very thorough debate of the legislation in this Committee before we reported to the Senate. We had 2 days of amendments and discussion and debate. Not a single one of those votes on those amendments broke on partisan lines, and that is exactly the spirit here in another hour of national urgency that is required of us, and I

have no doubt that we will, as a Committee under your leadership, meet that test.

This morning's hearing gives us an opportunity to begin to look at what we can do to aid the people of New Orleans and the rest of the Gulf Coast with their recovery in the aftermath of the destruction wrought by Hurricane Katrina. This, too, is a critical part of our oversight responsibility. This hearing is about today and tomorrow, not about yesterday.

Our staff investigation of the preparation and response to Hurricane Katrina has begun, and when we are ready we will go in whatever the forum is to public hearings. This is not about that. This is about the future, and this is a moment when we hope to step in early to ensure that the Federal Government and the State and local governments together get the recovery and building process right, better than they got the preparation and response process.

This is an opportunity to hear from experts, and we have some experienced ones before us, and to begin to lay down some markers on what should be done now and in the days ahead to help put these communities back on their feet.

It is also an opportunity to begin to consider how we can make sure that we spend the more than $60 billion already rapidly approved by Congress—with billions and billions more likely on the way—wisely and efficiently, and that we will do together.

Hurricane Katrina's path of destruction has caused, obviously, a loss of life and property beyond any experience in a single natural disaster event in our lifetimes. The personal and human toll from this storm on those directly affected has been immense, but it has also taken a toll on the millions and millions of other Americans who watched the hurricane and its aftermath with increasing shock, grief, then anger, and then I would say embarrassment, embarrassment at the government's failure to adequately protect its citizens affected by this hurricane, and embarrassment at the reality exposed by the hurricane, which was the other America of the poor who were left behind when the evacuations began post-Katrina and are left behind every day in cities and towns throughout our country.

The American people did not like what they saw, and I think that is part of why they individually and in groups have responded with such generosity to help those who have been hurt. This is a moment of tragedy, but it is a moment of opportunity if we handle it well and right and strongly, to pull our country together, to help these people and this region recover, and in a larger sense, to deal with the lack of opportunity of all those who are left behind every day in our country.

For me, as we focus today on what is happening now, it is a real opportunity to begin to restore the confidence so many people in our country have lost in our government as they watched the response to this hurricane, by showing that we can get the rescue, recovery, and rebuilding right, and that the government will play a critical, constructive leadership role in that.

I want to thank our witnesses, Governor Wilson, Mayor Owens, Mayor Morial, and Mr. Logan, for being here today. They bring extraordinary experience to the table before us that can help us do

exactly what we want to do, and that is what Senator Collins hopes that this Committee will be able to help.

I say, finally, this country has a history, and it mirrors our national values and attitude, which is like individuals, communities, and organizations in life, everybody is knocked down at some point, or stumbles down at some point. The test is whether and how we get up, and I think we are ready to prove what we are made of again as a people, and we are again ready to prove, and committed to prove, that our government is prepared to be as competent as the American people have a right to expect that we will be.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you. Senator Voinovich.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR VOINOVICH

Senator VOINOVICH. Chairman Collins, thank you for holding this hearing today. I applaud your initiative and leadership in considering the next stage of the recovery effort. Hurricane Katrina may be the largest natural disaster that this country has ever experienced. The recovery effort will be monumental, and I am pleased that you brought such an experienced panel before the Committee to assist us as we proceed.

It is great to have a former governor and two former mayors on the panel, and a distinguished guest from the International Red Cross. I must say, as a former mayor, governor, and county commissioner, the rubber meets the road when we have disasters on the city, county, and State level.

I would first like to take this moment to extend my deepest sympathies to the victims and loved ones of this unprecedented disaster. I know all of our prayers and thoughts go out to those individuals.

And, Madam Chairman, you would be interested to know that we worked with the Ethics Committee to create a Senate Katrina Fund as part of the Combined Charities Campaign. We are going to be urging all Senators and all members of our staff to contribute to this fund so that we can show our concern for our brothers and sisters who are suffering in that part of the country.

I would also like to recognize the dedication of those who have offered tireless assistance to the victims of Katrina. To date 50,000 people have been rescued, 208,000 are housed in shelters around the country, and countless families have relocated out of State. It is amazing, the calls that all of us are getting from our constituents that say, "I would like to take a family and take them in." It is just unbelievable, the outpouring that we are having in this country to help those that need help.

There has been much criticism of the relief effort, but I applaud the over 80,000 Federal personnel on the ground responding, including 22,000 active duty personnel, 1,900 reservists, almost 9,000 FEMA workers, 4,000 Coast Guard, and approximately 51,000 National Guard personnel. I also want to thank the 1,500 personnel from Ohio, 300 of which responded on Thursday night at the Super Dome, and hundreds more who are still on the streets of New Orleans and throughout Mississippi who are doing search and rescue and logistics. I am very proud of them, and I think we owe a debt

of sacrifice to those individuals who were there and the families that are supporting them.

Katrina's impact is unfathomable, and an entire region was irrevocably affected. I cannot conceive of a perfect evacuation or mitigation effort for circumstances of this magnitude. I know that we will all have questions about the timely response to this catastrophe, and in due time we will work to make sure these questions are answered.

However, our responders have a job to do on the Gulf Coast and our objective should be to offer assistance and to speed recovery and respond to the needs of those impacted. We must provide them with the best information we can about whether or not they will have jobs and homes to return to so they can make very important decisions about what they are going to do with the rest of their lives.

In addition to the recovery and rebuilding, we must take this opportunity to improve our capability to respond. Secretary Chertoff has made many recommendations for reforming the Department. Prior to Katrina, Secretary Chertoff said that FEMA should be removed from the Emergency Preparedness and Response directorate and made directly answerable to the Secretary of the Department. I look forward to hearing more about this proposal.

In closing, I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure that we conduct a measured and deliberate examination of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Madam Chairman and Ranking Member, Senator Collins and Senator Lieberman, I am glad that you said that it is the responsibility of this Committee and its Members to determine what went right and what went wrong on the Gulf Coast. I think we have to be very careful in circumstances like this when we decide whether or not to implement an independent group or commission to do the work. It is our responsibility.

I will never forget, when I ran for mayor I said, "We are going to get into the bowels of the City of Cleveland," and when I ran for governor, "We are going to get into the bowels of State Government." Well, we are going to get into the bowels of the Department of Homeland Security and make sure that the next time around it will be able to get the job done that we expect it to do.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you. Senator Levin.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR LEVIN

Senator LEVIN. Madam Chairman, thank you, and thanks to Senator Lieberman, for convening the hearing and for your leadership in the investigation, which is essential, into the events surrounding Katrina.

I am glad that our first hearing is focused on the needs of the people who survived Katrina. Private generosity has been overwhelming, but it cannot meet most of the needs caused by the Katrina disaster. We need housing, both temporary and permanent, for as many as half a million individuals, health care, environmental clean-up, oil refinery reconstruction, removal of debris, road and bridge repair, and so forth.

We have a special responsibility on this Committee in addition to oversight, reviewing the events and the failures surrounding the

Katrina disaster. We must oversee the ongoing Federal spending which is already $62 billion. We have jurisdiction over the Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, and Federal procurement issues in general. So we have the authority specifically to oversee the laws that govern the spending of Federal money, including the Competition in Contracting Act.

If contracts are being given to favorites instead of to people who are the most qualified and the most efficient; if we do not have a process to make sure that Federal funds are spent properly—in other words, without active ongoing oversight by this Committee, public support for the Katrina recovery effort will erode and deepen the distrust of the Federal Government, which is already plenty deep given the Federal failures following the catastrophe of Katrina.

So that is a responsibility that I know we are going to add to the other responsibilities that we are undertaking.

We have an opportunity later this morning to act in one area where we know we have an urgent need and where we have failed to provide the resources to local and State governments. That has to do with the ability of first responders to communicate with one another. Interoperable communications is listed by just about every mayor I have talked to, every county commissioner I have talked to, and about every governor I have talked to. Interoperable communications is either at the top of the list or high on the list.

And yet, the U.S. Conference of Mayors found in a 2004 report that 88 percent of the cities surveyed do not have interoperable communications capabilities with the Department of Homeland Security agencies, including FEMA. In addition, 83 percent of the cities surveyed reported that they have interoperability communications problems with the Justice Department, including the FBI and other parts of the Justice Department. Seventy-five percent of the cities surveyed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors reported that they have not received any Federal funds for interoperable communications.

We are going to vote in a few minutes on an amendment of Senator Stabenow, which would provide the first part, a down payment of the $15 billion needed to provide interoperable communications. It is an amendment that would provide $5 billion of that $15 billion, which is so essential. So we can act as a Congress in a way we have not acted so far, to provide dedicated, focused funding for interoperable communications.

Madam Chairman, there is a number of questions that I have set forth, including some, it seems to me, inadequate questions that have been even asked so far, relative to notice that was given by the FEMA Director, yes, on Monday night on television, to our leaders about the flooding that was taking place, and yet 24 hours later our leaders did not apparently have knowledge of the fact that we had this massive flooding in New Orleans. I lay out these questions in my opening statement. I would ask that the opening statement be made part of the record at this time.

Chairman COLLINS. Without objection.

[The prepared statement of Senator Levin with attachments follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR LEVIN

In the wake of the greatest natural disaster to strike our nation, our topmost priority must continue to be to help the hundreds of thousands of persons injured and displaced by Hurricane Katrina. I am glad that our Committee's first hearing on the Katrina disaster is focused on their needs.

If there is a bright spot in this crisis, it has been the generosity of the millions of Americans who are opening their hearts and homes to help. The generous contributions of aid and comfort to hurricane victims all across the country is America at its best. In Michigan, people have welcomed with open arms several hundred individuals and families into urgently prepared shelters, and are working hard for their recovery. I saw the outpouring of support from my constituents when the first group arrived at the Air National Guard Base in Battle Creek last Sunday.

Private generosity cannot meet most of the needs caused by the Katrina disaster. We need housing, both temporary and permanent, for as many as 450,000 individuals. Health care. Environmental cleanup. Oil refinery reconstruction. Removal of debris. Road and bridge repair. Changes to make sure social security checks and veterans benefits can be received. New funding for interoperable communications equipment not only for Gulf region but throughout the United States.

Congress has already appropriated $62 billion, with more to come. While other committees in Congress can address specific needs related to housing, health, and other Katrina-related problems, our Committee can and should contribute to at least two essential tasks: Spending oversight and accountability.

First, oversight of ongoing Federal spending. With our jurisdiction over the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and Federal procurement issues, our Committee has the authority needed to undertake an intensive oversight effort to help ensure that DHS and FEMA are responsible stewards of the billions of taxpayer dollars that are going to be paid out. Questions are already flying about no-bid contracts for huge sums of money going to favored contractors or contractors with questionable track records. Active Congressional oversight is essential to ensuring responsible spending and vigilance against waste, fraud, and abuse.

Without active ongoing oversight, public support for the Katrina recovery effort will erode. I am glad to learn that the DHS Inspector General has set up special teams to monitor and audit Katrina-related spending, but that task is no huge that it may be necessary to establish a special Inspector General with that sole responsibility. GAO also has a role to play in overseeing this spending, and we should call upon its expertise. In addition, we need to find out why FEMA is using no-bid instead of competitively bid contracts, why these contracts are so massive in scope, and how contractors were selected. As our Chairman will vividly remember, it was this Committee that authored the Competition in Contracting Act, and it is fitting and of critical importance that we help oversee Katrina spending to protect taxpayers.

Second, it is beyond dispute that emergency planning and response failures took place both before and immediately after Katrina hit. Our Chairman and Ranking Minority Member have set a course for this Committee to identify, analyze, and understand those failures, and insist on accountability for them. Without understanding and accountability for poor performance, there is no incentive or ability to improve. By finding out what went wrong, we can strengthen our preparedness for future disasters, whether natural or caused by terrorist attack.

I am particularly interested in finding answers to questions about the Federal Government's immediate response to the hurricane and how to prevent similar types of problems in the next disaster, including the following:

- Why was there a massive communication failure during Katrina, and what can be done to prevent this problem in the future? One of the key problems exposed by the September 11 attack was our lack of interoperable communications equipment, yet 4 years later, we seem no better off. In fact, a June 2004 U.S. Conference of Mayors report found that 88 percent of the cities surveyed still do not have interoperable communications capabilities.
- Why did it take so long for the department of Defense to join the hurricane relief effort? I don't believe there is a problem with the law in this area, but we need to make sure. And why did Navy commanders in Pensacola, Florida restrain their helicopter pilots from providing search and rescue services to people in dire need?
- Did evacuation plans exist for people with special needs, such as the elderly, the sick, the disabled, and those without cars or the resources to leave town? If so, why were these plans so poorly executed?

- At the Superdome, 200 National Guard troops guarded the perimeter of the facility but apparently thought they had no authority to provide security for the thousands of persons inside the dome. Why was security so poorly planned and executed, and why did it take so long to evacuate the persons to a safe location?
- When tens of thousands of individuals began gathering at the Convention Center, no government agency took the steps necessary to recognize the emerging problems for the people stranded there and provide them with security, food, and water. Why did it take so long to get water, food and security to the convention center?
- Last Saturday, a newspaper article stated, "In Louisiana and Mississippi, civilian and military leaders said the response to the hurricane was delayed by the absence of the Mississippi National Guard's 155th Infantry Brigade and Louisiana's 256th Infantry Brigade, each with thousands of troops in Iraq." The National Guard has since reported that, on the day of the hurricane, it had only about 34 percent of the equipment it should have had, due to deployments to Iraq. To what extent was our domestic preparedness hurt by the extensive deployment of National Guard troops and assets in Iraq?
- It is critical that we understand why the Federal response was so slow during the first 2 days after the hurricane hit. Levees were breached and broke when the hurricane hit on Monday morning, August 29. The resulting flooding was widely reported on television throughout the day on Monday. According to a report in the New Orleans papers, Army Corps of Engineers New Orleans project manager Al Naomi said that reports of the flooding and breaches were transmitted to Federal and State officials: "It was disseminated. It went to our [Office of Emergency Preparedness] in Baton rouge, to the State, FEMA, the Corps. The people in the field knew it."

  On Monday night, the former FEMA director, Michael Brown, announced on television, on MSNBC, that New Orleans was flooding, and that he had told the President of this. He said: "I'm just beginning to receive reports from my folks in the field of literally tens of square miles of homes inundated with water up to the roofs. I mean I've already told the President tonight that we can anticipate a housing need of at least in the tens of thousands."

  About an hour later that evening, Mr. Brown told CNN: "And I think what we see is, sure, New Orleans dodged the bullet, in the sense that the catastrophic disaster we thought would occur downtown, moved slightly to the east, 30 or 40 miles. But what that meant is that we now have literally neighborhood after neighborhood that is totally engulfed in water."

  Despite this information, DHS Secretary Chertoff, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, and General Myers have said that they did not learn of the levee breaks and severe flooding until late Tuesday morning or afternoon. They said that, after reading the newspapers on Tuesday morning, they still thought that New Orleans had "dodged the bullet."

  I would like to know why some of the most senior people responsible for emergency response and preparedness were either misinformed or uninformed about the actual conditions in New Orleans for so long.

  Presumably if they had learned of the dire situation 24 hours earlier, on Monday afternoon instead of Tuesday afternoon, more would and could have been done. Instead, critical response time was lost. We need to find out how this communications break down happened—who knew what, when they knew it, and what they did with the information. This analysis is critical to preventing a similar communications break down in the next disaster.

Again, I would like to commend Senators Collins and Lieberman for beginning this inquiry into the Federal response to the hurricane. This important task goes to the heart of American security.

Orleans Breaking News

Thursday, September 08, 2005

Alarm sounded too late as N.O. swamped
Slow response left city. in lurch

By John McQuaid
Staff writer

Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans with a double blow when it made landfall Aug. 29. First, storm surge waters from the east rapidly swamped St. Bernard Parish and eastern New Orleans before the eye of the storm had passed the city about 9 a.m. Within hours, surge waters collapsed city canal floodwalls and began to "fill the bowl," while top officials continued to operate for a full day under the mistaken belief that the danger had passed.

A rough reconstruction of the flooding based on anecdotal accounts, interviews and computer modeling shows that the huge scale of the overlapping floods - one fast, one slow - should have been clear to some officials by mid-afternoon Monday, when city representatives confirmed that the 17th Street Canal floodwall had been breached.

At that point areas to the east were submerged from the earlier flooding, trapping thousands, while gradually rising waters stretched from the Lakefront across to Mid-City and almost to the Central Business District.

Federal officials have referred to the levee breaches as a separate and much later event from the flooding to the east, and said that they were unaware of the gravity of the problem until Tuesday, suggesting valuable response time was lost.

"It was midday Tuesday that I became aware of the fact that there was no possibility of plugging the (17th Street Canal) gap and that essentially the lake was going to start to drain into the city. I think that second catastrophe really caught everybody by surprise," Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff said Sunday, adding that he thought the breach had occurred Monday night or Tuesday morning. By that time, flooding from at least one of the two breached canals already had been under way all day Monday, evidence shows.

Even on Tuesday, as still-rising waters covered most of New Orleans, FEMA official Bill Lokey sounded a reassuring note in a Baton Rouge briefing.

"I don't want to alarm everybody that, you know, New Orleans is filling up like a bowl," Lokey said. "That's just not happening."

Once a levee or floodwall is breached by a hurricane storm surge, engineers say, it often widens and cannot quickly be sealed. Storm surge waters in Lake Pontchartrain may take a day or more to subside, so they keep pouring into the city - most of which lies below sea level - until the levels inside and outside the levee are equal.

Experts familiar with the hurricane risks in the New Orleans area said they were stunned that no one had conveyed the information about the breaches or made clear to upper-level officials the grave risk they posed, or made an effort to warn residents about the threat after storm winds subsided Monday afternoon.

"I'm shocked. I don't understand why the response wasn't instantaneous," said Louisiana State University geology professor Greg Stone, who studies coastal storm surge dynamics.

"They should have been monitoring this and informed people all the way to the top, (and) then they should have warned people," said Ivor Van Heerden, who uses computer models at the LSU Hurricane Center to study storm surges and provided officials in the Louisiana Office of Emergency Preparedness headquarters with data indicating the potential for flooding that could result from Katrina.

The storm approached the coast early Monday, the easterly winds from its northern quadrant pumping a rising surge into the marshy Lake Borgne area east of St. Bernard. There, two hurricane levees come together into a large V-shape. Storm surge researchers say that point acts as a giant funnel: Water pouring into the confined area rises up - perhaps as much as 20 feet in this case - and is funneled between the levees all the way into New Orleans.

The water likely topped the levees along the north side adjacent to eastern New Orleans, which average only 14 or 15 feet, according to the Army Corps of Engineers' New Orleans project manager Al Naomi.

The surge reached the Industrial Canal before dawn and quickly overflowed on both sides, the canal lockmaster reported to the Corps. At some point not long afterward, Corps officials believe a barge broke loose and crashed through the floodwall, opening a breach that accelerated flooding into the Lower Ninth Ward and St. Bernard Parish.

The floodwaters moved quickly.

By around 8 a.m., authorities reported rising water on both sides of the Industrial Canal, in St. Bernard and eastern New Orleans. The Coast Guard reported sighting residents on rooftops in the Upper Ninth Ward. "Water is inundating everywhere," in St. Bernard, Parish Council Chairman Joey DiFatta said.

At 9 a.m., there was 6 to 8 feet of water in the Lower 9th Ward, state officials said. Less than two hours later, most of St. Bernard was a lake 10 feet deep. "We know people were up in the attics hollering for help," state Sen. Walter Boasso, R-Arabi, said that morning. By 11 a.m., water was covering Interstate 10 at a low point near the high-rise over the Industrial Canal.

Sometime Monday morning, the 17th Street Canal levee burst when storm surge waters pressed against it and possibly topped it, Corps officials said. Col. Richard P. Wagenaar, the corps's site commander at 17th Street, told The Washington Post that a police officer called him Monday morning to tell him about it. He told the Post he couldn't get to the site.

Naomi said he thinks the breach occurred in the mid- or late-morning after the hurricane's eye had passed east of the city. By that time, north winds would have pushed storm surge water in Lake Pontchartrain south against the hurricane levees and into the canals. Then the wind shifted to the west.

"As I remember it the worst of the storm had passed when we got word the floodwall had collapsed," he said. "It could have been when we were experiencing westerly winds in the aftermath of the storm, which would have been pushing water against it."

Naomi and other Corps officials say they think the water in the canal topped the levee on the Orleans Parish side, weakening its structure on the interior side and causing its collapse. However, Van Heerden said he does not believe the water was high enough in the lake to top the 14-foot wall and that the pressure caused a "catastrophic structural failure."

It's unclear when floodwalls in the London Avenue canal were breached, but Naomi said it may have been about the same time.

Once the floodwalls failed, water - then at about 8 feet or higher in the lake - began to pour into New Orleans from the west, beginning the full-scale nightmare emergency managers and other officials most feared. At 10 a.m., reporters from The Times-Picayune saw water rising over I-10 where it dips beneath the railway trestle south and east of the canal.

Naomi said that he thinks Corps officials had communicated the information about the breaches to the Baton Rouge Office of Emergency Preparedness

"It was disseminated. It went to our OEP in Baton Rouge, to the state, FEMA, the Corps," Naomi said. "The people in the field knew it. The people here (in Corps offices) in Louisiana and Mississippi knew it. I don't know how communication worked in those agencies."

Officials at the OEP could not be reached for comment. New Orleans officials were also aware of the 17th Street Canal breach and publicly confirmed it at 2 p.m. Around the same time, The Times-Picayune reported 4 feet of water in one Lakeview neighborhood.

An hour later, Terry Ebbert, head of New Orleans' emergency operations, listed Treme and Lakeview as among the areas hardest hit by the flooding. Ebbert said there would be casualties because many people were calling emergency workers saying they were trapped on rooftops, in trees and attics. In some cases, he said, authorities lost contact with people pleading for help.

As the day wore on, the flood crept east and south and made its way across the city, penetrating neighborhood after neighborhood.

At 3 p.m. Times-Picayune reporters found it was knee-deep under the Jefferson Davis overpass near Xavier University. A Mid-City couple stranded there said their home was surrounded by 5 feet of water. An hour later, the I-10 dip under the railroad overpass was under 15 feet of water.

George Saucier, the CEO of Lindy Boggs Medical Center south of City Park, told The Times-Picayune that water from the 17th Street breach had flowed into Bayou St. John and overflowed its banks, then followed streets like sluices on its way south, where it was starting to flood the hospital's basement.

By late afternoon, people stranded on I-10 near the Industrial Canal could see residents on rooftops stretching across Lower 9th Ward.

As night fell Monday, many outside of New Orleans breathed a sigh of relief believing the city had been largely spared the worse. But thousands were stranded from the Lower Ninth Ward, across St. Bernard and south to the east bank of Plaquemines Parish. And waters continued to rise overnight throughout central New Orleans. By dawn, they stretched all the way from east to west and into Uptown, and were coursing through the Central Business District. As TV helicopters flew over the city and beamed out pictures of the flooding, the extent of the catastrophe was clear.

That flooding would complicate evacuation efforts in New Orleans for days.

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Chertoff, Rumsfeld, Myers: "We Dodged a Bullet"

Secretary Chertoff, Meet the Press, Saturday, September 4, 2005
http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/9179790/

MR. RUSSERT: People were stunned by a comment the president of the United States made on Wednesday, Mr. Secretary. He said, "I don't think anyone anticipated the breach of the levees." How could the president be so wrong, be so misinformed?

SEC'Y CHERTOFF: Well, I think if you look at what actually happened, I remember on Tuesday morning picking up newspapers and I saw headlines, "New Orleans Dodged The Bullet," because if you recall the storm moved to the east and then continued on and appeared to pass with considerable damage but nothing worse. It was on Tuesday that the levee--may have been overnight Monday to Tuesday--that the levee started to break. **And it was midday Tuesday that I became aware of the fact that there was no possibility of plugging the gap and that essentially the lake was going to start to drain into the city.** I think that second catastrophe really caught everybody by surprise. In fact, I think that's one of the reasons people didn't continue to leave after the hurricane had passed initially. So this was clearly an unprecedented catastrophe. And I think it caused a tremendous dislocation in the response effort and, in fact, in our ability to get materials to people. **(bold added).**

Department of Defense Briefing, Tuesday, September 6, 2005 (from transcript of CNN LIVE EVENT).

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, you gentlemen both speak of a massive and meaningful military response that's no doubt going on now – saving lives, putting out fires, plugging the levee.

And yet, Mr. Secretary, you say that first responders, local and state responders, were struck low by the original blow . . .

RUMSFELD: Not quite correct. **The original blow was the storm.** And New Orleans escaped a great portion of it, if you're talking about New Orleans as opposed to Mississippi. **The flood followed that by a day.**

* * *

MYERS: **The headline, of course, in most of the country's papers on Tuesday were, "New Orleans dodged a bullet," or words to that effect. MYERS: At that time, when those words were in our minds, we started working issues before we were asked.** And on Tuesday, at the direction of the Secretary and the deputy secretary, we went to each of the services – I called each of the chiefs of the services, one by one, and said, "We don't know what we're going to be asked for yet." **The levees and the flood walls had just broken.** "And we know some of what's going to be asked" – because we already had some requests for assistance – "but there's probably going to be more. And so as you, a service, think of capability that might be needed, you work with Northern Command, Admiral Tim Keating, and you push it forward" – and we used what we call VOCO, or vocal approval of orders – "and then we'll sort it out later. If NORTHCOM says that's a good capability to push forward, then we'll push that forward."

And we started that before the magnitude of this tragedy was even understood by anybody at any level.

New Orleans in Anarchy With Fights, Rapes

By ALLEN G. BREED, Associated Press Writer
September 1, 2005

NEW ORLEANS - New Orleans descended into anarchy Thursday as corpses lay abandoned in street medians, fights and fires broke out, cops turned in their badges and the governor declared war on looters who have made the city a menacing landscape of disorder and fear.

"They have M-16s and they're locked and loaded," Gov. Kathleen Blanco said of 300 National Guard troops who landed in New Orleans fresh from duty in Iraq. "These troops know how to shoot and kill, and they are more than willing to do so, and I expect they will."

Four days after Hurricane Katrina roared in with a devastating blow that inflicted potentially thousands of deaths, the fear, anger and violence mounted Thursday.

"I'm not sure I'm going to get out of here alive," said Canadian tourist Larry Mitzel, who handed a reporter his business card in case he goes missing. "I'm scared of riots. I'm scared of the locals. We might get caught in the crossfire."

The chaos deepened despite the promise of 1,400 National Guardsmen a day to stop the looting, plans for a $10 billion recovery bill in Congress and a government relief effort President Bush called the biggest in U.S. history.

New Orleans' top emergency management official called that effort a "national disgrace" and questioned when reinforcements would actually reach the increasingly lawless city.

About 15,000 to 20,000 people who had taken shelter at New Orleans convention center grew ever more hostile after waiting for buses for days amid the filth and the dead. Police Chief Eddie Compass said there was such a crush around a squad of 88 officers that they retreated when they went in to check out reports of assaults.

"We have individuals who are getting raped, we have individuals who are getting beaten," Compass said. "Tourists are walking in that direction and they are getting preyed upon."

Col. Henry Whitehorn, chief of the Louisiana State Police, said he heard of numerous instances of New Orleans police officers * many of whom from flooded areas * turning in their badges.

"They indicated that they had lost everything and didn't feel that it was worth them going back to take fire from looters and losing their lives," Whitehorn said.

A military helicopter tried to land at the convention center several times to drop off food and water. But the rushing crowd forced the choppers to back off. Troopers then tossed the supplies to the crowd from 10 feet off the ground and flew away.

In hopes of defusing the situation at the convention center, Mayor Ray Nagin gave the refugees permission to march across a bridge to the city's unflooded west bank for whatever relief they could find. But the bedlam made that difficult.

"This is a desperate SOS," Nagin said in a statement. "Right now we are out of resources at the convention center and don't anticipate enough buses."

At least seven bodies were scattered outside the convention center, a makeshift staging area for those rescued from rooftops, attics and highways. The sidewalks were packed with people without food, water or medical care, and with no sign of law enforcement.

An old man in a chaise lounge lay dead in a grassy median as hungry babies wailed around him. Around the corner, an elderly woman lay dead in her wheelchair, covered up by a blanket, and another body lay beside her wrapped in a sheet.

"I don't treat my dog like that," 47-year-old Daniel Edwards said as he pointed at the woman in the wheelchair.

"You can do everything for other countries, but you can't do nothing for your own people," he added. "You can go overseas with the military, but you can't get them down here."

The street outside the center, above the floodwaters, smelled of urine and feces, and was choked with dirty diapers, old bottles and garbage.

"They've been teasing us with buses for four days," Edwards said. "They're telling us they're going to come get us one day, and then they don't show up."

Every so often, an armored state police vehicle cruised in front of the convention center with four or five officers in riot gear with automatic weapons. But there was no sign of help from the National Guard.

At one point the crowd began to chant "We want help! We want help!" Later, a woman, screaming, went on the front steps of the convention center and led the crowd in reciting the 23rd Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd ..."

"We are out here like pure animals," the Issac Clark said.

"We've got people dying out here * two babies have died, a woman died, a man died," said Helen Cheek. "We haven't had no food, we haven't had no water, we haven't had nothing. They just brought us here and dropped us."

Tourist Debbie Durso of Washington, Mich., said she asked a police officer for assistance and his response was, "'Go to hell * it's every man for himself.'"

"This is just insanity," she said. "We have no food, no water ... all these trucks and buses go by

and they do nothing but wave."

FEMA director Michael Brown said the agency just learned about the situation at the convention center Thursday and quickly scrambled to provide food, water and medical care and remove the corpses.

Speaking on CNN's "Larry King Live," Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff said the evacuation of New Orleans should be completed by the end of the weekend.

At the hot and stinking Superdome, where 30,000 were being evacuated by bus to the Houston Astrodome, fistfights and fires erupted amid a seething sea of tense, suffering people who waited in a lines that stretched a half-mile to board yellow school buses.

After a traffic jam kept buses from arriving for nearly four hours, a near-riot broke out in the scramble to get on the buses that finally did show up, with a group of refugees breaking through a line of heavily armed National Guardsmen.

One military policeman was shot in the leg as he and a man scuffled for the MP's rifle, police Capt. Ernie Demmo said. The man was arrested.

Some of those among the mostly poor crowd had been in the dome for four days without air conditioning, working toilets or a place to bathe. An ambulance service airlifting the sick and injured out of the Superdome suspended flights as too dangerous after it was reported that a bullet was fired at a military helicopter.

"If they're just taking us anywhere, just anywhere, I say praise God," said refugee John Phillip. "Nothing could be worse than what we've been through."

By Thursday evening, 11 hours after the military began evacuating the Superdome, the arena held 10,000 more people than it did at dawn. National Guard Capt. John Pollard said evacuees from around the city poured into the Superdome and swelled the crowd to about 30,000 because they believed the arena was the best place to get a ride out of town.

As he watched a line snaking for blocks through ankle-deep waters, New Orleans' emergency operations chief Terry Ebbert blamed the inadequate response on the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"This is not a FEMA operation. I haven't seen a single FEMA guy," he said. He added: "We can send massive amounts of aid to tsunami victims, but we can't bail out the city of New Orleans."

FEMA officials said some operations had to be suspended in areas where gunfire has broken out, but are working overtime to feed people and restore order.

A day after Nagin took 1,500 police officers off search-and-rescue duty to try to restore order in the streets, there were continued reports of looting, shootings, gunfire and carjackings * and not

all the crimes were driven by greed.

When some hospitals try to airlift patients, Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Cheri Ben-Iesan said, "there are people just taking potshots at police and at helicopters, telling them, `You better come get my family.'"

Outside a looted Rite-Aid drugstore, some people were anxious to show they needed what they were taking. A gray-haired man who would not give his name pulled up his T-shirt to show a surgery scar and explained that he needs pads for incontinence.

"I'm a Christian. I feel bad going in there," he said.

Earl Baker carried toothpaste, toothbrushes and deodorant. "Look, I'm only getting necessities," he said. "All of this is personal hygiene. I ain't getting nothing to get drunk or high with."

Several thousand storm victims had arrived in Houston by Thursday night, and they quickly got hot meals, showers and some much-needed rest.

Audree Lee, 37, was thrilled after getting a shower and hearing her teenage daughter's voice on the telephone for the first time since the storm. Lee had relatives take her daughter to Alabama so she would be safe.

"I just cried. She cried. We cried together," Lee said. "She asked me about her dog. They wouldn't let me take her dog with me. ... I know the dog is gone now."

While floodwaters in the city appeared to stabilize, efforts continued to plug three breaches that had opened up in the levee system that protects this below-sea-level city.

Helicopters dropped sandbags into the breach and pilings were being pounded into the mouth of the canal Thursday to close its connection to Lake Pontchartrain, state Transportation Secretary Johnny Bradberry said. The next step called for using about 250 concrete road barriers to seal the gap.

In Washington, the White House said Bush will tour the devastated Gulf Coast region on Friday and has asked his father, former President George H.W. Bush, and former President Clinton to lead a private fund-raising campaign for victims.

The president urged a crackdown on the lawlessness.

"I think there ought to be zero tolerance of people breaking the law during an emergency such as this * whether it be looting, or price gouging at the gasoline pump, or taking advantage of charitable giving or insurance fraud," Bush said. "And I've made that clear to our attorney general. The citizens ought to be working together."

Donald Dudley, a 55-year-old New Orleans seafood merchant, complained that when he and other hungry refugees broke into the kitchen of the convention center and tried to prepare food, the National Guard chased them away.

"They pulled guns and told us we had to leave that kitchen or they would blow our damn brains out," he said. "We don't want their help. Give us some vehicles and we'll get ourselves out of here!"

Senator LEVIN. I thank the Chairman.

Chairman COLLINS. Senator Coleman.

OPENING STATEMENT BY SENATOR COLEMAN

Senator COLEMAN. Thank you, Chairman Collins, for your expeditious and conscientious way that you have brought this hearing about. The Nation is full of questions and waits for answers, and we begin to meet that urgent need today.

I also want to express my appreciation for the foresight of the Chairman and the Ranking Member to focus on the road ahead today before we collectively look back, and we will collectively look back, and we need to get answers of what went wrong, but it is important to look to the future.

Some may say that a storm of this magnitude so overwhelmed our expectations that it destroyed our ability to respond. Others will say that all things are basically manageable and that this was primarily a failure of systems of government in which people, regular people, depend on for protection. I think each is partially right and each is partially wrong, and I second the words of my colleague, the former mayor and governor, that we need to get to the bowels of Homeland Security and figure out what was not done, talk to folks at the local level and State level, understand what was beyond the scope of government, and pull all of that together.

I served as Mayor of St. Paul, and in that capacity I had the opportunity to travel, and see close hand, the disaster that occurred in Grand Forks, North Dakota, and the tremendous leadership of Mayor Owens to respond to that disaster. It is great to have you here. That flood and subsequent destruction ravaged an area that was already hard hit by economic hardship.

I recall meeting with a local official in East Grand Forks, right across the river, and I asked him for the total financial assistance the area would need to receive. He said to me, "A few million dollars less than Kevin Garnett just received in his new NBA contract." I think an event like this brings all questions of values into sharp focus, and I think that is important.

An observation, first of all, I think we all heard the statement "every crisis is an opportunity in disguise." For those who lost their lives, their homes and everything, this tragedy wears no mask, and we need to confront the painful reality of what has happened to them and deal with that. But for the rest of us, Hurricane Katrina is an opportunity to learn lessons that may spare another community of a similar fate.

I also am looking forward to the prospect of a brighter future. When I was mayor my mantra was "Hope and confidence yield investment." Hope comes from government doing its business right; a sense of confidence comes from people believing that there are those who are going to be there when they need them. Hope comes from a brighter vision for the future.

I do believe that we have to take advantage of this time to build that brighter future, not just rebuild what was. There are 400 schools that have been destroyed. Do we rewire them in 20th Century technology, or do we do 21st Century technology? Part of my questions will be, how do we, at the Federal level, help bring to the table some of the ideas of urban planning and vision that are out

there but do not override local concern and direction? Somehow we have to bring that together. This is a moment of opportunity. We can bring hope to the people of the Gulf Coast. We should be doing that, not alone by ourselves, but working in partnership. So I hope that we get there.

We will have time to look back, and we will look back, but let us take advantage of this time to look forward and to make sure that we are building that future of greater hope and greater confidence and ultimately greater investment in the communities that have been so ravaged.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Senator Coleman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR COLEMAN

Hurricane Katrina will likely be noted as the most horrific and costly natural disaster in our Nation's history. I urge my colleagues to not lose sight of this fact as we begin, what I trust will be, an exhaustive investigation into the Federal, State, and local response to this unprecedented disaster. Moreover, I appreciate the foresight of Chairman Collins and Senator Lieberman to begin this oversight process by looking forward, before looking back. Our first priority must be to quickly aid the victims that are eagerly awaiting our assistance, rather than immediately beginning a process of recriminations.

I am confident we—the Senate, the government, and the Nation—will learn many important lessons in the months to come. However, our focus should now be on the massive recovery and re-building process ahead. Restoration is not only critical for the displaced citizens of New Orleans, but for the morale of all Americans. In the wake of the devastation that ravaged New Orleans, we now have a unique opportunity to not only rebuild, but also to revitalize New Orleans by utilizing the most innovative technology and infrastructure available in the process. However, I am concerned that without the presence of strong leadership and planning, the citizens, the schools, and the business community will have no direction.

Yesterday, I along with several of my colleagues in the Senate, who also were former mayors and governors, sent a letter to President Bush urging the creation of a New Orleans Rebuilding Commission. We envision a high level, independent panel of experts, appointed by the President, to restore and redesign the city of New Orleans.

The Commission will address the environmental, social, and cultural elements of the city as it develops a comprehensive urban re-design plan. A coordinated solution brought forth by many parties who understand the multiculturalism, geography and history of the city will ensure that while the face of the city may change, its soul will remain intact.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that while we do not want this investigation to interfere with recovery efforts, we urgently need an accounting of lessons learned at *all levels of government*—Federal, State, and local. Our response plans failed. Our communication infrastructure failed. We believed that these problems were solved after the brutal attacks of September 11. Unfortunately, much work remains to ensure a fluid response to the next disaster—whether natural or man-made. We were provided advance notice of the likely devastation to be wrought by Hurricane Katrina and our response failed. Terrorists will provide no such warning.

It is imperative that we ensure specific and demonstrable plans are available for all levels of government and for all types of disasters. Not only do we need plans—we need to test them regularly to ensure an adequate response becoming of the U.S. Government. I look forward to actively participating in this investigation.

Finally, we need to do all we can to assist the victims of this disaster. We will learn many important lessons from this unprecedented disaster and our plans will be improved. Yet, for the next few months our thoughts and prayers need to be with the victims of this tragedy throughout Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana.

Thank you, Chairman Collins.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you. Senator Akaka.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR AKAKA

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman and Ranking Member Lieberman. I wish to compliment both of you for once again taking the lead on an issue so critical to this Nation, the response to Hurricane Katrina.

I also want to welcome our distinguished panel, representing State, county, and national organizations, to this Committee hearing.

The devastation to the Gulf Coast region—what can I say—is staggering. To the millions of Americans affected by this catastrophe, I extend my prayers for those who have lost their lives and for those who are in mourning and those who are suffering.

We have the difficult task of making sure that those in need and those who seek to provide relief are served well by their government. This national emergency is a humanitarian crisis of enormous dimension. The world has witnessed tens of thousands of Americans lacking the basic necessities of food, water, shelter, safety, and medicine. Sadly, when Katrina's victims needed the Federal Government most, there was a crisis of leadership. I am not pointing fingers or assigning blame, but I know that many Americans are angry and are seeking accountability.

I have received hundreds of letters from my own constituents from Hawaii. Hawaii is also threatened by hurricanes and has been badly battered in the past by them. It is the hurricane season now in Hawaii. My constituents want to know what their leaders did wrong and what they did right. They want to know how the government can do better. They want to be assured that if Hawaii is hit again that they will be helped. All Americans want this assurance.

Since September 11, 2001, the Congress has given considerable attention to making Americans more safe. Yet there were disturbing similarities between Hurricane Katrina and September 11, similarities in what was known beforehand and how the government responded to pending dangers.

On September 11, we found that the President and other senior leaders received intelligence and law enforcement reports about imminent threats to Americans. In the case of Katrina, the National Weather Service tracked the hurricane for a week across the Atlantic and through the Gulf of Mexico, and the Administrator of NOAA rightly stated, "This storm was reported as widely as any I have ever seen." Moreover, there were numerous studies and news reports about the dangers this strong hurricane would pose to the levees.

In the 4 years since September 11, we should have done a better job in preparing to protect Americans. This unprecedented disaster is not only a test of our Nation's character, but it is also an opportunity to improve. We need to examine our national priorities and give greater attention to the needs of Americans, and even think of evaluating the structure of DHS and its response capacity, and to search for ways to do better.

Thank you, Madam Chairman. I welcome our witnesses and look forward to their testimony.

Madam Chairman, I have a longer statement that I request to be made part of the record.

Chairman COLLINS. Without objection.

[The prepared statement of Senator Akaka follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR AKAKA

Thank you, Madam Chairman and Ranking Member Lieberman.

I wish to compliment both of you for once again taking the lead on an issue so critical to this nation—the response to Hurricane Katrina.

The devastation to the Gulf Coast region is staggering. To the millions of Americans affected by this catastrophe, I extend my prayers for those who have lost their lives and to those who are in mourning. We have the difficult task of making sure that those in need, and those who seek to provide relief are served well by their government.

Over 90,000 square miles have been impacted by Hurricane Katrina—an area as large as Great Britain. We know that hundreds of thousands of Americans have lost their homes and worldly possessions. Loved ones and strangers alike have opened their homes and hearts to those who have been forced to seek refuge. Much of New Orleans was submerged under flood waters that have since become a polluted, toxic swamp, endangering the health and lives of storm survivors and their brave rescuers—a major U.S. city of a half-million people rendered uninhabitable. Entire communities in Mississippi and Alabama have been wiped out.

This national emergency—which was televised worldwide—is a humanitarian crisis of enormous dimension. The world has witnessed tens of thousands of Americans lacking the basic necessities of food, water, shelter, safety, and medicine.

Sadly, when Katrina's victims needed the Federal Government most, there was a crisis of leadership. On Friday, September 2, 4 days after the battered levees broke, victims in major shelters reported not seeing a single Federal official. Organizations like the Red Cross and the Salvation Army, along with private citizens and businesses sought to rescue and bring relief to the Gulf residents.

I am not pointing fingers or assigning blame. But I know that many Americans are angry and are seeking accountability. I have received hundreds of letters from my own constituents. Hawaii is also threatened by hurricanes and has been badly battered in the past by them. It is the Hurricane season now. My constituents want to know what their leaders did wrong and what they did right. They want to know how their government can do better. They want to be assured that if Hawaii is hit again that there will be help. All Americans want that assurance.

Since September 11, 2001, the Congress has given considerable attention to making Americans more safe. Yet there are disturbing similarities between Hurricane Katrina and September 11. Similarities in what was known beforehand and how the government reacted to pending dangers.

On September 11, we found that the President and other senior leaders received intelligence and law enforcement reports about imminent threats to Americans. In the case of Katrina, the National Weather Service tracked the hurricane for a week across the Atlantic and through the Gulf of Mexico, and the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration rightly stated "this storm was reported as widely as any I have ever seen." Moreover, there were numerous studies and news reports about the dangers that a hurricane of this magnitude would pose to the levees.

In the 4 years since September 11, we should have done a better job in prepared to protect Americans.

This unprecedented disaster is a test of our Nation's character. It is also an opportunity to improve.

We need to re-examine our national priorities and give greater attention to the needs of Americans and to search for ways to do better.

Thank you, Madam Chairman. I welcome our witnesses and look forward to their testimony.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you. Senator Domenici.

OPENING STATEMENT BY SENATOR DOMENICI

Senator DOMENICI. First, Madam Chairman, I want to say to both of you that I believe it is imperative that you proceed as you have started today.

A couple of statements that have been made here, I think, deserve being repeated. Senator Lieberman, you have approached this, in my opinion, in terms of looking at what went wrong, as a

Senator should, not as a partisan Senator. You have said this Committee should find out what went right and what went wrong. Inherent in that statement is that you think that there is sufficient competence in Congress for a congressional committee, structured as we structure committees, to do this.

As a long-time Senator, I just cannot believe what I am hearing these days. We have a problem like this, and it is instantly stated by some that Congress cannot answer this question, that it has to have some special outside committee. I would assume implicit in that statement is a belief that we would play politics, that we would not appropriately set responsibilities in things achieved and actions that failed. I do not believe we need an outside committee every time there is a problem in this country. We ought to investigate such problems, whether it is this Committee or whether our leadership establishes another committee, but it should be a congressional investigation by a committee with the same kind of virtues and the same kind of liabilities that standing congressional committees have.

So I thank you for that. I do not know that you expected it to be interpreted as I have, but I nonetheless believe it is imperative that it be stated. You are not asking that another committee be appointed, and I do not think you would be upset if the leadership appointed a congressional committee and you were on it, which you probably would be. Some of us would not be on it, and maybe some would be upset, but not every Senator is on this Committee either, so some are going to be upset anyway. Everyone wants to hold their own hearings, but that cannot be. Enough of that issue. [Laughter.]

Second, let me say one Senator suggested that we ought to quickly fund an amendment on the floor that asks for telephone interoperable communications. I am not sure we should do that. Why am I not sure? Because I do not know what kind of plan we have for the recovery of the area. That might not be the most important thing we have to do. We ought to find out what rehabilitation we are going to do, and then start to fund that rehabilitation, with the exception of those things that are absolutely imperative and must be done immediately. To do otherwise, as it appears we are headed, leads me to the conclusion that we are on a road to failure in the way we are doing things.

Mr. Governor, my friend, you know what is going to happen. The people in charge are not going to have enough time to do their work because every committee up here is going to have them up here testifying as to what we can do for you. They are not going to have enough time to figure out what they ought to do for the area.

So I am going to repeat here what I have said a number of times. The President of the United States should appoint a lead person as coordinator and set up a coordinating office, and do it quickly with the consent of the governors and mayors so it runs in deference to them, not contrary to them. The sooner the better, I repeat.

Now, Madam Chairman, I know that does not sit well with some because some think they should be doing that, and that is fine. I wish the President could understand what I am saying because I

think he is not embarrassing himself by doing it, he is not admitting defeat by doing it, rather he is setting a management structure in place.

Last, how many Americans and how many Senators know that there exists within Homeland Security an institute, a modeling institute, called the National Infrastructure Simulation Analysis Center, NISAC. Perhaps you do, Madam Chairman?

It is a center that has plugged into it information whereby you determine what areas in the country and what events in the country could bring the largest disasters. They already predict which one is the worst. It is the earthquake of San Francisco. And it says, if that happens, here is the damage. Now, do you want to prepare for it or do you want to wait until it happens, or is it too unlikely to happen that you should not prepare for it? I do not know. But nobody has studied that.

It said the second worst one, believe it or not, was this one. It was there. They modeled it out and said this is what will happen. They have No. 3, they have No. 4. I believe they have the first 20. Should we do something about that? I would say you bet. The President and Congress should say, "What are they? Are they accurate?" If they are, be honest. I submit some of them you cannot prepare for because they are so big, and while we are talking about who failed here, I submit that what really happened is that Mother Nature decided that we were going to get the most devastating storm that could ever hit America. And most of the damage we could not avoid. We can talk about who was 1 day late, 24 hours late, 36 hours late, but the truth of the matter is that Katrina was so gigantic and the aftermath of that event is so big that 1 or 2 days of preparatin and knowing who planned what and who did not is not going to solve the major problem that the Good Lord, if you believe in God, just put on this area something you could not fix. It happened and then we have to try to fix it.

I hope that people do not think that 1 day, 2 days here or there would have avoided the devastation that exists because of Katrina because it could not have. And I hope that comes out, too, when Katrina response is evaluated.

I took too much time, but I really believe what I have said was not intended to say anything about this Committee. I think you have done a terrific job and you should have primary responsibility. If Congress is going to do it, you should have prime responsibility.

I thank you for the time.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you. Senator Lautenberg.

OPENING STATEMENT BY SENATOR LAUTENBERG

Senator LAUTENBERG. Thank you, Madam Chairman, for convening this hearing. I have a longer statement which I would ask unanimous consent be included in the record.

Chairman COLLINS. Without objection.

Senator LAUTENBERG. One of the things that strikes me is, as we watched events unfold there, the bravery and the courage of the people who served in the rescue mission. The Coast Guard touched everybody's heart when you saw those baskets drop down virtually from the sky and pick people off rooftops. It was an incredible deed of courage. The winds were blowing, the sea was stormy, and it

was repeated by other departments of government. One of the things that comes out, as I review events, is that this constant refrain that we hear about shrinking the size of government, getting it down to so small that we can drown it in the bathtub, where would we have been without government's intervention in this even though there is plenty of fault to go around?

So I think we have to rethink the philosophy that pervades our society and say government is not evil. We do not do everything right, but we do a lot of things that are essential, and I am particularly pleased that we are going to have this review. I am mindful of where we are when I look at a story in today's *Washington Post,* in which Tom Kean, respected former governor from the State of New Jersey—and Pete Wilson, I know that you know Tom Kean, having served with him, and by the way, Governor Wilson and I were in the class of 1982, and it hardly seems that long ago because neither of us has aged in that period of time. [Laughter.]

The fact of the matter is that unless we take the lessons from history—it has been said by Santiama the poet—we are doomed to repeat them. So we cannot simply say stop the blame game and let us turn to the future. The fact is that unless we really understand what took place, then we are operating without full thought.

And Tom Kean issued a statement today in which he said that Congress has been delinquent, not his word exactly, but he said that—you know he headed the 9/11 panel, and we all in this Committee think a pretty good job was done there. He said that the bungled response to Katrina lay bare how unprepared the Nation remains for a catastrophic event, whether it is another terrorist strike or a natural disaster.

Senator Domenici said something that was absolutely right. When something of this magnitude happens, you cannot prepare perfectly for all the eventualities, but we at least ought to have plans that do not include cronyism or preferred contractors or things of that nature or people who do not have experience being assigned tasks that they never had any idea about how to handle.

While I commend the leadership of the Committee for starting this debate, it is obviously going to be a long, at times I think, painful debate, but we should not run or hide anything that was there in the past because those lessons, though painful, are critical to how we plan for the future.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Senator Lautenberg follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR LAUTENBERG

Thank you Madam Chairman for convening this hearing.

Hurricane Katrina was one of the worst disasters to strike our nation. It was an act of nature, compounded by a failure of leadership on the part of our Federal Government.

We all want to put the mistakes of the last few weeks behind us, so we can get on with the daunting task ahead.

But we can't ignore the mistakes of the last 2 weeks. We need to learn from them. If we fail to heed the lessons of the past, we will jeopardize our success in the future.

And the mission before us now is too important for us to fail. So we must take an unflinching look at why our government failed the people of the Gulf coast in their hour of need. We must also make sure that help is reaching those who need it. We have appropriated $62 billion to address the needs of Katrina's victims, and begin rebuilding their communities.

Most of that money will be administered by FEMA. To ensure that those dollars are spent wisely, this Committee must be certain that FEMA is being managed in a professional and competent manner.

There is no place for cronyism in FEMA. By the same token, this unprecedented event must not be used as an excuse to dole out sweetheart contracts for politically connected companies.

Imagine my surprise when the Halliburton corporation received the first contract in the aftermath of Katrina! The Shaw Group has also received a contract for $100 million dollars. That company is represented by Joe Allbaugh, a former FEMA director. Mr. Allbaugh came to FEMA with a great deal of experience running political campaigns.

Mr. Allbaugh brought along his college roommate, Michael Brown, who eventually took Allbaugh's job at FEMA. Mr. Brown's lack of relevant experience may have cost lives and hampered rescue efforts.

According to a *Washington Post* poll published this week, a majority of the American people are concerned that the government isn't doing enough to prevent fraud and corruption in the rush to award billions of dollars in contracts.

We need to bolster the confidence of the American people, and ensure that our resources go to those who really need help and are not wasted. Thank you Madam Chairman.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you. Senator Coburn.

OPENING STATEMENT BY SENATOR COBURN

Senator COBURN. Madam Chairman, thank you, and I apologize to our panelists. I am on the Judiciary Committee and have left that because of the importance of this, and I will have to leave this hearing shortly—I have a statement I would like introduced into the record if I may.

Chairman COLLINS. Without objection.

Senator COBURN. I would like to make two quick points. I have a short-lived history of politics, but the one thing I appreciate on the leadership of this Committee is the nonpartisan nature under which Senator Lieberman and Senator Collins conduct this Committee. If there is anything that is hurting our country most it is the divisiveness of the politicians that use partisanship as a tool with which to make political gains rather than to solve problems.

Senator Lautenberg mentioned laying the blame. The problem is not laying the blame. The problem is fixing the problem. What is the problem? How do we fix it? The blame will be evident in the facts rather than the pointing of fingers, and it is my hope that this Committee can model through its leadership a behavior that examples to everybody else in Congress.

My friend, Senator Voinovich, yesterday in our steering committee or our caucus, made the point that we have a committee to look at Homeland Security and FEMA. It is this one. I do not believe we need another committee. I trust the Members of this Committee to do an open, honest, frank appraisal of what went wrong, how we fix it, how we make the adjustments.

The third point I would make is what history teaches us about sacrifice. President Roosevelt expanded Federal authority a great deal in the face of the Great Depression, but what everybody else does not realize is that during World War II he cut discretionary spending by 20 percent. What everybody else does not realize is that President Truman cut it 28 percent during the Korean War. We are in the midst of a war. We have the biggest national tragedy that we have ever faced in our country.

I just got an e-mail. The State of Montana has offered to return all Federal earmarks to the Federal Government in the face of the

tragedies and financial difficulties in which we find ourselves. They are leading by example. We need to do that. The American people have already done it in the opening of their hearts in how they have responded to this tragedy. It behooves us to live up, as Members of Congress, to the examples set before us by the common citizens of our country, and if we cannot do that, and if this is nothing but a partisan battle to fix this problem, then I believe the country needs a new set of leaders, leaders who can look past partisanship to solve the very grave, difficult, and real problems that we face.

As I said on the floor, and I will finish, we have two national tragedies, this one that occurred along the Gulf Coast, but the financial tragedy that is in front of us as a Nation that will impact the way of life and the opportunity for the generations that follow us. We can do no less than leave them the same heritage that was left for us, which is one of sacrifice to create opportunity for the future.

I thank you, Madam Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Senator Coburn follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR COBURN

Thank you, Madam Chairman. I appreciate you holding this hearing, and I especially appreciate the leadership shown by you and the Ranking Member in focusing this hearing, as the title says, on where we go from here in response to Hurricane Katrina.

There has been too much attention paid to the political finger-pointing in the wake of this disaster, and not enough attention paid to the generosity and hard work put into the recovery or how we are going to finance the massive costs of our relief efforts.

I also appreciate our panelists who are here today. You each have a unique and valuable perspective on this problem, and I look forward to reviewing your testimony.

I do have to apologize in advance. As the only member of both this committee and the Judiciary Committee, I may be required to leave to tend to the confirmation hearing of Judge John Roberts.

I spoke on the floor about this last week, but I would like to reiterate to my colleagues my strong belief that we need to keep in mind the sacrifices made by past generations when paying for disaster relief.

Many remember President Franklin Roosevelt for his expansion of Federal authority and power in the face of the Great Depression. Less well known is the fiscal courage he showed in response to the disaster of Pearl Harbor. Following that tragedy, President Roosevelt realized the need for our country to rearrange its priorities. Between 1942 and 1944, he cut nondefense spending by 20 percent. Among those programs he cut were his own pet programs, the Civilian Conservation Corps, the National Youth Administration and the Work Projects Administration—three programs which represented one-eighth of the Federal budget.

Faced with the outbreak of the Korean War, President Harry Truman cut nondefense spending by 28 percent. Again,when faced with a crisis which required a significant financial commitment, the leadership of the United States made the tough choice and made the necessary cuts in spending.

Both of these presidents realized the need for fiscal restraint in a time of crisis and made the tough choices which benefited Americans in the long term. It wasn't the easiest thing to do for that generation of Americans, but it served to the benefit of future generations. Yet many seem uninterested in learning from these examples in order to provide a better future for our own children and grandchildren. Throughout our country, Americans are making sacrifices to assist those effected by this disaster, yet there is no sacrifice on the part of Congress.

It means our grandchildren are going to have a far lower standard of living as we try to continue to load this debt on them. That is not opportunity. That is not a heritage I want to be involved with. I want to follow the heritage of our forefathers and the great generation of World War II where sacrifice was made.

With the current Katrina aid included our deficit will be $670 billion this year. That is the real deficit. That comes to over $2,000 per man, woman, and child in this country this year alone. We will borrow internationally this year $1.4 trillion.

How many years do you think the international financial community will continue to allow us to borrow that money without some cost coming home?

The President, in his budget proposal this year, recommended 99 programs to be eliminated that did not meet an assessment rating program that was developed by OMB. That program was many times agreed to by many people in this body. That was $8.8 billion. There is not the courage coming from the Executive Branch To offer those, to say we are not going to spend another $8.8 billion of our grandchildren's money.

Last year, 2004, the Federal Government overpaid $41.5 billion for things it bought or handed out. That would nearly pay for our initial Katrina funding, if we would eliminate that. We can eliminate it. We choose not to do the oversight that is necessary to find the problems to make up more efficient, to accomplish the very goals to create the opportunity in the future for the next generation.

With all of this financial mismanagement, it is obvious that the money we direct to aid those along the Gulf Coast impacted by Katrina should be closely monitored. We need a controller for this money under the Office of the President to make sure it is spent properly. I am going to offer that legislation today to make sure it is spent right. The President has authorized in good will an inspector general increase to look at it, but they won't be controlling the money. What they do is see how it is spent after the fact. We need somebody in charge of spending before it is spent to make sure it is a priority before it goes down there, as we should be doing here.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you. Senator Carper.

OPENING STATEMENT BY SENATOR CARPER

Senator CARPER. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

It is especially good to be able to welcome a former governor and colleague, Pete Wilson. Thank you so much for joining us. And to our other witnesses, welcome. Nice of you to come.

Hurricane Katrina was in all likelihood the worst natural disaster that I have ever witnessed, and that may be true for others here today as well. Hundreds, some say thousands, have died, a lot of people are homeless as we know, large swaths of the States of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana are in ruins, and parts of the city of New Orleans today are still under water.

Having said all of that, I have been inspired by the outpouring of support and compassion from individuals all over the country. At the same time, like many Americans, I have been shocked and outraged by at least some aspects of our response to the storm.

During my 8 years as governor, some of which I shared with Pete Wilson and others with Governor Voinovich, but during my 8 years as Governor of Delaware, my State lived through a number of weather emergencies, everything from ice storms to blizzards to floods to hurricanes. In fact, someone suggested at the end of my time as governor, he said, "Were you the Governor when we had the snowstorm of the century?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Were you the Governor when we had the ice storm of the century?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Were you the Governor when we had the flood of the century?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Were you the Governor when we had the hurricane of the century?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Do you know what I think?" I said, "No." He said, "I think you're bad luck." [Laughter.]

Whether I am bad luck or not, we worked through all that stuff, and I know we certainly never suffered anything as tragic as what they have gone through on the Gulf Coast, but whenever we needed help from FEMA on my watch, we got it. They came early, and they stayed late. They worked hard. They sent real good people, and they were wonderful partners with all of us, and our first re-

sponders and our Guard and local folks back in Delaware. I think it is pretty clear to anyone with access to their televisions over the last couple of weeks that that kind of response, at least in the days immediately after Katrina struck, was not what we saw at the Gulf Coast.

There has been a lot of talk recently about the blame game. I think I just heard Tom Coburn mentioning it, and I am sure others did in their statements. I think instead of pointing fingers, it is time for our Nation's leaders—and that certainly includes us—starting right here with our Committee, my colleagues, to start playing what I call the responsibility game, the accountability game, and to figure out what we did right, what we did wrong, and what we need to do to make sure we are better prepared to respond to the next disaster, be it a hurricane, be it an earthquake or some kind of terrorist attack.

I think it was Abraham Lincoln who once said the role of government is to do for the people what the people cannot reasonably do for themselves. Four years after September 11th, however, it is clear to me that we still do not have our act together when it comes to responding to national emergencies. At a time when Americans still live under the threat of a terrorist attack, we must do better, and we can. That is why I hope this Committee will continue the work we have begun with the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and the reorganization of our Intelligence Committee by examining and addressing the failures at all levels of government that have contributed to the disaster in the Gulf Coast region.

Because we still have people on the ground in the Gulf Coast and in emergency shelters across the country in desperate need of assistance in the aftermath of Katrina, we need to learn more about what needs to be done in the coming days and weeks and months, maybe even years, to help those communities affected by Katrina to recover as best they can.

I am pleased that we have before us this panel today, which fortunately or unfortunately has a considerable amount of experience in recovering from natural disasters, to help us guide the way. Again, we thank you. We look forward to your testimony.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you. Senator Chafee.

OPENING STATEMENT BY SENATOR CHAFEE

Senator CHAFEE. Thank you, Senator Collins and Senator Lieberman for holding this hearing, and I look forward to the testimony of the distinguished panel.

Governor Wilson, in your testimony you say that California emerged from your fires, droughts, landslides, and earthquakes stronger than before.

And, Mayor Owens, you say that Grand Forks has come back bigger, better, and stronger than before the April 1997 floods.

So I am sure that is all our goal, to see the Gulf Coast come back stronger than before, and I look forward to your testimony.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you. Senator Dayton.

OPENING STATEMENT BY SENATOR DAYTON

Senator DAYTON. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

It has now been over 2 weeks since the levees protecting New Orleans from the rains of Hurricane Katrina have failed, and almost a week since the Senate Majority Leader announced that this Committee would investigate those and other failures.

Since that time the Federal officials responsible for the Administration's actions and inactions to the hurricane have been unwilling to appear before us in a public session. They pretend they are too busy 24 hours a day, 7 days and nights a week to do so. Madam Chairman, obviously, none of us on this Committee want to disrupt the disaster relief efforts in Louisiana or Mississippi. They are already disrupted enough without us. But those Federal officials have enough time to appear on the Sunday talk shows, more often than not from here in Washington.

Eight days ago, 10 Federal agency heads, all of them Cabinet Secretaries, briefed Senators for over an hour here in Washington behind closed doors. There was nothing, nothing that they said that could not and should not have been said in a public setting.

Six days ago the heads of operations for FEMA and for the Coast Guard briefed Members of this Committee behind closed doors.

Today we finally have our first public hearing on this greatest natural calamity ever to inflict our country, and the responsible Administration officials—if that is not an oxymoron—are still hiding behind closed doors.

President Bush said yesterday that he wants to know what went right and what went wrong. So do we. So do the American people. However, as my mother taught me, actions speak louder than words. While the Administration professes to want the answers to tough questions, they will not face those questions in public before us on this Committee.

While the Republican Senate leadership professes to want this Committee to investigate the failures and the successes of the Federal response to Hurricane Katrina, they will not permit us to do so in public.

Madam Chairman, I have the utmost respect for you and for the Ranking Member, and I know that you have done your utmost to begin the public inquiry, which is this Committee's responsibility. It is a responsibility that is ours, as Senator Voinovich said, under the Senate's organizing resolution, and it is not dependent upon the majority leader's beneficence or the White House's concurrence.

I have the utmost respect for today's distinguished panel, outstanding public servants who answered this Committee's call to share their previous experiences with us. None of them, however, hold positions of public responsibility for Hurricane Katrina, and none of the people who hold positions of public responsibility for Hurricane Katrina are yet willing to appear before this Committee, and thus, in public, before the families and friends of those who lost their lives, before those who lost their homes, their businesses, their jobs, their communities, or before the rest of America, who have the right, as we have the responsibility on this Committee, to get answers about what happened, what did not happen, and why.

Until those Federal officials who are responsible appear in public before this Committee, then anything else here today or otherwise,

I regret to say, Madam Chairman—but I must say—anything else is part of the Administration's cover up, and any attempt to delay the public investigation of this Committee into Hurricane Katrina is an obstruction of justice. Any attempt to bypass this Committee by some select subcommittee, as being proposed, is unacceptable, and any acquiescence by this Committee to their doing so would be unconscionable.

This is our responsibility. This is our authority. So let us get on with it. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you. Senator Pryor.

OPENING STATEMENT BY SENATOR PRYOR

Senator PRYOR. Thank you, Madam Chairman. Let me first start by thanking the Chairman and the Ranking Member for their leadership on this and a variety of other issues.

I do hope that this Committee hearing we are having in this Committee today is the first of many that we will have on this subject. For those of you who may be new to the Committee, out in the audience or watching at home perhaps, Senators Collins and Lieberman have really led by example. I have been working with them for 3 years, and time and time again they have shown strong bipartisan leadership. In fact the intelligence rewrite that we did last year proves that this Committee can be a very non-political venue and that we can do great things in this Committee if we are allowed to do so. So it is my belief that regardless of outside political pressure, it is this same Committee that ought to pursue oversight responsibilities on the government's slow rescue and response effort in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

If the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee for some reason is not allowed to do its job, which I believe is correct under the Senate Rules, but if we are not allowed to do that, I think that the families of the Gulf Coast and the rest of the Nation really have a right, and they really deserve to get, a thorough review of the mistakes that occurred in a setting where politics will not play a role. I believe very adamantly that part of this investigation and legislation that follows really should begin with looking at the chain of command and the bureaucratic breakdowns that we saw in the aftermath of Katrina.

I think a lot of us look at some of the problems and sometimes forget to mention some of the bright spots. I think there were a lot of bright spots, most notably three that I want to mention. One is the Coast Guard. I think the Coast Guard was absolutely excellent. By all accounts, everything I have heard, they have just been fantastic. Second is the National Guard. They really once again came to the rescue. And also just everyday citizens of this country have really been great. They have been very generous. They have just been amazing in how they responded to this.

But back to Homeland Security and FEMA and other Federal agencies. When we set up the Department of Homeland Security, we were hoping for a smooth and immediate rescue and recovery when major national tragedies happen. That did not occur in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. I must say I am very concerned and very dismayed, given the government's response, and I think that our failure to respond adequately in the aftermath of Hurri-

cane Katrina really shows a weakness in our emergency preparedness, and that weakness is of great concern to me and all my Senate colleagues, and also to all Americans.

So as we go through these hearings, I look forward to—as my colleague from Ohio said—getting down in the bowels of Homeland Security and FEMA and really doing the nuts and bolts oversight work that the Senate should do and this Committee should do.

Madam Chairman and Senator Lieberman, thank you very much for your leadership.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you.

I want to thank our panel for having such patience in sitting through more than an hour of opening statements. I think it shows how much the Members of this Committee care about this important issue.

Unfortunately, as former Senator Wilson will appreciate, a vote has just been called. What I would like to propose to do is to briefly introduce this panel, then recess for about 12 minutes, and then we will resume with your statements immediately upon our return from the vote.

We have a very distinguished panel of witnesses. Governor Pete Wilson has devoted more than 30 years to public service. During his first term as Governor of California, he was confronted with an astonishing array of declared disasters. I believe I read 22 declared disasters in your first term, one of which was the Northridge Earthquake of 1994, which killed more than 50 people, displaced 22,000 people, and leveled numerous buildings and critical highways in the region. It also caused an estimated $44 billion worth of damage. Following this tragedy, Governor Wilson directed State response efforts for which he has been lauded. He truly, having gone through all those disasters, is one of our Nation's premiere disaster and recovery experts.

Mayor Patricia Owens has served local government in Grand Forks, North Dakota, for nearly 30 years. She was mayor when one of the worst floods in her region's history engulfed 80 percent of the city. She oversaw the evacuation of most of her 50,000 residents.

I was telling the mayor earlier that I was struck by the phrase that she used, and it was a great example of communication, when she advised people to bring their pets, pills, and pillows, and I think we have seen in New Orleans that if that advice had been given to people, we would have had a better evacuation. And I appreciate your coming up with that communications effort.

Mayor Owens then oversaw the recovery efforts in Grand Forks, including an extensive urban planning effort that led to the movement of homes and businesses away from the floodplain areas. So we look forward to hearing from you as well.

Mayor Marc Morial was Mayor of New Orleans from 1994 to 2002. He is currently President of the National Urban League, he has had many years of public service, and he brings to this hearing a special understanding and deep concern of the needs of Katrina's survivors. We look forward to hearing his advice on how we can best help the Gulf Coast recover.

Iain Logan is the Operations Liaison for the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Mr. Logan was the Chief Coordinating Officer for the International Federa-

tion, on the ground for 4 months after the tsunami disaster killed an estimated 150,000 people and displaced more than a million more. He also played a similar role in responding to the devastating earthquake in Iran a year earlier. He has also worked in many other international disasters, including Hurricane Mitch, which caused such suffering in seven Central American countries.

We are very pleased to have all of you here, and I thank you for your patience as we now take a brief recess.

[Recess.]

Chairman COLLINS. The Committee will come to order.

Governor Wilson, again we welcome you, and we are going to start with your testimony. Thank you.

TESTIMONY OF THE HON. PETE WILSON,[1] FORMER GOVERNOR, CALIFORNIA

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Senator Collins. Thank you for convening this hearing. I thank the Members for attending. In the interest of time—you have my prepared statement—let me try to highlight some of the things that I think are of essential value.

Before I do, I would make this general statement. As daunting as it seems, recovery from Katrina is not just possible, it is essential. It is essential to the well being of the Nation. New Orleans and the rest of the Gulf are simply too important not to take that very strongly into account, and I think our job in both the public and the private sector must be basically to dispense with business as usual and procedures that will delay and impede recovery, and instead, in both the public and the private sector, we must devise practical incentives to accelerate the return to health of this vital region. The good news is that it has been done in other places. It can and must be done in response to Katrina.

Now, specifically, as you pointed out, I had the doubtful experience like the rest of this panel, of having more experience than we would like to have in this area. You mentioned 22 major natural disasters. That is true. I will not make the statement about this disaster, Katrina, which I think dwarfs all others in American history. I will not make the well-intended but perhaps unfortunate statement made by one of my predecessors as he was reviewing recessing flood damage in Northern California. The former Governor Pat Brown said, "This is the worst disaster since my election." [Laughter.]

I share his concern, but in any case, we had too many to choose from. I am going to leave to Mayor Owens the experience of dealing with floods. We had floods in California. We had one in January 1997 that she recalls. It resulted in eight deaths, evacuation of 120,000 people, relocation of 55,000 people to over 100 shelters, damage or destruction of 30,000 residences and 2,000 businesses. Total damage estimate about $2 billion.

As serious as that was, it was by no means the worst of the things that we faced. The largest, of course, as you pointed out, was the Northridge Earthquake, which up until the time of Andrew was the costliest disaster in U.S. history.

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Wilson appears in the Appendix on page 71.

Let me point out some of the things that can be done that we did do trying to speed recovery. We first of all had excellent response from FEMA. We had it in the first Bush Administration, and we had it in the Clinton Administration. Yes, there are always things that can be done better and faster, but the response was really very good, and the coordination was excellent, some would say because we had had so much practice working together with those 22 natural disasters.

But in the case of the Northridge quake, our first job was to make certain that people were safe. And then we went about slashing the red tape and trying to set aside rules that imposed delays to which there was no real purpose. We had to take care of people who had no food, no homes, no jobs, and I underscore the "no jobs" because that is a very important consideration.

As with so many other disasters faced in my State, and as with Katrina, the National Guard was our extraordinary first line of response, often supplementing the efforts of people who had as their official duty a response. There were over 23,000 Guard members mobilized to protect public safety, to distribute food and water, set up tents as emergency shelters for thousands of victims. By the way, in the case of a major quake, I think that it is common to find that people are unwilling to go into structures because they are afraid of the after shock. So we had that experience. The Red Cross, the Salvation Army had shelters that were not at capacity, but we used tents for people who simply could not bring themselves to go back in.

We recruited and deployed some 4,200 State workers to help out with processing claims of various kinds, working with Federal disaster centers that we set up with FEMA. In order to cut the long waits, we used these 4,200 State workers, working in any number of areas where they could be helpful to recovery, outside their agencies and well outside their job descriptions, and in fact, we made the FEMA Disaster Assistance Centers into a one-stop center for both Federal, and State, and local assistance. We had people working side by side. We even had insurance agents in there handling claims.

We were trying to rebuild very quickly, and I do want to spend some time on that. Someone mentioned—I think Senator Levin—interoperability of communications. Something that you may want to look at is the interoperability of equipment. When we had the Oakland fire, the terrific coordination and cooperation that exists under long-existing mutual assistance pacts was frustrated by the fact that when fire departments from other parts of the State, other communities, came to help Oakland with a fire that consumed some 3,000 homes, they were frustrated to discover that their equipment would not fit the hydrants in Oakland.

When we were trying to cut red tape, we did it in a variety of ways. I should tell you the key to all of this was the existence in the State Government Code of Emergency Powers, explicit powers and explicit authority conferred upon the governor in time of emergency, to suspend the operation, not only of regulation, but statute, and I did that with alacrity.

We suspended several trucking rules, some of which prohibited nighttime deliveries of food products. We suspended overtime rules

for those employers whose workers were having a terrible time getting to work with the bridges down on I–10 because they needed to have flexibility of schedule to come during normal and abnormal times.

We had my Secretary of Health and Welfare armed with the ability to go to hospitals and to other structures that we needed to convert to hospitals on a temporary basis, with whatever waivers were required for that purpose.

We waived fees to speed the reinstallation of mobile homes. We expedited the permitting of reconstruction by waiving many of the procedural requirements and put staff from State and local permitting agencies into a single location.

We waived the waiting period for unemployment benefits to get aid to those who needed it immediately.

We eliminated all the paperwork requirements for getting a portable classroom and thereby made 230 units available through a simple phone call from districts in need.

We issued, I think importantly, bridge loans and loan guarantees from State resources to help small business owners get back on their feet until the Federal assistance, which took a time, could arrive.

So in these and many other areas we dealt with a situation that it deserved. We decided that there was just no time for business as usual. Most notable, I think, was the fact that when we were seeking to repair the freeway bridges, the overpasses on I–10 that had been reduced to rubble in a matter of seconds, we said to those contractors bidding on the repair work: "We want to know not only when you will finish the job and how much, but we want you to agree that you will submit to one more condition, and the condition is very simply that for every day that you are late in terms of your promised date of completion, you will incur a penalty of $200,000 per day. For every day that you are early, you will earn a bonus of $200,000 per day."

The winning bidder I think made more on the bonus than on the bid. We had been told initially that it would require 2 years and 2 months to restore those bridges, an intolerable situation for an artery that was central, the busiest freeway in the world and central to the functioning of our economy. It did not take 2 years and 2 months. It took 66 days.

The other thing that I would urge the Committee to look at with specific regard to New Orleans and the levees, I am told—and I am not an engineer—that there is an engineering solution even in that alluvial soil without bedrock. It is very expensive. It seems inevitable to me that we are going to have to do as public agencies what we have done in the past in other parts of the country to deal with flood damage, but in this instance, it seems to me that the private sector, who may very well benefit from the rebuilding of New Orleans, has an opportunity, and what we ought to do is say, "We will share the burden and use something that many Members of this Committee are familiar with—there are former mayors and governors sitting there, most of whom are familiar with tax increment financing, the use of bonds for land assembly to redevelop blighted areas." I do not think anyone can argue about the blight in New Orleans.

What I think we ought to do is extend that mechanism to include not just land assembly in the ruined sections of the city that will need to be rebuilt, but that we ought to include fronting the costs, the expensive costs of constructing these new super levees by the use of that kind of tax increment bond, because as we rebuild in New Orleans, as new properties are added, it adds dramatically to the tax base, it builds that tax increment, and over time will create the fund that is required to redeem those bonds. It is a very simple, and I think ingenious, idea that someone had for redevelopment of blighted areas many years ago. It is a proven technique. We should simply permit the funding to go to the construction of the levees and whatever else is necessary to secure the investment that otherwise I do not think will come.

If we are going to give potential investors the confidence to invest and to rebuild New Orleans, then it begins with their having confidence that the next time a Category 4 storm approaches, that the levees will not go down.

There are other things that I could say. Let me conclude simply by saying this—I see I am over my time—again, I emphasize economic development as an essential requirement and something that has to have the earliest possible attention. That is what was behind our rebuilding of the I–10, not just driver convenience. It was costing $600,000 per day, by conservative estimate, in economic dislocation.

The Mayor of Los Angeles made it his priority. Dick Riordan was bent upon bringing jobs to his community and rebuilding confidence. That kind of can-do attitude, I think, is essential as well as the bipartisan or nonpartisan cooperation between all levels of government, and a sharing of the responsibility between the public and the private sectors.

Thank you.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you very much, governor, for your excellent testimony. I know all of us are going to have questions to follow up on it.

Mayor Owens.

TESTIMONY OF THE HON. PATRICIA A. OWENS,[1] FORMER MAYOR, GRAND FORKS, NORTH DAKOTA

Ms. OWENS. Madam Chairman, Ranking Member Lieberman, and Members of the Committee, I feel honored that you would ask me to be here today to testify on how we recovered and how I feel that we, as a Nation, can help the Gulf Coast with their comeback.

Grand Forks, North Dakota, in 1997, experienced eight of the worst snowstorms it ever had. It was almost 100 inches of snow over about a 5-month period, and we were very well prepared for a 49-foot flood. By the time April 1 came, we were all exhausted from battling keeping the roads open and keeping the cities going and so forth, so we were pretty run down. April 1 we had a huge ice storm that stifled the whole State, and the next day we had a 14-inch snowfall. By Monday it was thawing and the ice jams were forming.

[1] The prepared statement of Ms. Owens with attachments appears in the Appendix on page 77.

We were in emergency mode, and that Wednesday I had a meeting with some of the people that were in the lower areas of the city. About 2,000 people appeared, and I had to stand up and say, "You need to evacuate because we do not know what is coming." The Weather Service had said 49 feet. They had no other way of knowing because it was coming so fast.

By that Friday I was called back to the emergency center to evacuate the city. I had gone home for just a couple hours to get some rest. I remember as a political figure what you think is—(I had worked for the city for 33 years for four mayors before I ran for mayor)—my goodness, they are looking at me here, and I am going to have to evacuate 50,000 people. I mean I knew every nook and cranny of that city, but this was just surreal. So I turned around and I saw the Coast Guard there, and I thought, yes, Grand Forks is flat. I know this is serious. [Laughter.]

So my mind went from one thing to another, and I know elected people go through this because it is so unreal. And they said, "We have people on the levees and they are starting to breach." My first comment was, "Get them off of there and get these people evacuated."

We started evacuating in the middle of the night. We sent people through the neighborhoods. The Coast Guard was there, the National Guard, our police and fire departments with bullhorns. We had our civil defense sirens, which was really a plus in an emergency for people to take note.

We got all 50,000 of those people out of the city prior to the waters inundating about 90 percent of our city. We even had to move our emergency center.

I think one of the main things was we had the FEMA people in about 2 weeks before with the representatives from Minnesota and North Dakota, and led a delegation to show them what we had done and what we figured was going to happen.

Across the river was a city of about 9,000 people, too, and the bridges were out. I did talk to the Mayor of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, and we decided our main goal was to tell them to take their pets, their pills, and their pillows because we knew they were going to be gone for a while. My first goal was to take care of the people first, and I said, "We are going to save all lives at all costs." I got on TV as a front line figure because I think they trusted me since I had worked for government so long. I needed to encourage people. The majority of them left.

We had to find a strategy to recover. We were out at the University of North Dakota. We had a huge group of people, thousands of people in a hangar at the Grand Forks Air Force Base, so we had to figure some strategy to keep in touch with these people. I stayed on TV constantly so they would be updated. I think the two critical elements present during a response is establishing and maintaining emergency disaster information for the public, and also as you are recovering. It is never enough. I mean no matter how much we did, you still get critical comments. It is because people are so busy they just cannot watch everything or they do not have the communication. And then the interactive communication among the city, county, State, and Federal agencies is so important.

One of the things we decided to do is build for the future and do it better. As long as we were investing the money, we were going to do what was right for years to come, not just put what we had in place.

One of the best things we had was nonpartisanship. We had our congressional delegation. The two Senators and our Congressmen were wonderful. They were right beside me. I mean I followed them and they followed me. Our governor was there also. The governor was Republican. Our people in Washington were Democrats. They worked as a team, and they worked with us. I still believe in emergencies you can have a plan, but that plan is not going to always address everything. We updated ours all the time because we had floods. That plan will never be something that you can follow to the top degree; however, it will assist you.

I think there is not a plan or a book written that is going to take people through a disaster like the Gulf Coast went through. I mean it is just tragic. I think the one thing that they had there with the first responders was dealing with the human part of the disaster, with the looting and the shootings and the things that were going on that endangered the lives of the people in their city, but also the first responders. It is very difficult to go into a city when that is happening.

I believe the less finger pointing that is done and the more we move ahead, the quicker those people are going to recover. We had places, too, that were not right, and mistakes were made, but we just moved on. I made it a point that we just would try to do it better and just move on and keep going.

I think one of the things that I did that worked really well was I put together a group of technical people to help—because I did not have all the technical abilities, even having worked for the city for so many years. I put a group of people together of my top department heads. It was my Director of Public Works, who would deal with the infrastructure and getting it back online, and then also our future flood protection, which I think is something you need to do right away or people will not come back to the city. The businesses will not want to come; the people will not want to come back. You have to address that early on.

So we did address that and we did get a $350 million levee system in Grand Forks.

The next thing I did was put the next community development director in place. We were fighting in Washington for a $500 million disaster aid bill, and we worked very hard with our Senators and Congressmen to get that. It finally went through, and we were allotted $171 million of that to kind of jump start recovery in our city.

We needed accountability on that money. I put my city auditor in place for accountability on all the monies. That is one of the things where they will hit brick walls. Every bit of money you get, you have to have accountability, and there is always conflict over how it is distributed and what you do with it.

Grand Forks recovered well, but we recovered well because everyone worked together. I think government with a city starts right at the local level and goes up to State and Federal, and we were a team. We worked together from the very beginning. We had a

one-stop shop again. Our City Hall was gone, so we were even in that one-stop shop where they had the FEMA Headquarters. All the agencies were there. We met daily for 3½ years in the mornings, and at the beginning it was all the emergency response people. We met maybe two times a day so we could touch base to see where the critical needs were, and critical needs, of course, were getting people back into some type of housing. We did build 200 homes, congressional homes, with monies that we got from HUD, and sold them with incentive so people would locate back in an area that was dry.

We had to move back from the river quite a ways, so we had the buy-out program. I am sure the buy-out program is going to cause a lot of conflict also. That is a difficult thing to do. There are those who will do it voluntarily, and there are those who will not want to do it.

I guess you learn one thing when you are an elected official during a disaster, I do not think anybody can imagine what the people go through. We are there suffering with them, but I do not think anybody can imagine what the elected people also are going through. It is exhausting. It is a daily—I mean you have no rest for the whole time that you are working during your term. It is just totally exhausting. You are inundated, and you have to be very strong to get through it because you will take criticism.

But like I said, the first thing was we took care of the people. We got housing. We got trailers in there. We addressed the jobs. I appointed a group of citizen people and broke them off into about 13 different areas. Local bankers worked with some of the citizens to get the jobs online. We had money and checks coming in in my name, so we had to form some type of bank set aside—I believe we did it through the Bank of North Dakota—and have a small group to monitor so people could submit applications. What we did with that money mostly was start a day care because once you were getting your jobs up, you had no day cares.

Another thing that I think when you have a disaster, the first thing I did was close all the bars. We had a dry town. [Laughter.]

The psychological effects are horrible because people are tired, they are exhausted, they turn to alcohol and drugs. There is more abuse. There are suicides. That is a huge issue that has to be addressed. The children need help, too, with that type of thing.

I could talk for hours on what we went through and the good things that we could do. I am an employee of FEMA, by the way. I was hired on by FEMA as an Ambassador of Hope and a consultant with Region 8 after my term was ended. I did go several times with FEMA to the disaster areas when I was mayor. Congresswoman Eva Clayton had invited me to North Carolina, so I went there, and joined in a rally, and went to Rocky Mount, Princeville, and Greenville, and did what my job was, to inspire people and give them hope. That is what I tried to do in my city because I did have my technical people to work. Our people in Washington were wonderful. I lobbied for months. I felt like I lived here most of the time. They were wonderful. We just had to present our story, and we did get the help we needed as the monies were available.

Examples of what happens to people, elected people, I mean most of the time you are voted out of office, which I was, too. I had won

by 77 percent of the vote. I lost by 300 votes. Most of the time this happens to elected people, and James Lee Witt had warned me of this. There was a North Carolina Mayor, after I gave a talk in North Carolina, who came up to me, and he had tears running down his face. What I do best is inspire people. I inspire them so that they can do it. There is nothing that you cannot accomplish if you work together and just keep going and have faith in God, too, and faith in yourself and the people around you. That is what I kept saying, keep the faith.

But this mayor came up to me, and he said, "You know, Mayor, I lost my election, too," and I said, "What was the reason for yours?" He said, "You know, after flooding of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks, Minnesota, I sent a truckload of goods, and that is what they used against me, was my inability to help here, but I sent goods to a community that was hurting." I told him, "You know what, you will have a special place there, and you did your job." I said, "That is remarkable. You just keep your head high. You did what was needed at the time." And I said, "That is the only way you can be a good politician."

So personal strain. You have to be strong to do the regulations that need to be done. We put regulations aside for building also so that people could come forth. We had to deal with the gouging, contractors coming in that were not legitimate. You need a City Attorney who does not budge. You need a strong City Attorney working with the Attorney General. They have to be the top-notch person—and that man was by my side.

I do have to say, about 3 days after it started, I knew he would be one of my top people, and we disagreed on something. So I very politely just leaned over the desk and took him by the tie—and I am small—— [Laughter.]

And said, "We have to work together for 3½ years to get this going." I do not think we ever had another word after that. [Laughter.]

Anyhow, I think one of the things that the Gulf Coast has, it has wonderful people working in a nonpartisan manner, and there is nothing more enlightening to me as a person who lives in the United States than to see people come together to help the people who are hurting. I personally know from experience, I have the greatest confidence that this group is going to work to bring New Orleans back, and it will be bigger, better, and stronger. And the people there need to know that, too. We cannot point fingers. We need to move on. We can do things better. We can go back and see the challenges that they had in getting people out.

I have also had the experience of two of the hurricanes in Florida because I am retired and living in Florida now. I know what just the tail end of it can do, and I think of what happened there. So I have had flooding. I have been involved—in fact, FEMA called me to go to work the hurricanes again. Well, I cannot because of health reasons. They called me last year, and before I had my suitcase packed, I could not even go because the next hurricane was there. So I was struggling with my own family to keep things upright.

Again, I just say, all you have to do is keep the faith. You can do it. And bad things happen, and we do not know for what reason.

We had a bad flood. They had a catastrophic event, and we all need to be there for them as everybody was there for us.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you very much. Thank you for your excellent testimony.

Mayor Morial, we are pleased to have you here, too.

TESTIMONY OF THE HON. MARC H. MORIAL,[1] PRESIDENT AND CEO, NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE, AND FORMER MAYOR OF NEW ORLEANS

Mr. MORIAL. Thank you very much. Madam Chairman, Senator Lieberman, and Members of the Committee, I want to thank all of you for giving us a chance to come down here and talk to you today. I am here as the President of the National Urban League, but also, very importantly, as the former Mayor of New Orleans, and one who loves New Orleans, its people, its culture, its history, and its very essence.

So I come here shocked and angry, and this is how I have felt over the last several weeks, hurt, betrayed, befuddled, and bewildered. But I come today to say now is the time for competence and compassion. And the Nation, the voluntary agencies, the people of this Nation have expressed a great deal of compassion and generosity for the people who are victims and survivors of Katrina, who are from New Orleans and all over; I want to remind everyone, Southeastern Louisiana, Southern Mississippi, parts of Southern Alabama.

I come today to also say that I agree that it is not the time for gamesmanship, salesmanship, or brinkmanship, but it is time to thoughtfully, as this Committee in all of its opening statements has suggested, plan about what the best next steps are.

So I want to lay out for you some of my thinking about next steps under the umbrella of what I call the "Katrina Victims Bill of Rights," because in all of this, in this tragedy, the most important thing is that we have one million displaced Americans, internally displaced Americans. They are not refugees. They are our own citizens. They are our neighbors. They are our voters. They are your constituents. They are, if you will, they are black, they are white, they are hispanic, they are Asian, they are rich, they are middle class, they are working class, and they are poor. And while the poorest of poor suffered the most and their candid images are what we saw, Katrina was an equal opportunity destroyer that affected the lives, in a dramatic way, of so many Americans.

I believe as we think about this we should look at how this Nation responded, how this Congress responded, how the President responded in the aftermath of September 11, as the standard, the gold standard, if you will, to help guide our thinking and our discussion. This is why I believe that this Congress should create a victims compensation fund.

In the aftermath of September 11, within 2 weeks after that tragic event, the Congress created a victims compensation fund, which in the end paid out some $7 billion to many thousands of victims, those who were survivors of those who were killed, those who were injured, and those who suffered economic losses. The com-

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Morial appears in the Appendix on page 104.

pensation fund functioned in an orderly and appropriate way and gave due respect to the fact that people's lives were significantly disrupted by that tragedy.

Second, I believe that in this, as I visited Houston, and as I fielded calls from all over the country, as our affiliate offices have received scores of people coming and looking for help, people have been dislodged from their jobs. They have been dislodged from their businesses. They have been dislodged from their bank accounts. They have been dislodged from the social structures and clubs and organizations that are a part of their quality of life. But most importantly, they have been dislodged from their jobs.

So I believe that Congress must look very carefully at an appropriate way to provide unemployment assistance to every worker for an appropriate extended period because if not, it will be in Houston and Dallas, in Austin, in Little Rock, in Memphis, in Washington, in Boston, in all of the communities where displaced Americans have gone that will have to bear the burden of people in those communities with no money, with no job, with no house, with nowhere to go. It will be local and State Government that will have to bear that very significant burden. So Congress, as it thinks going forward, I would urge should think about an appropriate way to give unemployment assistance and assistance to people in connecting to new jobs, assistance to people in connecting with both temporary and permanent housing.

The hard, painful reality is that no one can say with any degree of accuracy when it is that people will be able to return to New Orleans or to St. Bernard Parish, or Plaquemins Parish, or Slidell, or Gulfport, Biloxi, Waveland, or Bay St. Louis. No one can say with any accuracy. Our leaders should not hold out false hope until the rescue and recovery efforts have had an opportunity to quickly, I hope, move forward.

Third, the displaced citizens who are now in all of these communities, displaced by Hurricane Katrina, must continue to have full voting rights in their States. This is not meant to politicize the discussion, but meant to say that they must have a voice in the rebuilding of the communities from which they have been displaced. In this regard, the idea of one million displaced Americans, we are in uncharted territory at least certainly in the last 100 years. But this is an area that I hope Congress will give some attention to.

When it comes to the rebuilding, certainly the Federal Government must commit to a Gulf-wide rebuilding effort that meaningfully includes the residents of the Gulf Coast region, but also challenges us to put together an unprecedented and comprehensive public/private Federal, State, and local coalition to orchestrate, to design, to plan this rebuilding. If not, partisanship, regional conflict, class, and racial conflict will dominate this rebuilding process. As various people begin to articulate their singular vision for the rebuilding, there must be a collective vision. New Orleans is not a gated community. New Orleans' essence is as a diverse multi-cultural, a place that has given the world and the Nation great music and food and great people.

So I believe that Gulf-wide rebuilding effort is going to require the hands-on involvement of many, but require a broad coalition, a broad partnership to think about all of the suggestions that have

been made about red tape and tax increment financing and all of these very important ideas, but this is unprecedented. We have never had to rebuild an entire city or an entire region.

Also I would add—Senator Domenici suggested this, and there have been some other suggestions. The rebuilding has to be a building for the future that respects the history. Somehow in this perhaps there needs to be a czar, a super secretary, a coordinator, some person with direct access to the President, who has credibility with all of you and the public at large, a single point where the buck will stop, to coordinate the rebuilding of the lives of the people and also the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast Region.

Finally, I would suggest this. I think, yes, it is certainly appropriate that Congress conducts its own investigation of what happened because that is your job and that is your responsibility. But I do think that the September 11 experience demonstrated that there is a role for an independent commission. This issue of disaster preparedness and disaster response, I think as all of us up here learned or know, is tough, sophisticated science, tough and sophisticated science, and the best minds and experts need to be utilized in looking at what went right, what went wrong, and how to improve it fast, quick, and in a hurry. I suggest that due consideration be given to some sort of independent September 11 style commission to work in conjunction with the appropriate investigatory activities of this Committee, the House, and the Congress.

Finally, FEMA has come under great fire. I had an opportunity when I was mayor to work with James Lee Whitt, and the relationship and the experience were positive. It seems to me at the very least that one of the things that Congress can do is look at writing into the FEMA authorizing statute the minimum qualifications for the Director and the top-level officials.

Disaster preparedness is a science, it is a profession, it is professional. It is not something that simply because someone is smart, a good manager, a good communicator can do. It requires experience, it requires training, and the top Federal official ought to at least meet some minimum standards with respect to disaster preparedness and response.

As I close I want to say that I had the opportunity to visit Houston, the Astrodome, the George Brown Convention Center, and the Reliant Arena with former Presidents Clinton and Bush, with the governor, with the mayor, with the county executive down in Texas. What Houston has done is remarkable. The generosity, the arms, the attitude, the cooperation, is a model for the Nation. It is uncomfortable for people to live on a cot, sharing a bedroom with 10,000 people, but Houston has done an excellent job. I think it bears a look by all communities in this Nation because what they simply did when the need was there was to pull the trigger on their own emergency response plan. I think their generosity reflects the attitude and the spirit of so many Americans, and I thank them for that.

And my final word is, what is needed is for this Committee and for the Congress to be an advocate for the survivors and the victims. That is what is needed. I fear that when this story drifts from being a lead story on the evening news, from the front page of the national press, that the people are going to be forgotten. This situa-

tion needs public advocacy. It needs the Congress of the United States to be victims. What happened to New Orleans and the Gulf Coast could happen to San Francisco. It could happen to Miami or Charleston or coastal North Carolina. It could happen to Houston. It could happen to San Diego or Los Angeles. And as I grew up in New Orleans, and as I served as mayor, people said, "This is what will happen when the big one comes."

One of the reasons why many people may not have evacuated is there were those who could not, and there were those who said that Chicken Little is saying the sky is going to fall in one more time, and I have heard this for so long. This unprecedented event, this epic biblical event that has displaced so many of our citizens and shocked our conscience could happen to another community again. Thank you.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you, mayor, for your very thoughtful testimony.

Mr. Logan, thank you for being here.

TESTIMONY OF IAIN B. LOGAN,[1] OPERATIONS LIAISON, INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

Mr. LOGAN. Madam Chairman, Senator Lieberman, I have some testimony that I would like to ask to be included in the document of record.

Chairman COLLINS. Without objection.

Mr. LOGAN. I will make a short statement and then highlight a few points in my testimony that would perhaps stimulate some questions.

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, first of all, would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to give testimony at this hearing. More importantly, on behalf of the President and the Secretary General of our institution, we would like to convey on behalf of the 181 Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies around the world our condolences and our thoughts for the people of the United States, but more specifically, for those that are affected in the South.

The Red Cross and the Red Crescent movement represents a collective humanitarian force. It is dedicated to assisting people in the recovery of those impacted by both natural and manmade disasters by mobilizing the power of humanity, which is our mission statement.

Unfortunately, we are only too familiar with the scenes that we have seen in the last few weeks. The Indian Ocean tsunami, the earthquakes in Bam and Gujarat, Hurricane Ivan, so many more.

Although members of the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement share a common mission, the nature of each disaster can vary depending on the economic situation of the government and the agencies that are responding, the overarching needs of the public and the capacity of the national society of that country. In the United States, my colleagues behind me from the American Red Cross focused their disaster relief on meeting people's immediate and emergency disaster needs. And today the American Red Cross faces the

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Logan appears in the Appendix on page 108.

largest relief operation in its history, and it is both an honor, and indeed a duty, that 156 Red Cross people from 80 national societies around the world, including myself, have been asked by the American Red Cross to support them in that enormous task.

But as the waters of the flood recede, there is a need to rebuild lives, property, and above all, hope. It is with that challenge in mind that we would like to share with you some of the experiences that we have had from an international context because as I have been listening to my colleagues here, it is very clear that there are some overarching issues which transcend boundaries.

Humanitarian actors may be greater in number, the economies in which they work stronger, but the principles of a sustainable recovery remain the same wherever it is. What is next? That is the question that you are asking yourselves right now. There is a feeling amongst the public, amongst some governments that a disaster is an event. It is on the TV. For those of us that work in this business, it is not an event, it is a part of a continuum, and the ability to be able to deal with a disaster has got to do with awareness of the full continuum, the preparation, the mitigation, the response, the planning that goes afterward because sure as this one came, there will be another.

So recovery for us around the world starts during the response. We learned during the tsunami that within weeks of the response we had to start to evaluate what were going to be the recovery strategies from some 11 different countries with very different types of economies and populations.

For the Red Cross movement, a major part of that recovery is based on the fact that we are a volunteer organization. Those volunteers that you see for the American Red Cross and other agencies are critical, not only in the response phase, but in the recovery for many months later on. It will require the participation of many different kinds of actors, and it really does not matter. My observation is that whether you are a farmer in Ethiopia following a drought, a fisherman in Sri Lanka, a waiter in New Orleans, or a doctor in Iran, the most critical thing is that people need to get up and feel that there is hope. They have to go back to their livelihoods. They have to start working.

It never ceases to amaze me that following the most disastrous of events, the spirit of the human being to stand up and start to do something. You see it daily. Equally well, there will always be those who are paralyzed with shock, and your recovery has to take account to mobilize the strength of those who have the resilience, and to be ready to support those who are so traumatized that they need additional help.

There also is spontaneous recovery. From the very beginning there will be organizations, institutions, individual towns and villages who will automatically start to take care of themselves. This cannot be held back. It needs to be built into the planning. People wish to take charge of their own lives.

Recovery has to be inclusive. I have recently moved to New York City, and I am amazed, listening to the debate on the reconstruction of the World Trade Center. It could be absolutely duplicated from some of the comments that I heard in the city of Bam, Iran, in terms of the citizens there at the 2,500-year-old world heritage

site, who demanded, in spite of the fact that their government is very different from here, that they be a part of how that city would be rebuilt. At that moment in time those people are exactly the same.

Recovery must be sustainable. The community in which we work very dramatically, it is absolutely unacceptable that following a huge disaster such as the tsunami that we would stand back and allow a recovery that would not improve the lives of the people who are affected, that in fact, you reinforce the very risks that they were facing.

There is enormous pressure at this moment in time to do something and do something quick, and very clearly you have to start to do something. In a disaster decisions may be flawed. You can fix them. No decision and inertia is the worst thing that can happen. At the same time you have to think about the planning. In the tsunami there is some criticism that we are not doing enough, we are not doing it quick enough. But in Sri Lanka and in Indonesia and in the Maldives, they recognize that there is an opportunity to build back better, and that requires greater thought. Greater thought may take more time, but in the long run, that extra time may be valuable. How do you balance those two needs, to move but to think?

Very clearly we have examples around the world, in Turkey, in Gujarat, that many of the casualties may well have been as a result of standards, building construction that had not been monitored. Yet again, the person that I remember talking to in Papua, New Guinea, had no desire to be provided with a modern house. They wanted a home that was traditional for them, and our challenge was how do you build a better home of that kind? I have seen people who have relocated from New Orleans who have ended up in Alaska. Some of them will stay. This will be a huge new opportunity for them. But since I am a Canadian, when winter comes, they may wish to go back to New Orleans. [Laughter.]

Some of them would rather go back, as we found in Venezuela, when they were offered opportunities of going to new farms up the Orinoco Valley, that they would rather come back and live on the very dangerous slopes that they had left just before. How do you plan to meet both those eventualities?

Finally, a few words on coordination. It is a culture. It is not something that you talk about today and forget about tomorrow. It must be built into not only your responding authorities, but to the very communities themselves. The International Red Cross, for example, every year since Mitch, which was not our greatest moment, we run a workshop in which our American Red Cross, the British Red Cross, USAD/OFDA, the United Nations, the European Union, all come together every year to remind ourselves what are we actually doing there? We track these hurricanes. Hurricanes, we know they are coming. We do not know what directions they may go. We do not know what force they will end up. But we can predict with great accuracy the number of hurricanes we will have every year in the Caribbean. It will be humanitarian malpractice not to take that into account and to make plans that build up a culture of preparedness and awareness.

Finally, relocating displaced populations, a very sensitive task in which the voice of the people must be listened to. Forced resettlement is not acceptable in any country anywhere in the world.

Finally a few comments from our special representative who is now working with former President Clinton, who is doing exactly the same thing in terms of recovery. Whether Katrina was the United States' tsunami is debatable. What is true for both and is in most disasters, the endless grief of those who lost loved ones, the courage of the rescue and relief workers, and the selfless generosity of strangers who opened their doors and gave of themselves.

All those devastated, be they Iraqi, Indonesian, American, have the same need for dignity, community, privacy, and above all, the belief that a better life awaits them and that you will be with them in the long term.

When I left Bandar Aceh after the tsunami, a young Indonesian teacher said to me, "Don't say goodbye. If we thought you weren't coming back, we could never let you go." And it was only afterwards when I realized that she was quoting Winnie the Pooh. We live in a small world.

Thank you.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Logan, for your exceptionally moving testimony.

I would like to start by asking each of you a general question. Now that the initial rescue stage is largely complete, we face an enormous task. We have some 90,000 square miles that were affected by this hurricane. We have 450,000 families that are going to be in need of long-term shelter. We have considerable unemployment, businesses that are shut down. We obviously have an overwhelming number of needs that we need to meet. If you were giving advice to the emergency management officials, whether it is Federal, State, or local level, what should be the top priority right now? What would it be? What should we be doing right now?

We will start with Governor Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Senator, I think that an interesting focal point would be the comment that several members of the panel have picked up on made by Senator Domenici, where he said that it is necessary to have one person who is given the responsibility and the authority to make decisions when we are talking about recovery and the urgency of that need. That, I think, is at the Federal level and at the State level, the most important thing.

If I could leave the Committee with one abiding thought, it is one that relates to Federal responsibility, but really to the State responsibility that I had, and I do not know whether Governor Blanco, Governor Barbour, or Governor Riley have the same authority that I had that was conferred upon me and other California governors by the State Government Code. If not, they should not hesitate for a moment to demand it from their legislatures. If they do not have it, they should convene a special session of the legislature to get it.

But they really need the authority to do the kinds of things that we have been discussing this morning, to grant the waivers, which in the normal course of business may make great good sense as safeguards of one kind of another, but which in the urgency of recovery requires someone who is invested with authority commensu-

rate with his or her good common sense to get rid of requirements that simply waste time, and time, as you heard from all the panelists, is of the essence.

When you are talking about rebuilding infrastructure, when you are talking about rebuilding an economy, there has to be the kind of authority that allows you to do what I was able to do. Those governors should have it. Someone at the Federal level should have it. And as was pointed out, when you are talking about Federal agencies, you are talking about a multiplicity of agencies, each with different enabling legislation, each with different regulatory requirements derivative from their enabling legislation.

This Committee would do well, I think, to make it its responsibility to look at all of those different agencies, all of those different enabling acts and regulations, and give someone the authority to waive them in time of crisis, which is what you are facing after—not only after Katrina, but after every major natural disaster. I think Mr. Logan's comment was poignant and prophetic, tragically, that we know that there is going to be a next one.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you. Mayor Owens.

Ms. OWENS. I agree 100 percent with Mr. Wilson that there needs to be one point in whatever you do so that it does not tie it up because they need to be able to move through. They cannot be tied up in the politics or the rhetoric of what is happening.

Another thing that I know that they are going to be faced with, from experience, is they are going to have to clean up that area. We had so many deaths and so many people who had illnesses afterward from respiratory diseases, every kind you could imagine. Before people move back in there, they really need to make sure that they have that clean so that they do not—they can avoid other possibilities of people dying from the after effects of the disaster—because it is contaminated. That was serious in our city.

Thank you.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you. Mayor Morial.

Mr. MORIAL. I will echo the idea of a czar or a coordinator, but I want to really emphasize, in terms of next most immediate steps, is to focus on the displaced people. If the energy becomes, "Let us orchestrate the rebuilding," which could in fact take time, then the unemployment, social, educational problems, sense of alienation and abandonment of people who are displaced will in fact be accelerated and exacerbated. That means—and I would say that the disaster response system that has been typical in the United States, that I am familiar with, contemplates that people would be displaced for a limited period of time, be able to go back to their homes, or if there was any permanent displacement or long-term displacement, it would be a few people or small number.

Here we have a large number of people. So are the systems in place? Are the resources in place? Is the coordination in place for those displaced citizens? That would be the No. 1 priority.

Second, with respect to the rebuilding, there needs to be, either placed under a czar, a commission of prominent citizens, a task force, a group, the ability to be able to get the alignment correct, as the mayor said, to clean up and deal with environmental and health hazards first before the town is opened.

Third, to coordinate what the State's role, the Fed's role, the State's money, the Fed's money, the city's role, the city's money, is going to be in this massive rebuilding effort. If not, we are going to have a situation—and New York has struggled with breaking ground on the rebuilding of two buildings 4 years later. Great plans, lot of discussion, but still controversy on what is going to be at the site of the World Trade Center. Here we have an entire set of communities.

So I would offer those thoughts, but to put people and their needs first as the most immediate objective.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you. Mr. Logan.

Mr. LOGAN. I think in terms of my observations for the United States and the role that the Red Cross would have on that, the American Red Cross are the people that you would need to talk to about in terms of their very specific activities and recommendations. However, it is very clear, and I would concur that the question of the continuation of a coordination mechanism, based on the relationships and the successes, because there will be and you have already identified successes in coordination. That coordination has to look to the long term, and it cannot be a separate series of processes. They have to link to the very foundations.

The fact that you have got such a widely dispersed population, as Mr. Morial has said, means that you are going to have to throw that net very wide, and that means there must be a common message that people can buy into. That population that have been displaced, who will come back, have to feel that there is a clear motivation for them to return, that things will be better.

And building better of course is not just simply building a better school, it is building more hope. The amazing thing—and I think the opportunity for that coordination is that in the worst disasters that I had been involved in, it has in fact broken the cycle of poverty. It has given people opportunities, and I think that linking all of those social elements along with the very dry but essential elements of the technical rebuilding is critical and the more successful initiatives that I have seen on recovery.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you. Senator Lieberman.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Thanks to this panel. You have been extraordinarily helpful, I must say both programmatically, and if I can put it this way, therapeutically. I think programmatically you have given us a series of recommendations from your own considerable experience that, Madam Chairman, we may want to consider passing on to the appropriate administrative agencies of our government, or even insofar as it is relevant, turning it into legislation.

I say "therapeutically" because the end point of all that you have had to say, based on your experience and attitude, is hopeful, that not only can you rebuild from a disaster, you can rebuild—what was your phrase, Mayor Owens? Bigger, better, stronger——

Ms. OWENS. Bigger, better, stronger.

Senator LIEBERMAN. I like it. So thank you for that.

I want to pick up on Senator Collins' question and the answer that Governor Wilson, you gave, and others did, too, which is about the need for a new structure here. We all saw that one of the problems apparently—and we will know it better when we proceed with

our investigation—in the preparation and response to the Hurricane Katrina was some troubles in the relationship between the different levels of our government. It seems to me that as we begin to contemplate, not just the recovery but the rebuilding, which would be the largest rebuilding in our Nation's history, we have also to think about three levels of government and how we put them together.

I take it under the existing national response plan, FEMA gets the responsibility to oversee rebuilding and recovery from the Federal Government point of view. I think we are all seeing that something larger is necessary here, and I wonder if you have any ideas on how we can do that, of how we can put the three levels of government together. Some have recommended a public authority, a kind of private/public new entity that will oversee the reconstruction of the communities that have been devastated.

Governor Wilson, you are a great place to start because you have had experience at the local, State, and Federal levels of our government.

Mr. WILSON. Senator Lieberman, I think the answer is that you need to coordinate all three, and you are not going to have the same solution each time. It does need to be tailor-made. I think a fundamental principle is to allow the local initiative to have maximum exercise. There will be limits imposed by law, some imposed simply by circumstance, but I must tell you that I have great confidence in New Orleans. I have a great affection for the city and a great admiration. I travel there frequently these days because I am privileged to serve as a trustee of the National D–Day Museum, which is located in New Orleans, in fact has become the major tourist attraction there.

It is in New Orleans because New Orleans acted after 50 years, when no one else in the country did, to recognize a responsibility to build that museum as a memorial to the most important event of the last century and to the people who teach succeeding generations of Americans that freedom is not free, that it has to be repurchased by the courage and the sacrifice of people willing to fight and die for it.

Congress—and I thank you for it—has officially recognized that contribution by recognizing the museum as America's official World War II museum. The people who built that—and it is still a building, and we have an ambitious campaign under way—the people who took the initiative are extraordinary.

The business and civic leaders in Mayor Morial's city grabbed the ball when no one else had, and I have confidence that their pride in their city and their determination to complete that task is the kind of thing that will allow New Orleans, given time and the adequate tools, one of which we have discussed today—and I put it at greater length in an op-ed in yesterday's *Wall Street Journal*—I think they can be expected to rebuild it bigger, better, and stronger, to use Mayor Owens' phrase. I think to the extent that you have got people who are self-starters like that, what you want to do is look at how you can enable them. I would say that the role for Federal and State Governments is to be as great an enabler as possible to those at the local level.

Senator LIEBERMAN. I will share briefly a story with you. I heard from a friend from New Orleans yesterday that when order began to collapse in New Orleans, there was just a slight bit of looting that went on at the gift shop at the D–Day Museum. Somebody there ran out, and the National Guard came rapidly to take position around the museum to protect it for all the present and past associations with it.

My time is rapidly going, but I wonder if anybody else has a thought about the structure—the most obvious thing is to create a so-called czar, but is there a different kind of structure here that integrates the different levels of government? Mayor Morial.

Mr. MORIAL. Senator Lieberman, your question is intriguing because it certainly provokes the thinking that you could have a super enterprise or empowerment zone that would be managed by some sort of special public authority or some sort of special public agency that would have representatives of both the State, the Federal, and the local government on it that would be sort of a coordinating conduit for the rebuilding that would be tailor-made because the challenge for FEMA is FEMA has ongoing responsibilities for other disasters. Hurricane Ophelia is there. Snow emergencies and weather emergencies that arise during the winter, another hurricane season, tornadoes, all of the myriad of natural disasters, and this is critical. But they have got to also keep their eye on the continuing ball of other natural disasters, which is why your thinking that a specialized public authority might be a good idea.

I think the most important thing is that it not be seen as some sort of Federal usurpation.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Correct.

Mr. MORIAL. That it be a true partnership.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Mayor Owens, you want to add a word quickly?

Ms. OWENS. I agree with you, but I think also I agree with you. Government starts at the local level. You have got to be that person who works with Washington. You have to work with your State, get your governor on board.

Now, FEMA in our case—and I know this applies because I went to Virginia for a week when they had the hurricanes 2 years ago to tame some tempers that were—people were under a lot of duress. And FEMA, actually after they are dispatched, they are accountable to the State. The State tells them what they want. They tell them how much ice they want to come in, what they should be doing. So a lot of times I think people do not understand that the State also gives them the authority when they are there to do whatever they are going to do, and that is what they did not understand in Virginia. It worked a lot better when they started doing that.

To put an agency together, I think, is very simple because when you have a disaster the first thing that you should do is get your local, State, and Federal Governments right on board. And this was just such extenuating circumstances. I do not know, in another case like this, if it could be better or not. They get on the ground as quickly as they can, but yet they are small compared to the amount of disasters that are happening.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you for your answers. I must say it was a question I asked without having an answer to it. I think we are all struggling for the right answer here. You were very helpful.

I do want to say real quickly—something that was said earlier—I heard from a friend from New Orleans, who is a business leader—this fellow said a certain number of people will come back to New Orleans no matter what, a certain number of people will not come back no matter what, but there is a large group in the middle who need the confidence and the hope to come back, and the number one thing that will bring them back is reconstruction of the levees up to Category 5.

Mr. WILSON. Madam Chairman and Members, forgive me. You see me poised to take flight because I have less than 2 hours to get to Dulles, and I have to be back in Los Angeles by 6 o'clock.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you very much for being here, Governor Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Been a privilege and a pleasure.

Chairman COLLINS. We very much appreciate it.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you.

I am going to call on Senator Voinovich. Unfortunately we do have two votes on right now, and I am going to go vote and rush back. If anyone is here after Senator Voinovich finishes, feel free to pose your questions, even if there is nobody officially chairing. You can be temporarily the Chair, and I will return. Thank you for your patience.

Senator VOINOVICH [presiding]. Thank you, Madam Chairman. The real issue here is what is this Committee going to do? Hearing from these excellent witnesses, it seems to me that the focus of this Committee should not be on what happened but on what we are going to do to deal with some of the things that have been talked about. Mayor Morial has talked about dealing with—where are the people? How are they going to be? Where are they living? What about the medical care? Do they have jobs? And so forth.

The next issue is, what are they going to do to rebuild the city? As Mayor Owens has pointed out, we need to collaborate and cooperate. We should bring together people who know a lot about FEMA and disaster recovery to work with the Administration.

In the future, I look forward to hearing about two best practices out there. Additionally, I look forward to hearing from the Administration and asking them questions about what their plans for response and recovery are. But right now, we have to take care of the people, and we have to give them good information.

Mayor Morial, the question I would ask you pertains to the issue of information. We know that some people are going to leave, some are in limbo, and some definitely will come back. But I really think that people have to be informed. I understand that we cannot provide them with information immediately, but do you not believe that the sooner we can give them the facts about what is going to happen, the better off everyone is going to be?

Mr. MORIAL. I agree, and I think one of the mistakes along the way in this has been, is just the communication has been very disjointed. You are right, people need a place to go to get accurate information. My concern is what I call false hope, news reports that

this section of the city is open, but that section is not open. The minute any section is open people are going to seek to return because they want to go examine their homes. They want to go examine the whereabouts, particularly those who evacuated beforehand, which is about 75 to 80 percent. But communication is key. I do not know if it has to be multi-faceted, an official website, perhaps with official communications that would come from a czar or FEMA or jointly.

There is a lot of—and it is prompted—I know this because I get a lot of phone calls from people who said, "I heard this on the radio but I read that in the paper. What is true? What in fact is the case? Is the city going to be drained in 8 weeks, or is it going to be drained in 12 weeks? And then when will I be able to return? How about my insurance claim? How about my automobile insurance claim? Do I have to pay my mortgage? Do I have to pay my bank loans? If I write a check is it going to bounce? Where can I get information about my basic human existence short term while thinking about what I need to do long term?"

So communication is important. Where the buck stops on that at this point is a question that needs an answer. Someone has got to say "I have got the responsibility for communicating, and I am going to communicate daily." And when that person talks, it is not that a local official is going to say one thing, and then in the afternoon a State official is going to say something else, and then a Federal official the following morning is going to say, "No, no, no, that is not the case. Where did you get that information from?"

That is very important at this stage. I think the media that has covered this, as many have expressed to me privately a desire to report accurate information, but they do not know what the centralized departure point is for that information.

Senator VOINOVICH. We had a wonderful briefing last week where many of the Cabinet Secretaries spoke about what they are doing in response to Katrina. I was quite impressed with the waivers they are talking about giving. I wish that everybody in America had a chance to be there to hear the lengths to which the Federal Government is going in response to this disaster. The challenge is how do we get good information and adequate coordination? What has happened is, for instance, we thought we would have 1,000 people in Ohio. It was not until just prior to the planned arrival that the plans to send evacuees to Ohio were cancelled. But 200 families have come to Ohio unassisted by DHS. The Federal Government is trying to provide these individuals with an ID number so that they know who they are and how they can provide them with the best information. I know one of the things you are talking about is moving people out of the area even though they want to come back.

I had the EPA Director in yesterday. He said that the water is just horrible, and they are really concerned about the conditions. Mayor, you just brought that up, you had to go back and make sure that the areas were sanitized so that if people came back, they would not be exposed to hazardous substances. My question is—do the people know this? We must get the information out.

I have dealt with FEMA as governor of a State. In my experience, they come in and they help, we get the program in place, and

we tell everybody what they are entitled to, but ultimately FEMA leaves, and the State and local governments take over. Is that not what happens?

Ms. OWENS. Right. They stayed with us until their job was done, which was quite a long time because that was the only disaster at that time. But the staff continually goes down. They can be there 2 or 3 months. In this case I would say they will be there—unless we have others—I would say they have a 1- to 2-year battle there.

Senator VOINOVICH. The question I have is in terms of recovery.

Ms. OWENS. But they are there to help because——

Senator VOINOVICH. But the fact is, what they are doing is they are helping you access Federal programs and other programs that are available. Correct?

Ms. OWENS. Right.

Senator VOINOVICH. IT, the Department of Labor, unemployment, and all those other things.

Ms. OWENS. Right. They are just wonderful to lead the people through that. I mean they have people in their organization that will help lead them through that.

Senator VOINOVICH. Recovery, rebuilding homes, and that type of thing. Again, what we need is information. Who ran that in your town?

Ms. OWENS. Who ran the information part?

Senator VOINOVICH. No. Who ran the actual operation? You talked about—what you got, $500 million and an advance of $100 million.

Ms. OWENS. Right. That is why I just appointed three tri-chairs and a five-member flood response committee out of our city council, and myself.

Senator VOINOVICH. And you ran the response?

Ms. OWENS. City Council and those three tri-chairs with the help of others—they were the main, and I was the voice that spoke in front.

Senator VOINOVICH. How about your State Government? Were they at the table or did they just access programs they had?

Ms. OWENS. Everyone was working, but they were not always—they were at the table at the beginning until we had things lined up. They always had a representative there. In fact, the governor appointed one of the retired National Guard as the lead for the State. So that person was at that table all the time.

Senator VOINOVICH. How about the Federal Government, who was at the table?

Ms. OWENS. Federal Government, honestly, every time I turned around one of the three would come in if there was anything urgent or anything detrimental. They were with us all the way. I mean we would talk daily. We would get in on phone conversations. I mean they were there, all of them were together. That is what I was saying was so unique because we discussed almost daily, for over 2 years, even longer than that, as things progressed. At the beginning it was more, and then we would kind of siphon down. But they were always there.

But it was our five-member flood response committee out of council. We had 14 council people, so you can imagine that is not easy. And then the three tri-chairs with the different things they were

working with because somebody has to lead the infrastructure and dealing with the new flood control, which I said is No. 1 to me, to get the people some hope that when they go back it is not still vulnerable.

Senator VOINOVICH. So one of the first things that you think we should do in New Orleans is to decide whether or not we are going to rebuild the levees, to get that information out, and to give people an idea of how long it will take in order to get that done. People must know that they are going to be taken care of or many will never come back.

Mr. MORIAL. Right. The levee system, and also not much has been said about the drainage system, which the levee breaks which occurred, occurred on levees that protected the city from manmade drainage canals, not natural bodies of water, and those drainage canals take water from below the streets of the city into the lake. So when the levees break, it has the effect of the lake water reversing back into the canals into the city. So the levee system and New Orleans will realize, the drainage which is a subsurface water system, to know that it is operational, the pumps are working, there is a system of redundancy, will give people some confidence that there are better protections from a Category 4 or 5 engulfing the city in the future.

Senator VOINOVICH. I have just been informed that there is no time left on the vote, and I am hoping that they will keep it open. The Chairman of the Committee will be coming back, but I am not sure whether any of the other Members will, so please stick around for a little while.

This is one of the best panels that I have questioned since I have been a member of the Senate. I thank you so much for being here, and I suspect that the Chairman and the Ranking Member will be back in touch with you for more of your ideas. I am going to recommend that we get the best ideas and find out what the Administration is doing and see if it meets the benchmarks that some of you have established in your respective communities.

And Mr. Logan, it is incredible to hear what the Red Cross has done and what your experience has been in some of the areas that you have come back and rebuilt. Thank you very much for being here today.

Mr. LOGAN. Thank you. Thank you, Senator.

Senator VOINOVICH. I will say that the Committee is recessed until the Chairman returns.

[Recess.]

Senator LIEBERMAN [presiding]. Folks, since I am here I will be happy to take advantage of your collective wisdom, and as soon as any other Member comes back, I will be happy to yield to that person. I thank you again.

Some of you referred to an aspect of this that is very real and human, but we do not always talk about it and figure out how to deal with it governmentally. And that is the psychological impact of going through something like this.

I keep referring to friends I have in New Orleans. I love the city. I was thinking, mayor, as we talk about it, that New Orleans, of course, is a tourist town. And in part that means that it is one of the cities that I bet you most Americans feel really good about, feel

like they have some part of themselves there. But also, in all the ways that you said, for what it has contributed particularly to American culture, it is a part of America.

But anyway, just to ask the question from what you have been through, there are people walking around, both those who went through the worst parts of this, losing somebody, losing a family member or friend, or going through the awful conditions of the Superdome and the convention center, or frankly, I have talked to some friends who said that they feel lucky, their families have enough money, they evacuated, and ended up in a hotel in Baton Rouge or Memphis. But the house is gone. They do not know where the law office or business is or what the future is. You have all gone through that in different ways.

What, if anything, can government do to be responsive to that particular dimension of this? Because if people are truly wounded, it is going to be hard psychologically. It is going to be hard to have the kind of recovery that we want.

Mr. MORIAL. The others may be able to add, but I think it is a subject for the experts. I think that the Committee should publicly, privately, the staff talk to experts who confront this sort of massive trauma, and to a great extent massive grief. I know I fought back tears the first week to 10 days, particularly when I watched television. I know that friends and family members have called me, sobbing, in tears, going back and forth from thanking the good Lord that they are living, but lamenting the fact that they have lost much.

The other component of it that I think could be addressed is family separation. There are people who cannot find their family members. Family reunification, and sometimes it is just a case of information, but if you cannot find your family member, you think they may be one of the deceased. You do not really know because people were separated at evacuation, and a family is in New Orleans, like it is in so many communities, it is an extended family. It is several generations who might not necessarily share a home but lived in the same neighborhood. One may have gone to Memphis, one may have gone to Houston, one may have found their way to Austin. You do not know. So family unification is certainly something. But I think on the overall question the only thing I would add, I do not feel competent or qualified to address that except to say it is massive grief and massive trauma.

As I sit here, you fear that the phone will ring and someone you knew very well was in the deceased category. I know I learned from a man I talked to in Houston about the neighborhood that I grew up in, where the water was to the ceilings, and I said, "Well, did you think people got stuck?" He said, "I know people got stuck." He says, "I am lucky. I had a second floor on my house, so I was able to await rescue."

It is something I appreciate you and the Committee's concern for, but I think it is a subject that the public health experts and the mental health experts ought to be tasked with helping the country deal with.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Mr. Logan, you have been through this. Senator Collins asked a question about the emotional consequences to individuals, communities, as a result of this. We see it from

those who went through the worst of it, and some, as I mentioned, as you said to me, had enough money in the bank, they are not worried about their future in one sense. They evacuated. But their lives have been altered. Their homes are gone. Their offices are gone.

So I ask if there is a government role in this and how important is it? Mr. Logan.

Mr. LOGAN. I think there is an interesting dynamic that certainly I have observed, and I have even been part of it myself, I suppose, in other disasters. What is going through your population right now is a stress that is primarily adrenalin driven, get out of the city, get away. We talk to people, there is even a certain excitement about it. There is grieving, but the whole thing is a pivotal moment in their lives, and it is very much adrenalin driven.

This is not the same as losing a family member, where it is you and your family. The grieving process will go ahead. What is really special about what is happening like this? It is the stress that comes later, and it is the stress of sometimes impotence against a bureaucracy. The normal things go beyond the disaster. It is getting your life straightened out. It is sorting out your mortgage payments. It is do you put the kids in one school?

And this is what is happening in Indonesia right now. What our psychological teams are finding is that the level of psychological stress actually increases but in a different form after the disaster has gone. As the adrenalin goes out, you are faced with the numbing problem of not having your surrounding community, not having your family, not knowing what to do.

I watched one of your psychologists on television talking to a lady who is in a wheelchair. She had spent her whole life—she was 70-years-old—in New Orleans. She was in Montana or somewhere, and she said, "I don't know whether to be so grateful for these people from the American Red Cross and the government who are helping me, or to commit suicide, because I don't know what to do. I've got no friends. I've got nothing."

So I think that the authorities in government have to look at the psychological impact of this as a long-term thing. One of the benefits that we have had in the tsunami operations, for the first time ever we have been able in the international humanitarian to have funds that will allow us to put in programs which normally we can only run for a few months, for programs that can be run for several years, and I think that is a challenge that is faced.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Mayor, do you have any reaction to my question based on what the folks in Grand Forks experienced?

Ms. OWENS. Yes. We put together—you do not realize when you are starting with this that you are going to have all that, but even at the very beginning I would have calls that—well, for instance, this man was in his home. He had a gun. Neighbors called. He was going to shoot himself. Well, that is when I discovered also what we were going to go through psychologically. In fact, I almost adopted, through the whole time I was in, a young boy who had lost his grandfather, and he could not recover. So his dad asked me to help him, so I just took this kid—it is a smaller city—but I took him, and I did whatever I could to help him.

But the main thing, FEMA does have people that line that all up for these cities and so forth. When that happened, all I did is—(I was in the same building). I went and got them. They went out there, and we had several like that. They do have a division of their FEMA people that work with that. By the time they were gone, we had lined up through our local United Health Services a group of our top psychologists, psychiatrists, agencies like the Northeast Human Service Center, that type of thing, and they had already gotten together, and we just actually sent to them.

Another thing that happens is your own people, the city staff, and county staff who are working, become psychologically burned out, and that is something you really have to watch for because it can be very detrimental to the recovery of your city. We had much of that. Eventually we hired on a person from the Minneapolis area, and at least we had somebody to send them to and also a local psychiatrist. We had an employee assistance program, and it lasted a long time. In fact, there is still some of that, 8 years later, those that really still need the help.

Psychological is going to be one of the biggest problems because they are hurting.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you. Senator Collins.

Chairman COLLINS [presiding]. I almost said, thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is really scary. [Laughter.]

Senator LIEBERMAN. That is very kind of you. You have been very generous in working together, but I do know I am the Ranking Member. [Laughter.]

Chairman COLLINS. Mayor Owens, I was struck by the fact that you had a fairly sizable city, 50,000 people, that you had to evacuate. And I assume that means that temporarily you had to house them as well. One of the major challenges we face with Katrina is we are going to have to provide long-term housing for some 450,000 families in addition to many more who have short-term housing needs. What did you do for housing?

Ms. OWENS. Of course, like I said, I do not like our title, but we were the largest disaster per capita ever in the Nation until this one. And we evacuated the largest American city. I mean I look at the area now, and it is similar, but it is so much smaller.

The only thing is, when our people left, they went to 49 of the 50 States, and many of them had to—I mean they could not come back because the homes were gone. There were homes destroyed, homes wet. What we did is we brought in the trailers. We had 400 trailers on our side of the river, and I do not know, 200 to 300 trailers on the other side of the river in East Grand Forks. And they lived in those for 18 months, a lot of them, until we could get some housing stock rebuilt.

We formed a group with Grand Forks Homes, Inc., which is a private investing company in our city, and Fannie Mae, and worked to build—and private financial institutions—to build 200 homes so people would start coming back. If we saw that we were having more problems, that things were not getting cleaned up, we were going to do more. That is controversial, too. It was not at the beginning. But then when things started getting better, the realtors were not happy. But we got in the middle of that. You have to do this or you are going to lose your people. But housing that

many people, I said, "As I look at it, I do not know, I think the people across the United States are just going to have to each help some of these people."

The thing that I could not get (and I know I would not do it), but I know they have to, is they take you out of a shelter, put you on a plane and you do not know where you are going to land. That just got me. I do not think I could do it.

Chairman COLLINS. That actually is a great segue to the question I had for Mr. Logan. I was struck when you mentioned the fact that you cannot force people to live where they do not want to live. And FEMA officials have told me that one of the very big challenges that they are facing is helping displaced families to come to grips with the fact that they are not going to be able to go home any time soon.

We have also seen—for example, there is a former closed military base in Northern Maine, where I am from, which could accommodate some 200 people. I am shocked to learn from FEMA officials that people from the South are not that eager to go to Northern Maine and live there for a period of time. [Laughter.]

I am sure they would love it if we could get them there, but in all seriousness, how do we deal with the housing needs, respecting the preference of individuals, and yet accommodating an overwhelming need not just for temporary housing, but for long-term housing.

Mr. LOGAN. I think in the case of the United States, it is very different from the ones that I have been involved in where the capacity of this country is so enormous, but I do not think it is immune from that very dilemma. You are right, you cannot—well, you can force people to leave, but you have already seen what happens with mandatory evacuations. They are so sensitive that they are not practical. There are some countries, perhaps, where the political situation would just simply force people to leave. That is a forced evacuation, forced resettlement. And we in the Red Cross movement have been faced with the dilemma of what do you do when people have to be compelled one way or the other to leave.

We do not get involved in that. What we do is if you are going to move a population, they have humanitarian needs, they have to be sheltered, they have to be fed. Clearly what we would try to do is advocate for alternative solutions, and this is what we are doing, for example, in Indonesia, where there is no way that we can put 100,000 families into permanent housing tomorrow. In Sri Lanka they have never built more than 5,000 houses in a year ever, and we have to build it. So you look at various different alternatives, and you have to listen to what people are saying.

Interestingly enough, a number of years ago I was working with the American Red Cross on disaster management exercise, and one of the tasks that they were asked to look at at the time was, what are you going to do if you had to evacuate a major city in the United States? And specifically it was to do with shelter because traditionally, internationally anyway, the Red Cross movement is involved in shelter. It got down to—there are certain parameters. You had to be 200 miles from the city because of contamination. I think it was a weapons of mass destruction type of scenario. You could not use schools and hotels because they would be needed

later. Very quickly, everybody was saying, "Well, we cannot do this. How can you house 200,000 people?"

And interestingly enough, the international member said, "Oh, yes, we can do it. We do it all the time. You put them into tents." And they said, "Well, you cannot use tents." But ultimately you have to use whatever is there, and then you work up. In the tsunami what we are seeing is there will always be someone in a tent until it is finished, and there will always be somebody who goes first into a new home. If they have to stay in a tent, we have to make sure that is the best possible tent that we can get them, and they are already beginning to degrade, and then you move them up.

The problem is, if you move them into temporary accommodation, in any society in the world that I have been to—and I have been to 50 countries now—there is always the worry that if I am the first one into a tent will I be the last one to get a permanent house? So this requires a lot of communication. It requires a lot of transparency, and above all, it requires listening to the people and letting them be a part of the solution.

Chairman COLLINS. Thank you. Senator Akaka.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I listened attentively here to all the experiences you have gone through, all of you, and no question that what you are stating to us will be helpful.

Mayor Owens, I have been a key proponent of pre-disaster mitigation programs. Do you know if your city at that time benefited from any of FEMA's pre-disaster mitigation programs prior to the 1997 flood? And if so, how would you assess their effectiveness?

Ms. OWENS. When the 1997 flood occurred, we were in the process, through our city building enforcement, of trying to work with and enforce the 100-year floodplain. And FEMA came in and they worked—I have testimony that I have sent in. We had to comply with that disaster resistant community plan that they had. They have acknowledged to us that we were one of the committees, as we were rebuilding, that complied totally with what they wanted in place. Before we had started, we were building a flood control project that we were halfway through. We had to throw it away because it was not any good.

We had, in fact, even talked with the Corps of Engineers. We are flat, but they were going to build it around us, so we would have been like in a bathtub, and New Orleans was one of the ones that I knew very well because they would talk to us about it.

But it came about from the FEMA plan. That was one of the best programs they have. I do not think they have it any more, and I think it was a wonderful plan. They need to do that because these events are going to keep happening time and time again.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you for that. I understand that there was a mandatory evacuation of Grand Forks, which has a population of 50,000. Did anyone refuse to be evacuated, and if so, how did you handle those refusals?

Ms. OWENS. I do not know why, but for some reason or another, they listened to me, and maybe it is because I had 33 previous years with the city and had been front line with four mayors. They

knew me personally, and it is a smaller city, you can know the person personally.

But we had people going through the city actually with bull horns. We had the fire department, the National Guard. We had the Coast Guard. We had the police department, and actually, the National Guard was already trying to clear out the nursing homes and all that were in those low areas.

They did listen. There were some that did not, unfortunately. A group of them that did not were in that building that caught fire downtown. They had left the electricity on. They did not tell me, but they knew there were some people still housed up there. That is what shorted out. So when they went in, they could not get in, they could not use fire hydrants. They could not do anything to hook up, so the fire department saw those people and got them out. There were kids. And, yes, there was even a county commissioner and her husband who refused to leave who lived right behind my home. We did not force them, but we did remind them that the worst cause of death in a flood is electrocution or fire and that we would not respond because we did not want to put our first line responders in danger for their inability to take charge of their own lives.

Senator AKAKA. Grand Forks Water Treatment Plant was shut down during the 1997 flood.

Ms. OWENS. Absolutely.

Senator AKAKA. What was the extent of contamination of your city? And based on your experience, what would you recommend in terms of handling the cleanup?

Ms. OWENS. I will tell you, I know everything that had been touched by the floodwaters had to be discarded. We had tons and tons and tons of garbage. I cannot tell you the extent—I just know everything was contaminated. We had animals and things in there, too, but we lost no human lives. There was fuel oil, there were chemicals that it had picked up.

One thing that we did is we delegated to the State Health Department and our Health Department officer in the city, and they worked with that, with the EPA, and of course, legally with our City Attorney. That City Attorney stood out with everything we did.

Chairman COLLINS. Excuse me for interrupting for just a moment, Senator Akaka and Mayor Owens. The second vote, the time has expired. I have not voted, so I am going to go vote, but I would be happy to turn over the gavel to you, Senator Akaka, so that you and Senator Pryor can complete your questions.

I do, before I run off, just want to thank our witnesses since I will not be coming back this time, and to say that the hearing record will remain open for 15 days for additional materials.

But thank you so much for your excellent testimony and for sharing your experiences with us.

And, Senator Akaka, I am proud to turn the gavel over to you. Thank you.

Mr. MORIAL. Thank you, Senator. And I have to excuse myself also to get to another engagement. Thank you.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Ms. OWENS. Mr. Akaka, I think the thing I would tell you is that even with the size of our city with all the technical things, we really turned over and left it to the experts, and they were remarkable, with the EPA in cleaning up our city.

Senator AKAKA [presiding]. Thank you for that. Mayor Owens, I understand that the flood caught Northern System's Power—one of the largest power supplies in North Dakota—by surprise. But it was still able to implement an emergency shut-down plan. When power was re-energized to the city, were any steps taken to minimize the possibility of fire outbreaks, and how do you assess their planning and their implementation?

Ms. OWENS. Well, we had no power for probably a week before. With the ice storm the whole region was out, so they had their plans well in line because they knew what was coming. But the only thing we did is we had our State Electrical Board and our City electrical people, enforcement people, before anybody could enter any building after the electricity was on, they had to check it through thoroughly.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Let me ask one question of Mr. Logan, and we will have questions from Senator Pryor.

Mr. Logan, you were involved in the tsunami relief effort in Southeast Asia. As you mentioned in your testimony, many saw the disaster also as an opportunity to implement a redevelopment program for the region, and that would raise the standard of living for the residents. Yet one of the problems was the Indonesian Government's slowness in developing and implementing plans.

Based on your experience, what recommendations would you make to city, State, and Federal officials in the States affected by Hurricane Katrina as they begin planning for reconstruction and redevelopment?

Mr. LOGAN. I think that is a question that has overarched across boundaries, so I do not think I am in a position where as a visitor I am suggesting recommendations to yourselves.

It is true. Forget the additional complication in both Sri Lanka and in Indonesia, that these were states in conflict. There was ongoing conflict there. And that the Bandar Aceh province had been effectively a closed province for nearly 30 years, which added to the complication. Consequently, the Indonesian situation, there is perhaps some understandability that the mindset of the government had to turn around to go to a massive redevelopment in a region that was actually going in the opposite direction, requires quite a change of turn. It is a bit like chaining an aircraft carrier, you will get around there eventually, but it is a big circle.

What became clear, and where I think the lesson is in both Sri Lanka and in Indonesia, which are the two biggest ones, but very clearly and positively demonstrated in the Maldives, a much smaller country, was that once the decision was made that there was a need to look at this beyond simply throwing up a few little houses for the fishing communities, that there was in fact not only an opportunity, but in fact an obligation to build better, if you like. In the case of both of them, they established a specific focal point that would transcend the national, regional, and local authorities without cutting them out, in other words, incorporating them. By the

way, even in Iran, ultimately it was the state and the city who actually took on the lead even there.

The feeling there was that if we can do this now, we can learn from this, and the urging of former President Clinton and his group is that this is an opportunity to establish a mechanism that does not necessarily have to be large, because many of the communities that I helped respond to are quite limited in capacity, but something that is extremely flexible. In other words, it has a mindset that between disasters it is there working on preparedness and being ready, and this cultural awareness, but that the mechanisms are there for it to rapidly expand to meet whatever the scope of the disaster is.

So I think that those countries that have realized that other disasters will come, and that disasters do in fact give you an opportunity to address risk, to build better both socially, to build better both in terms of architectural and building standards. That needs to be continued as a mindset between the time when there are no disasters. And I think therein lies a lesson that has been learned in many countries around the world, the success that it has been implemented varies, but certainly we are seeing some real progress now in Indonesia after that decision was made, and they got a particularly effective individual, and that is why I am saying I think the individual very much will be the person who drives that forward ultimately.

Senator AKAKA. I will turn the questioning over to Senator Pryor. Senator Pryor.

Senator PRYOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now is our chance. [Laughter.]

Senator AKAKA. It is your time.

Senator PRYOR. Mayor Owens, let me ask—I am sorry I had to step out for those votes—but in your area you had extensive flooding, is that right?

Ms. OWENS. Yes.

Senator PRYOR. And an ice storm?

Ms. OWENS. Well, it started, we had over 100 inches of snow, eight snowstorms that just crippled our area all the way from October through to April, so we had been battling with that. We had to even acquire the help of the National Guard to keep our roads open it was so bad. Our whole State was inundated.

It was the largest disaster ever per capita in the Nation until this event, and we evacuated 50,000 people. We had the ice storm. We were sandbagging at that point. We always had some type of flood. But then 14 inches of snow the next day, and then right after that we had to dig the snow away so we could continue to sandbag on the levees. And then it just melted too quickly, and we had the Red Lake and the Red River of the north, ice jams, and we just got inundated.

Senator PRYOR. Right. How much water did you have in your city? How high was it?

Ms. OWENS. It was anywhere I think in the lower—well, what we call the Lincoln Drive area, they had a levee system in there that had been in since the 1950s. That is the first one that breached. I am not sure of the extent of it, but it went over the roofs of the

houses. They were just floating. Otherwise, I would say throughout our city, anywhere from 4 to 6 feet of water.

Senator PRYOR. So in other words, when you see pictures of New Orleans, that looks like your city?

Ms. OWENS. I looked up my 10-minute film that I had, and you can identify right up to where we lost no people, and then that is where my heart just went out to them.

Senator PRYOR. After the water receded, how long was the water there in your city?

Ms. OWENS. We were probably flooded a couple weeks.

Senator PRYOR. After the water receded, what percentage of the buildings could be saved?

Ms. OWENS. Well, 90 percent of our city was wet, and I think we lost about, without the flood control project, we lost approximately 1,000 homes on our side of the city, and then East Grand Forks, Minnesota, lost almost their whole housing stock. They were totally under there in the 8,500 population.

The majority of the businesses were wet. I would say the majority of them also could be saved.

Senator PRYOR. But a minority of the houses could be saved?

Ms. OWENS. Well, we have, let us see, all the ones along the river for sure, were gone, 1,000. So 90 percent were wet. I would say we lost a lot of our apartments, probably 40, 50 percent of our housing stock at that time.

Senator PRYOR. I am just trying to get a sense of what we can anticipate down in New Orleans because I know it is different, but there are a lot of similarities to what you went through.

Let me ask this in terms of the aftermath concerning the housing and also the commercial property; who paid to have them cleaned up, or maybe demolished and rebuilt? Who paid for that? Was it private insurance? Was it the government? How did that work?

Ms. OWENS. Both. We, first of all, had the $171 million that we got out of that $500 million disaster aid bill that Congress passed, we used much of that for help for businesses, to get them back on board. I mean we did some of that. The SBA a lot, most of it was private. They had to get loans. We had a lot of people that are still working at 75-years-old because they could not retire. They had to invest. But it was a partnership, but a lot of it was private money.

Senator PRYOR. Let me ask both of you a question concerning population. Arkansas is immediately above Louisiana, and we are to the west of Mississippi, so we have a lot of evacuees in our State. We do not know exactly how many, tens of thousands, and by one estimate, 75,000. Some are in church camps. Some are with friends. Some are in hotels. You all know the routine, you have seen this before.

I was on the phone yesterday with a lot of the people who are running these camps. We have a lot of civic centers we have converted, but we also have a lot of church camps that are being used. That has seemed to work out very well. When I was talking to Arkansans on the phone yesterday who were in those camps and centers, they said that a number of the people they have talked to have said, "Look, we do not have anything to go back to, and if you can get us a job here, we will just stay here." Has that been your experience?

Ms. OWENS. Yes. We did lose population at that time. I think the thing that I would say right now to New Orleans and the Gulf Coast is this is going to be a 25-, 30-year project as you move along. It is not going to be rebuilt overnight. It is going to take a long time. I mean that is just my thinking from what we went through because ours is about a 15-year project. But the one thing I would say, I think what really pulled the heartstrings in my household was you become blind to the poverty level of some of the people, and that just broke my heart. If these people go away and they can find jobs and stability right now, I think they need to do that. Let New Orleans and the Gulf Coast rebuild, and other people will come in, and these people may come back, but they need some normalcy in their lives because they cannot go on for as long as it is going to take to rebuild.

Senator PRYOR. Mr. Logan, is that your experience?

Mr. LOGAN. I think it is exactly the case in any part of the world that I have ever been to. Some will never leave, in spite of the fact they are floating down the river. Some will never come back. The bigger group will be driven by the need to retain their family connections, to get their kids into school, whatever that may take.

So consequently some will relocate for a certain period of time until they observe that the situation is sufficiently stable for them and their families to go back. So you have to make programs for the people who will come back immediately, the ones that may come back later on. What will your obligations be? This is a difficult one that some authorities can think around the immediate transitional needs, but they do not think through the fact that they may not necessarily be the ones that are calling the shots 5 years from now, and that is why I am saying you have to be ready to welcome them back, not just today or tomorrow, but maybe 5 or 10 years from now they may want to come back to their home, particularly those who are native to that city.

And then others will see an opportunity that they never had. We are dealing very often with people who are not only moved from their city, but actually moved out of their country. They have become refugees. And I think that there are many stories that being a refugee, which was a term that was being used early on here, which is incorrect, but nonetheless, so many refugees actually become—they broke that cycle and there were opportunities, and I believe that there will be opportunities and you will probably find some hardy New Orleans people who actually find living in Alaska has given them something new. It is a broad spectrum.

Senator PRYOR. Right. And you touched on one of the reasons I asked that is because in our State, we have school districts, we have cites, counties, State that are providing services, etc. And just as I talk to them over the next several days, several weeks, several months, I just need to be ready to share my thoughts on how many of their resources they should invest in these folks because kids are in schools, they are trying to find jobs, all those issues. I want to tell you, I have never been more proud of my State. They have welcomed people with open arms. They have opened their checkbooks, opened their personal homes. They have given them cars. I mean it has just been amazing to see the generosity of people in Arkan-

sas, and I am sure that is true in other parts of the country as well.

But that is really why I was asking because I just would love to be able to advise either our governor or our various local people on what to expect, what the future might look like.

Ms. OWENS. Even in our case now, and I said New Orleans and the cities along the Gulf, of course, they have to recoup their economic development, try and get their people back for the tax base. But in our city, it can be an opportunity. It sounds terrible because there were lives lost, but these people that are at the poverty level, some of them might find jobs, a place where their children can go to school, a place where they can make a better living. To me, then they should take their opportunities, and other people will move in, or these people may go back, but it can be an opportunity for people who were living at the poverty level particularly.

Senator PRYOR. Let me ask another question on a different line, and that is concerning our experience in Arkansas, where a lot of these people, when they got off the buses, they were bewildered. They did not know what State they were in. In fact, there is one case—we do not have to relive all of FEMA's problems—but one example I heard is that people were loaded on the bus at the Superdome and driven all the way to the Astrodome. It was full. They were driven back to New Orleans even though there was no place to go back to. Apparently they waited on the parking lot, I heard, for 5 hours. I have not verified this, but this is what, anecdotally, people have told me. And then they were driven up to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, and I do not know how many hours that would be, but anyway, they were processed there, and then they got on a bus to go to the camp wherever it may be. So some of these people spent a full day, maybe 2 days on the bus, maybe 3 days, I am not quite sure.

And they were very bewildered, I mean literally, when they got off the bus, and some of them did not know what State they were in. Clearly a lot of these people really felt no real assurance from the Federal Government.

And then I have heard stories where in one of these camps they kept saying FEMA will be here in the next few days, and everybody was anticipating FEMA coming. They finally came, and all they had was a guy with flyers, with just the toll free number and a website, and so there was a big letdown there.

I guess my question is, based on your experience, is that common, or normally is there a government agency there that actually has a better game plan and is actually taking care of people in a more deliberative way?

Ms. OWENS. In our case they were there. I mean we did not have that problem. We had people in 49 of the 50 States. I mean they just—I do not know if you were here when I said that would be the hardest thing that I could do. I would probably be one of the ones that would not want to go to get on a plane when I do not know where I am going to be on the other end because you have lived here all your life. You are just ripping people, but that is what they had to do I guess.

But I do not know. It was so large, I do not know if they could have—it could have been done better. They had to get them out to safety I guess.

But what we did for our people who were evacuating, even in that small city, we had the ability to tune in through TVs. The media was wonderful to us. And every place where they had a large group of people in these cities, we had a press conference almost daily, so they would know what was going on in their city while they were gone. And that worked wonderfully. Like I would tune into, well, all across the country they did that for us.

Senator PRYOR. That is good to know.

Mr. Logan, do you have any comment on that?

Mr. LOGAN. Not specifically to your question regarding the United States, but I think there is one other statistic that we have identified. Whether it would apply here or not, I do not know, but I suspect that it might. In almost any displaced population there probably is somewhere around about 10 or 15 percent who would have to be classified as especially vulnerable.

Now, in our case it may well be that it is old folks who cannot get to food distribution lines. The young guys get there. In Africa they are up there and—but very often, that 10 or 15 percent slips through because your planning is for the 75, 80, 90 percent, and very often these very vulnerable people—maybe it could be handicapped, it could be mentally challenged, it could be single moms, of course, is one of the big problems we have in refugee camps where it is mostly women and children.

But what I would say is, is that those people who are involved have to give some special attention to identifying where that 10 or 15 percent might be, because otherwise, they will be the ones who will drop down, and they are probably disadvantaged to start with, and they will slip right down below the radar. So I think that needs to be looked at as well.

Senator PRYOR. Let me ask about the Red Cross. Do you guys work with FEMA very closely?

Mr. LOGAN. I really cannot answer on the basis of the American Red Cross. I know that of course they have as part of their—they are auxiliary to the U.S. Government, and they have a very clear mandate, and that they will be working with them right as we speak. I know that. The details we would have to ask my American Red Cross colleagues at some other time.

Senator PRYOR. My last question, I promise, Mr. Chairman. One thing that you have heard the Committee talk about today is accountability. We have a lot of money that we have appropriated for this region of the country, and I am curious about your experience in terms of scams and rip-offs. I am a former Attorney General of my State, and we used to do consumer protection, and we would see those scams and rip-offs of people, fly-by-night contractors and things like that, that would get their money up front and you would never see them again. So certainly we know that there is going to be some of that, we just know that.

There is also the contracting process. Unfortunately, we have done some of this with no big contracts, and I know we will talk about that a lot over the coming weeks here in the Congress. But what is your experience with the money that goes in to try to help,

and sometimes people try to profiteer or sometimes people try to take advantage of desperate situations? Do you have a comment on that?

Mr. LOGAN. It has always been a problem internationally, and I suppose never, ever more than in the tsunami, which was the greatest sort of giving internationally that we have ever seen, to the point at which of the three main areas that former President Clinton, in his role as Special Envoy, has identified that require specific attention, aside from the tracking and the personal needs, and that is accountability. Very clearly—and we are dealing with government authorities of 11 different countries in the tsunami and in many other ones—is the willingness and the ability to have some form of external auditing. In the case of the tsunami, all of the governments involved, all of the agencies involved like our own, have opened ourselves up to not only vigorous internal auditing and tracking and accountability, but also external.

Clearly the complications of dealing with that amount of money on an international basis are very important, very tricky, and undoubtedly we know already from day one that we will be under the microscope on the whole question of accountability, just on that. And then you multiply that by the number of other disasters that we are working at internationally, it has become a core element of stewardship for the Red Cross as a movement.

Ms. OWENS. We had one construction company that was working with an event center we were building at the time, a $70 million event center. So they were in the city, and we knew we needed somebody immediately to start helping with so many different things that needed these people. And the City Council and myself agreed to keep them on board because our others were all scattered.

I was not very popular later because when it came down to where you could start with divvying out the jobs to the other people coming back for private enterprise, I had them pull back, and I mean they did a wonderful job, but it was time to turn it back to open, and that is what I did.

Senator PRYOR. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much.

I want to thank our witnesses on this hearing, Recovering from Hurricane Katrina: The Next Phase. I want to thank you so much for your testimony. It will be helpful to this Committee, this Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

I, as Chairman, will adjourn this hearing. This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:50 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR WARNER

When the framework for our nation's government was first laid out, the goal was the creation of a republic with limited Federal powers. The Founding Fathers envisioned a situation where state and local governments maintained the responsibility to provide public services and maintain public safety. However, over the past 200 plus years, the growth of our economies and that of our population have made the scale of many issues beyond the capacity of our state and local resources. Fortunately, advances in technology have made it possible for the rapid deployment of Federal and pooled state resources in times of tragedy. We have seen this time and time again. It is the American spirit to help one's neighbors in times of need and the response to Hurricane Katrina is truly an event that proves that fact.

The role of the Federal Government has expanded approximately over the years. The challenges now are to efficiently utilize the vast array of resources and talents that people across this nation are willing to bring to the situation. I applaud Chairman Collins and Senator Lieberman for calling today's hearing and especially appreciate the specific stated purpose. We are here to discuss next steps—to make certain that the appropriate resources are brought into use.

The task ahead is a difficult one. We must appropriately and efficiently allocate resources to manage what is likely to be the largest response, recovery, and rebuilding effort in modern American history. We have to focus on coordination among Federal, State, and local agencies. We also have to be certain to consider the indirect and long-term effects of decisions that are made. Priority one is saving lives and getting those who are displaced from their families, homes, and places of work back to a state of normalcy. But we cannot forget the fact that every decision has not only short term costs and benefits but also long term ones as well.

As United States Senators we must remember our duty is not one of project managers who are involved in every detail of the response. True, our responsibility is one of oversight—as a Member of this Committee, the Environment and Public Works Committee, and as Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, I am receiving daily briefings and updates from numerous Federal agencies working on the response. However, at this point in time our most important role is one of providers.

As Members of Congress we must make certain that the operational units have the resources necessary to do their work. To date, the Congress has provided $62.3 billion in Emergency Supplemental funds. More will come. We also must work to ensure that the law provides decisionmakers the authority to get the job done. Many agencies have temporarily suspended certain regulations to speed the effort, from weight limitations on roadways, to contracting requirements and certain environmental permits.

Yesterday, I took the Senate floor to discuss the current efforts by the Department of Defense in the response effort. I have spoken with General Blum, who is the Commander of the National Guard. He never once flinched when he said we are doing the job and we are going to succeed. Our hats are off to the National Guard. The Navy deployed 20 ships, including the *USS Harry S Truman,* an aircraft carrier, and the *USNS Comfort,* the hospital ship. More than 400 aircraft, including 373 helicopters and 93 airplanes, are in support of search and rescue, medical evacuation, and logistical supply missions. The amount of humanitarian support provided to the region is astounding. More than 16 million meals-ready-to-eat—the old MRE or military meals—44 million liters of water, and more than 175 million pounds of ice have been delivered to date. The Army Corps of Engineers has 39 of its 137 permanent pumps operating throughout New Orleans, with an additional 46 military pumps operating at a lower capacity. I wonder though if there are limitations under current law that prevent the Department of Defense from bringing its full range of assets to the effort.

I have spoken with many of my colleagues about the framework of laws that have served our nation well, especially the Posse Comitatus Act, the Insurrection laws, and to what extent we must revisit that doctrine. We must determine if changes are needed to meet Federal obligations in facing the uncertainties of the 21st Century, especially the new threats of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about their experiences and specifically what they needed but couldn't get because of red-tape, regulatory hurdles, or even prohibition by Federal law. again, as Members of Congress, we can best help by providing the resources—through appropriations and statute—to best serve our local, state, and Federal agencies speed the recovery of the Gulf Coast states.

Surely the task is a daunting one. But we are up to it and are united in our collective desire to help our brothers and sisters get back home.

Testimony of Hon. Pete Wilson

Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs
September 14, 2005

Disaster Recovery Lessons Learned in California

While the topic of today's hearing is one which all of us here wish had not happened, I am happy to be here today to share some of the lessons we learned in California in dealing with disaster recovery.

First, Gayle and I wish to express our deep concern for the victims of this horrendous event, and for the thousands who are working to restore homes, livelihoods, and communities. The personal devastation of the victims, the chaos that must be tamed, and the demands placed on the men and women engaged in response and recovery are simply unimaginable for someone who has not been on the ground in the middle of this type of event.

Unfortunately, I have far too much experience with the whole subject of disaster recovery.

During my tenure as Governor of California, our state was hit by what seemed at the time an unending series of natural disasters, often of Biblical proportions. Fire, floods, freezes, earthquakes, drought, landslides, pest infestations, civil unrest—we even faced an increase in volcanic activity in Mono Lake, but thankfully no eruption.

While nowhere the scale of the Katrina disaster, California's floods in January 1997 had similar human results. This disaster resulted in eight deaths; the evacuation of 120,000 people; relocation of 55,000 people to 107 shelters; damage or destruction of 30,000 residences and 2,000 businesses; and total damage estimates of about $2 billion.

The January 1994 Northridge Earthquake resulted in 51 deaths and over 9,000 injured; 22,000 homeless; severe damage or destruction of 54,000 buildings; closure of 14 damaged hospitals; closure of 11 major roads due to the collapse of 7 major freeway bridges and damage to many others; and total damage estimates of $44 billion. Up to that point, this earthquake was the costliest disaster in US history.

Yet, as often as we were tested, California emerged from each of these unfortunate events stronger than before. We learned how to respond quickly. More importantly, we learned how to get people's lives and communities working again just as quickly.

Some of the actions we found essential to these recoveries:

First, we learned to point the way, not point a finger of blame. In each emergency situation, we were grateful for the commitment of first the Bush Administration and then the Clinton Administration to helping our state work its way towards recovery. There were always things that could have been done better or faster. There was always a need for more resources than what we had or what we got from the federal government. There were always things that simply went wrong. But everyone took the tack that our

first and only focus was to repair the damage and put people and our communities back on their feet. Hindsight and performance reviews came later.

In the case of the Northridge Earthquake response:

Our first job was to make sure people were safe. We then set about slashing the red tape and rules to help those left with no food, no homes, no jobs.

As with any other state and as with Katrina, the National Guard was our first line of response. Over 2,300 Guard members were mobilized to protect public safety, distribute food and water, and set up tents as emergency shelters for thousands of victims. Even though the Red Cross and Salvation Army shelters were not at capacity, these tents were needed because many victims would not enter a building for fear of aftershocks and more damage.

We recruited and deployed over 4,200 state workers to help out—working with the federal Disaster Assistance Centers to cut the long waits and working in all other areas of the recovery where they were needed—outside their agencies and well outside their job descriptions. We made the FEMA Disaster Assistance Centers into a one-stop help center for both federal and state assistance.

We were rebuilding the roads and bridges within 24 hours of the earthquake. I issued an Executive Order suspending all statutes and regulations related to state contracting.

We had Caltrans employees literally walking the rubble with the authority to issue oral contracts to begin clean-up and demolition. We reopened several critical transportation routes within 13 days of the event as a result.

We continued this approach throughout the rebuilding. My goal was to reopen I-10 within 6 months, and every other road within a year. Each contract included an incentive—if the work was late, we charged a fine and if it was completed early, we paid a bonus and the motorists in Los Angeles were happy each time we did. We waived the requirements for lengthy environmental and permitting reviews for strict replacement work—cutting 18 to 24 months off the construction schedule.

I cut the rules impeding recovery in other areas as well:

- Suspending several trucking rules, including the prohibition on nighttime deliveries of food products to keep trucks off the damaged freeways during commute hours, and make sure supplies kept coming into the region.

- Suspended overtime rules to give employers more flexibility in setting work schedules and reducing congestion during normal commute hours.

- Sent my Secretary for Health and Welfare to the hospitals damaged by the quake with the authority to issue on-the-spot approvals for converting facilities to new essential uses.

- Waived fees to speed reinstallation of mobile homes.

- Expedited permitting of reconstruction projects by waiving many of the procedural requirements, and putting staff from all state and local permitting agencies into one building. Business owners and home owners could walk through one door and leave with all the approvals they needed to get their lives back in order.

- Waived the waiting period for unemployment benefits to get aid to those who needed it immediately.

- Eliminated all paperwork requirements for getting a portable classroom, and made 230 units available through a simple phone call from the districts.

- Issued bridge loans and loan guarantees from state resources to help small business owners back on their feet until their federal assistance arrived.

In these and in many other areas, we dealt with the situation as it deserved: extraordinary events that could not be handled by business as usual.

Each state and each disaster is going to present a unique set of circumstances and a unique set of needs that must be overcome to restore a community to normal as quickly

as possible. But in each case, it is the state that will best know what is needed to help people get back on their feet and well along the road to recovery.

If I had to make one recommendation on what is needed to speed recovery in the Gulf Coast, it would be to give the states the power to make things happen and happen fast. Reinforce the Governors' emergency powers to set anything aside—state and federal statute and regulation—that stands in the way of quick recovery.

In its times of need, California has always been grateful for the help we received from the nation and other states. It's now time for us to help our fellow citizens of the Gulf Coast.

Thank you.

Prepared Statement of
The Honorable Patricia A. Owens
Former Mayor
Grand Forks, North Dakota

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
September 14, 2005

Madam Chairman, Ranking Member Lieberman, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. The catastrophic disaster that Katrina caused to Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama brought back many memories of the '97 disaster in my home city of Grand Forks, ND.

In April 1997, the raging Red River of the North spawned the "flood of the Century", a 210 year event, and forced the evacuation of nearly all the city's 52,000 population. Amid the flood waters, 11 buildings in the heart of downtown burned. We had no water, no sewage system, no electricity and very limited communication systems for several weeks. The flood waters covering our city were rushing through our city with dangerous force, freezing cold and very toxic. Many of our people scattered around the country to 49 of the 50 states. Other evacuees were housed in a hangar at the Grand Forks Air Force Base. The University of North Dakota offered their facilities for our Emergency Center when it too went under water, the use of their news center for daily news conferences and housing for displaced residents.

Blizzards, massive flooding, fire . . . it was an unforgettable season of disaster for Grand Forks, North Dakota. When it was over, nearly 90 percent of the city had flooded, the downtown was a shadow of its former self and there was extensive property damage and destruction. With the infrastructure, schools, neighborhoods, businesses and sense of community destroyed, how does a whole city sturdy itself and come back even stronger? Though we thought we had been through the worst of it, the city would now face its biggest challenge yet - rebuilding.

President Clinton, accompanied by cabinet members, our ND Senators, Congressman and Governor, came to our city on April 22 and met with officials. He also addressed the large crowd of citizens that were housed at the Grand Forks Air Force Base. The promise he made was that the government would stand beside us and assist us in our recovery efforts. We lobbied long and hard and were fortunate to have received Federal and State funds to be used toward our recovery efforts. The nation responded with immediate assistance for our people. These monies and support not only gave elected and community leaders the strength, courage and motivation to tackle the enormous task of rebuilding a city suffering from such mass destruction, but it also gave us an opportunity to creatively build our city back better than ever.

Now the question I had in my mind was where do we start to rebuild? People's lives were turned upside down. How do we get our people back, and, if they do come back, how do we help them

to physically, mentally and financially face the task of rebuilding their lives? How do we help them begin to return to some form of normalcy in their lives? Their place of employment either no longer existed or were closed altogether. There were no daycare centers, no schools, no churches. Most were either destroyed or damaged severely. What we in Grand Forks did was roll up our sleeves, organize, work hard and believe that we could create a future for our citizens.

Rebuilding had to start with delegating responsibility and communication. First of all, we had to get our local government back and organized to start the planning process. As Mayor, I appointed a tri-chair group to assist in the Mayor and Council efforts. It consisted of my Director of Public Works/City Engineer, Community Development Director and City Auditor. No Mayor can possibly have all the technical knowledge required to run a city much less to rebuild one. They assisted me, followed me, and advised me on all issues that arose during our rebuilding process. We had 14 City Council members. I recommended forming a flood response committee consisting of 5 of those members. We met daily. They were my advocates in setting up citizen committees to head up and address the various avenues we needed to even get started.

My City Attorney became invaluable in the recovery process. He worked with the State to filter out the questionable contractors that come forth to rebuild the city. He kept on top of all the legal issues such as gouging the people when they came back to repair their homes and businesses. We needed to get our tax base back. I appointed a group of local business people to work with our Community Development Director to start that process.

Our Director of Public Works/City Engineer's first task was to get our water plant up and running and address the issue of the destroyed infrastructure. He also continued to work with the Mayor and City Council on a permanent flood protection project for the future. Without this project as a promise for protection in the future, people were not interested in coming back with the possibility of experiencing the same disaster again in the future. Eight years later, this project is almost completed.

We were not afraid to get expertise from consultants as rebuilding from the ground up was all new to every one of us. We hired a firm to help put a workable plan in place. Some areas of our city were going downhill prior to the flood/fire such as the downtown. These consultants helped us to put plans in place that would bring us back much stronger. We were not afraid to make changes such as tearing down an enclosure for a downtown mall that had been struggling. It was opened up with new store fronts, a town square and a greenway that attracts tourists and serves as a gathering center for the farmers market, concerts. etc.

We, City government, immediately started having planning sessions with the other governmental bodies in the city i.e. the Park Board, Schools and the County. We worked together every step of the way to bring back our city's tax base.

Housing was a concern. It was decided to build 200 affordable homes and give incentives to those that wished to purchase them. This was very controversial but has turned out be one of the best decisions that was made.

Our Senators and Congressman were great advisors and leaders for our local government in the rebuilding efforts. I worked right along side them in Washington, D.C. in lobbying efforts and efforts to bring the message to the President and Congress of our on-going needs necessary for recovery.

Grand Forks has come back bigger, better and stronger than it was prior to the disaster. This has not been without obstacles every step of the way. Elected people need to be personally strong as people get angry over their lives being turned upside down and tend to pass the blame on to anyone that is out-front. Cities need to set up a structure in their recovery process that addresses psychological issues such as depression, anger, alcoholism, drug abuse, etc. These problems get worse as time goes on.

Eight years have come and gone since the flood of 1997. The lives of those involved will never be the same. Many moved to new neighborhoods; many never returned. It is an event that had a permanent impact on Grand Forks' citizens. We were forced to evacuate, leaving our homes and all our material possessions at the fate of the flood. We in Grand Forks were fortunate as we lost no lives in the flood and fire. Ours was bad; Katrina was catastrophic.

After my term in office as Mayor ended, I was hired by FEMA as an Ambassador of Hope and consultant to other cities experiencing disasters. Communities and their elected people need a support base when bad things happen. They need to know that it will take a long time to recover but that it can be done with determination and hard work. The key to recovery is communication and organization in setting the future vision of the city.

When we were going through this disaster and survival/recovery efforts, there were constant obstacles in the way. In times of disaster, one sees the best and the worst in people. Everyone is running on adrenaline for days, weeks, months and they eventually get very tired. Emotions run rampant. Elected individuals need to instill in people that they can recover but it takes time . . . a lot of time.

The groundwork that was laid in our survival and recovery efforts is accomplishing our vision and goals for the residents of that city. We are seeing eights years later the positive results of everybody's dedication and hard work. As I stated many times over during our turmoil, "we will rebuild and we will come back bigger, better, stronger." Today this is happening.

My message to those affected by Katrina is to form partnerships among citizens, community leaders, businesses and city, state and federal agencies. Team work pays off for everyone involved. Recovery is difficult and sometimes very cruel, but your continued strong faith, hope and determination will reap rewards as you move through recovery. Together you can do it!

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Owens
Former Mayor
Grand Forks, North Dakota

City of Grand Forks
Recovery Update
April 2002

Winter snow/blizzards of 1996-97 brought a record 98.6 inches of snow – which gave way to spring flooding.

- **Flood Impact:**
  - **Red River crested at 54.35 feet.** Earthen levees in place could protect to a level of
    52 feet (49-foot for levee + 3 feet of freeboard)
  - **Water rise was 1-inch/hour** (2-feet/day) during flooding
  - **3.5 million sandbags** (17,500 tons of sand) plus 170,000 cubic yards of clay and 20,000 cubic yards of gravel used to fight the flood
  - **90 percent** of the 52,500 **residents** evacuated
  - **83 percent (9,001) of homes** and **62 percent (751) commercial units** damaged
  - **All 385 businesses downtown** impacted (400,000 sq. ft of space)
  - **11 historic buildings and 60 apartments** burned
  - **No water for 13 days - no drinkable water for 23 days**
  - More than **$74 million damage to GF School District** (16 of 22 schools significantly damaged)
  - More than **$48 million damage to University of North Dakota** (72 state-owned buildings)
  - **Serious health issues** including contaminated debris, fuel oil in basements, mold
  - **More than 20,000 volunteers** came to the community to help clean up and rebuild
  - **60,000 tons of flood debris** hauled to landfill
  - **Believed to be one of the worst disasters in North Dakota history**
- **Flood Recovery:**
  - **Formed public-private partnerships** to augment city's work in guiding the recovery process. A special flood-recovery task force made up of key community leaders and city staff was appointed by the mayor for this purpose.
  - **Enforced local floodplain ordinances** to assist citizens/businesses as they rebuilt and to guide future development.
  - **Residential:**
    - About **800 properties** (nearly all homes) acquired through city's voluntary

buyout program.

(**629** in the 100-year floodplain; of those, **about 350** adjacent to the dike)

Funding (includes acquisition of 42 commercial properties):

- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (federal/state funding) = **$12.5 million**
- State of North Dakota = **$1.7 million**
- Remainder funded with city money & Community Development Block Grants

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- More than **200 new homes** built west side of city (Congressional housing development).

- New home and apartment building continues.

- **Downtown:**
  - A new **$14.4 million Corporate Center** (two buildings) was built as an anchor for the downtown redevelopment, replacing most of the burned office space.
  - About **90 percent** of the downtown is occupied by businesses, government offices and some non-profit organizations. About 75 percent of those were downtown at the time of the fire and flood. The remaining businesses located elsewhere in GF or went out of business.
  - **Renovation of historic buildings** continues
  - **Flood Memorial Park** now occupies site of Security Building where the fire started. Park formally dedicated April 19, 2002.
  - **Town Square**, year-round community gathering place, heralds the gateway to the city. Since its opening in Oct. 2000, has been home to annual Farmer's Market, outdoor concerts, ice skating and other community activities.
  - **Paver-brick** sidewalks and **ornamental streetlights** have been installed.
  - **Construction of new, larger $390 million permanent flood-control project** has begun. Estimated completion date is 2004-2005.
  - **Planning underway to develop Greenway** along the river from downtown into residential areas.

- **Financial Assistance:**

FEMA:

Disaster Housing Program (Grand Forks County, includes city): $ 44.8 million (21,846 applicants)

Program provides assistance to individuals to pay for things such as minimal home repairs, assistance to pay for temporary housing, etc. **Statewide assistance: $54.5 million (29,756 applicants)**

statewide

Note: This is an estimated cost provided by the ND Department of Insurance of claims paid, mostly under sewer back-up coverage. Bulk of this is believed to be in Grand Forks. Figure could actually be higher because not all claims were reported.

Donations (citywide, Grand Forks): More than $1.3 million

Source: City of Grand Forks Public Information Office

Public Assistance: **More than $ 130.5 million

Program provides assistance to governmental entities and certain non-profit organizations to repair or replace damaged infrastructure. Federal funds cover 75% of approved costs for eligible projects. For this disaster, FEMA paid 90% of approved costs for eligible projects; the State of North Dakota funded 5%.
**** Note: This figures includes the 3 major applicants: City of Grand Forks ($47.5 million); University of North Dakota ($40 million); Grand Forks Public School District ($43 million). Does not include state property, other smaller governmental entities or private non-profit organizations within the city).**

Crisis Counseling (primarily for Grand Forks): $ 3.7 million **statewide**

Program pays for counseling services on local level sought by disaster-impacted individuals

Disaster Unemployment Assistance: $ 5 million **statewide**

Program provides unemployment compensation for individuals not otherwise covered by unemployment benefits whose jobs were affected by the disaster.
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Individual & Family Grant Program (city of Grand Forks): $ 10 million

FEMA/state assistance funded on a cost-share basis to eligible individuals for serious, disaster-related needs not covered by insurance. **Statewide assistance: $14.1 million**

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program: $ 12.5 million

Provides money for projects on a cost-share basis that will reduce or prevent future disaster damages. Funded by FEMA (75%), administered by the State of North Dakota. **Grand Forks money was for voluntary property buyouts in high-risk areas. State of North Dakota funded an additional $1.7 million of the Grand Forks project. Other funding also was used. Statewide assistance: $47 million**

National Flood Insurance Program: $ 75 million in claims paid

Voluntary insurance program that covers losses related to flooding. NFIP is a division of FEMA.
Statewide: $100 million in claims paid.

Other Funding for Grand Forks:

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) $ 154 million

Figure provided by City of Grand Forks Public Information Office

Department of Housing and Urban Development:

- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) $ 171.5 million

Fannie Mae Foundation: $ 10.7 million

Economic Development Administration: $ 10.8 million

Private Insurance Companies: More than $20 million

City of Grand Forks, North Dakota

Interagency Coordination for 1997 Flood Response

Federal, state and local communication and cooperation among key agencies began with the incident and carried through to beyond the point the city was inundated.

Agency Coordination:

During the flood fight, technical assistance was provided to the city and its various departments by:

- North Dakota Division of Emergency Management
  - a) Emergency planning & resources
  - b) State Radio served as answering point for 911 emergency calls
- North Dakota National Guard
  - a) Evacuation
  - b) Rescue
  - c) Security
  - d) Transportation and aerial reconnaissance
  - e) Public Affairs
  - f) Water purification
- North Dakota Department of Health
  - a) Public health & safety
  - b) Disease control
- North Dakota State Water Commission
  - a) Emergency Dike construction
  - b) Engineering expertise
- University of North Dakota
  - a) Facility support
  - b) Media support
  - c) Some food service
  - d) Security
  - e) Equipment and office furniture
  - f) Physical plant personnel
- U.S. Air Force, Grand Forks Air Force Base
  - a) Equipment to support firefighting efforts
  - b) Security
  - c) Housing for the largest emergency shelter (run by Red Cross)
  - d) Public Affairs
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
  - a) Engineering support for temporary dike construction
  - b) Management of emergency functions that were mission-assigned through FEMA

(cont. on pg.2)

- U.S. Coast Guard
  a) Search and rescue
  b) Transportation
- U.S. Marshal's Service
  a) Security
- Environmental Protection Agency
  a) Hazardous materials identification & removal
- U.S. Public Health Service
  a) Identification and technical support re: serious public health threats
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
  a) Provided mobile emergency response support and command center that was used to augment the city/county Emergency Operations Center. Mobile Command Center features included free-standing telephone equipment & service, power supplies, briefing room, television monitoring, satellite link for interactive meetings
  b) Telecommunications experts
  c) High-level emergency coordinating officer to help facilitate local requests (via state) for federal resources
  d) Comprehensive Public Affairs function (see details under communication section)
  e) Infrastructure
- National Weather Service
  a) River levels
  b) Weather forecast information
- American Red Cross
  a) Food
  b) Emergency Shelters
  c) Assistance with citizens' emergency needs
- Numerous volunteer and non-profit agencies including United Way, Humane Society, Salvation Army, church organizations

Agency Communication:

Two critical communication elements were present during the response:

1) **Establishing and maintaining emergency disaster information for the general public**
2) **Interactive communication among city, county, state and federal agencies.**

Some methods used to address these elements were:

- City/County appointed a public affairs officer (PAO) to handle media inquiries and to disseminate critical emergency disaster information.

- FEMA Public Affairs supported the local public affairs operation by:
  a) Providing trained public affairs specialists in the fields of radio, television and print media to assist needs assessed by the local PAO including news releases, flyers, etc.
  b) Providing satellite time and technical equipment to help disseminate disaster information when local resources were unable to function normally because studios were taking on water and because of power outages throughout the city
  c) Establishing and managing media pools to give local, regional, national and international media controlled access to restricted disaster areas
  d) Supporting the EOC operation with a public affairs officer who developed an internal communications plan and who supplied updated disaster information to key management and to the media
  e) Coordinating hourly radio updates from the EOC.
- Daily press conferences were held, featuring key officials from appropriate agencies.
- Daily meetings were conducted by the Mayor where key city, county, state and federal staff reported on the status of their respective operations. This not only provided good internal communication but helped to coordinate efforts and deal with future planning.

Lessons Learned:

- Successfully managing an emergency or disaster comes from good advance planning, training, developing relationships with key agencies ahead of the event, honest communication, working out problems in private and whenever possible, presenting a united front to the public.
- Attitudes of local leaders set the tone for the disaster – both internally and externally. Leaders who appear strong, calm and reassuring send the message that the emergency can be overcome and the community will survive.
- It's important to set realistic expectations of what government can and cannot do for its citizens. On any level, it cannot make people whole.
- Internal communication among emergency workers is just as critical as external communication.
- The ability to be flexible and innovative in managing the emergency is important to the overall success of the operation.
- Good public affairs support is necessary to ensure that clear and concise information is being provided to the community and to manage the demands of the media (i.e. information, access to disaster area, interviews with key officials, etc.)
- Enlist professional help in monitoring internal morale and responding to signs of critical incident stress. Physical and emotional burnout is common on large and/or extended disasters.
- Conduct an after-action session to examine what went right and what went wrong. Adjust future plans accordingly.

State Agency Summaries of After Action Reports for the 1997 Flood Disaster

North Dakota Aeronautics Commission

During the winter and spring disasters of 1997, the Aeronautics Commission provided air transportation for state agency personnel. The Aeronautics Commission was most often required to respond on short notice, therefore, it was necessary for the commission to stay updated on the weather reports and airport conditions. In the future, the Aeronautics Commission would like to see airports/air transportation utilized more in the overall disaster emergency plan because many times travel by air is the only transportation available.

North Dakota Association of Counties

As a stable grass roots form of government, volunteer counties provide numerous services, which establish the framework that help society to function. The disaster conditions of 1997 caused counties to stretch their budgets even further to meet the demands of these extreme conditions. The disasters had the largest impact on three integral county service areas: rural transportation, social services, and public safety. It is in these areas that counties experience the greatest costs and management difficulties in times of disasters. Although federal and state assistance helps cover a certain percentage of the initial cost impacts, counties are responsible to cover remaining costs using their own resources with property taxing authority virtually frozen at current levels.

The North Dakota Association of Counties developed two programs to directly help those counties affected by flooding. The Counties Helping Counties program was a way for counties in need of goods or services to get in contact with other counties who could provide services. The other program, the County Employee Relief Fund, was designed to allow county employees to make tax-deductible monetary donations directly to flood-affected county employees.

Based on survey data from 30 counties, it has been projected that total response costs were approximately $11 million and recovery costs will be in excess of $18.7 million. These figures, however, do not include any major facility reconstruction or demolition costs.

North Dakota Department of Agriculture

Agriculture, North Dakota's number one industry, has suffered the largest blow of any sector of the state's economy at the hands of Mother Nature during the winter and spring of 1996-97. More than 123,000 head of cattle perished, over five million pounds of milk were destroyed, and close to one million acres of prime farmland were left unplanted as a result of the winter storms and spring flooding that ravaged the State.

Farmers and ranchers not only experienced livestock and crop production losses, but suffered damage to farm buildings, machinery, and stored crops. Direct losses to farmers and ranchers totaled more than $250 million, with estimated additional indirect losses expected to reach over $600 million.

The North Dakota Department of Agriculture took quick and decisive action to help North Dakota farmers and ranchers during these disastrous and difficult times. As the disaster progressed, the Department of Agriculture activated the Agriculture Snow Emergency Task Force and began to take action to coordinate agricultural assistance efforts. Some of the other programs that were utilized include the Animal Carcass Disposal Program, the Help Your Farm Neighbor Relief Fund, the Cattlemen Coping with Winter mailing, the Pesticide Fertilizer and Agricultural Chemical Clean-up, the Oklahoma and Iowa Fence Post and Fencing Materials Donation, the Livestock Indemnity Program Documentation, the North Dakota Agricultural Mediation Service, the Rural Survival Task Force, the Disaster Assistance Web Page, the Adopt-A-Farm Family Program, and the establishment of the Agriculture Disaster Response Center.

Coordinating and establishing these services helped to ensure unified and direction action on the part of agencies and organizations directly responsible for providing assistance to farmers and ranchers. It also helped clarify and communicate the roles of various U.S. Department of Agriculture programs and other federal programs, which provided assistance to farmers and ranchers.

Attorney General's Office

The Attorney General is the chief legal and law enforcement officer of the State of North Dakota. The Attorney General is responsible for protecting the rights of North Dakota, to defend the actions of state officials, and to ensure public order. In response to the flood in the Red River Valley, the Attorney General's Office initiated rapid actions to protect North Dakota citizens from fraudulent activities that frequently follow natural disasters and assist the local criminal justice agencies and fire service. Divisions of the Attorney General's Office, which directly participated in the flood response and recovery, include the State Fire Marshal, the Licensing Section of the Criminal Regulatory Division, Consumer Protection and Antitrust, the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, the Gaming Division, the State and Local Government and Natural Resources and Indian Affairs Legal Divisions, and the Administration and Finance and Attorney General Administration.

The Attorney General's Office also undertook substantial efforts to establish the "One-Stop Shop" for transient merchant and contractor licensing. The purpose of this program was to streamline the state and city processes for transient merchants and contractors and to provide some protection to Grand Forks citizens from unscrupulous businesses through the use of criminal background checks. In conducting the minimal background checks, more than 20 arrests were made for outstanding warrants. Additionally, approximately 24 illegal aliens were identified and detained.

Participation in the establishment of the "One-Stop Shop" for transient merchant and contractor licensing involved the participation of more than eight federal, state, and local agencies. Cooperation among agencies that established the Shop was exemplary. Working closely with those agencies, the legal divisions of the Attorney General's Office were able to identify issues which could be addressed through legal agreements and assistance. Having legal staff on hand with a working knowledge of how the operation was progressing allowed for timely responses and advice.

Department of Banking and Financial Institutions

The impact to North Dakota financial institutions due to the spring blizzard was statewide. Nearly all financial institutions in the city of Grand Forks were either national banks, federal savings and loan associations, or federal credit unions, which the Department of Banking and Financial Institutions does not supervise. There are three small state-chartered unions, however, located in Grand Forks.

In response to the flood, the Department of Banking and Financial Institutions generated and updated a listing showing the status for returning financial services to customers due to financial institutions' main offices and facilities being disrupted by flooding or evacuation orders. This information was sent to all financial institutions in the Ninth Federal Reserve District, the American Red Cross, and was to be available to others making inquiry. The listing also includes telephone numbers or special "hotlines" that have been established for customer use.

The Department's examiners were instructed to encourage lenders to work with borrowers by deferring loan payments and crafting loan terms and agreements to accommodate borrowers situations. Further, examiners were asked to use leniency in assessing loan collateral margins for borrowers impacted by the flood.

Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

When the National Weather Service declared that the Red River would crest in Grand Forks at 49 feet, many volunteers helped sandbag, in order to make the existing dikes high enough the handle the predicted crest. By March, the Grand Forks Community Service/Restitution Program (GFCSRP), the Wahpeton District Parole/Probation Office, and the RESTORE program in Fargo, began referring court-ordered community service clients and parole/probation offenders to help in the sandbagging efforts. In total, 55 persons completed approximately 4,443 hours of community service toward the sandbagging and flood fighting effort.

After the City of Grand Forks was evacuated, 51 inmates at the Grand Forks Correctional Center had to be relocated to other correctional facilities. At the State Penitentiary, off duty staff assisted with processing and setting up housing for some of the displaced inmates. Inmates were temporarily housed in the infirmary, orientation unit, womens' unit, and a unit in the women's gymnasium. Cots were borrowed from the National Guard and mattresses were brought up from the Missouri River Correctional Center. Other jails in the area agreed to accept 21 of the inmates and additional inmates were released by court order on April 24 and 25.

In an effort to make contact with parole and probation clients, the Grand Forks adult parole/probation office re-

routed all calls to the Grand Forks Office to the Bismarck Central Office. In addition, a temporary office was sent up in Larimore, North Dakota, an ad was placed in the Grand Forks Herald, requesting all parole/probation offenders assigned to the Grand Forks Office to contact the Larimore Office, local radio stations announced that all parole/probation offenders were to contact the Larimore Office, officers performed home checks for criminal offenders, and officers used answering machines in their residences for offender check ins. By July 1, 1997, nearly all of the criminal offenders assigned to the Grand Forks adult parole and probation office were accounted for. For those offenders who are still unaccounted for, bench warrants have been issued for their arrest.

Economic Development And Finance

To help the business community recover from the flood, Economic Development and Finance, along with other partners in the "One Stop Capital Center" met with local lenders, developers and primary sector business owners to find out where help was needed and where there were financial gaps. From these meetings, it was determined that the needed assistance was in short term working capital. In responding to this need, the Development Fund and Technology Transfer, Inc. boards restructured existing loans and delayed principal/interest payments. The Development Fund also established a $2 million disaster recovery fund to help businesses recover financially.

Economic Development and Finance hired Flour Daniel Consulting Firm to provide a basis for planning the states economic future. The consultants met with local lenders in Devils Lake and Grand Forks to develop recovery strategies and recommend possible adjustments to existing economic development strategies. Further, Economic Development and Finance committed $9,000 to match federal funding to help the Procurement Assistance Center work with North Dakota companies to receive federal contracts for work or services and it has paid per diem expenses for Small Business Development Center consultants to come to North Dakota to help local businesses recover from the flood.

North Dakota State Electrical Board

The North Dakota State Electrical Board is responsible for safeguarding people and property from electrical hazards arising from the use of electricity for light, heat, and power. In response to the flood, the State Electrical Board immediately drafted a policy for flood damaged electrical work, and met with all electrical contractors in Grand Forks to go over policies and answer questions as to the proper procedures the contractors were to follow.

In addition, the Board coordinated with Northern States Power, Cass County Electric, and Nodak Electric to determine the number of homes and businesses that were inundated by flood waters. Volunteer electricians were used to verify dry basements, while retired electricians were hired and trained to be electrical inspectors.

North Dakota Forest Service

North Dakota experienced excessive spring flooding in 1997. Trees were inundated with water for prolonged periods of time, damaged by large ice flows, or destroyed during emergency dike building operations. Native forest areas were also negatively affected by the seasonal flooding. Devils Lake reached a record level of 1,442.22 feet above sea level on June 18, 1997, which flooded an additional 200,000 trees. Since 1993, the lake has inundated more than 900,000 trees.

In the Red River Valley, it is estimated that 5,000 community trees, valued at over $525,000, were damaged or destroyed. Most of the trees destroyed during the flood were less than three inches in diameter and planted within the last five years in parks, subdivisions, and city nurseries along river corridors. The heaviest losses were from mechanical damage caused by large sheets of ice or flood debris shearing off young trees and from emergency dike building efforts within and adjacent to the planted trees.

In Devils Lake, submerged trees and floating debris from dead trees are threatening boaters and other water-based recreation users on the lake. The loss of trees along the water's edge will also have a negative ecological impact on the lake. Woodlands in riparian areas are important because trees stabilize soils, provide critical wildlife habitat and act as filters for pollution prevention. In an effort to replace the forestry in flood damaged communities, the North Dakota Community Forestry Council, which is responsible for advising the State Forester on the administration of the state community forestry program, has decided to give priority to flood communities in the grant application process for America the Beautiful (ATB) and Community Transportation Enhancement (CTE) grant programs.

In large flood damaged communities, "green spaces" will be developed along the river corridor. The concept is to reestablish the natural floodplain that existed prior to the communities development. Homes within this area will be removed, and native vegetation resistant to flood damage will be established. The North Dakota Forest Service will play an integral role in reestablishing these by providing financial and technical assistance.

North Dakota Game and Fish

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department is responsible for managing the fish and wildlife resources and habitats and activities that affect those resources. In addition, the Game and Fish Department has regulatory oversight and enforcement of water safety regulations. The Law Enforcement Division of the Game and Fish Department has eight qualified, trained, and equipped divers who perform rescue and recovery missions, underwater investigation and numerous underwater environmental monitoring activities.

During the 1997 spring flood, the Game and Fish Department assisted in the evacuation and security in and around Grand Forks. For five days immediately after the Red River overflowed its banks, eleven field wardens and one supervisor conducted several missions, using department boats and aircraft in the Grand Forks area. These missions included assisting the evacuation of governmental offices, assisting individual citizens with evacuation, conducting night surveillance in flooded areas using Game and Fish boats, escorting VIPs into the flooded areas by boat, and performing aerial surveillance to prevent looting.

North Dakota Geological Survey

The North Dakota Geological Survey has been studying floods in the Red River Valley since 1965. These studies involve documenting past flood events as well as predicting areas of inundation at various water levels. In addition, the Survey has been involved in several studies of the Devils Lake area over the last 100 years.

Since the flood, the North Dakota Geological Survey has been monitoring the extent of the inundation from the 1997 floods in the Red River Valley and comparing the areal extent of the flood to the Survey's earlier predictions. In addition, the Survey has provided technical information to federal, state, and local government agencies to examine the feasibility of building either a diversion tunnel or new system of dikes.

North Dakota Department of Health

The North Dakota Department of Health plays an integral role in protecting the health of North Dakotans. When flooding began in Grand Forks, department staff members responded to immediate public health needs such as maintaining sanitary living conditions, relocating nursing home residents who were forced out of their homes during the emergency evacuation, and restoring the city's drinking water system. The State Health Officer assisted the medical community with evacuation of the medical part complex, provided on-site support to community and public health officials and worked with community, state, and federal agencies to coordinate emergency and primary health care services.

Many divisions of the Department of Health were active in preparation, response and recovery efforts before the flooding occurred. In early spring, the Division of Microbiology requested funding to purchase larvicide in anticipation of increased mosquito counts due to flooding. Employees in the health department's Division of Disease Control worked with local public health departments to encourage tetanus immunizations among potential flood victims. The Preventative Health Section declared that dead cattle in waterways constituted a public health threat, and FEMA funding was made available for cattle removal. Thereafter, the Division of Water Quality assisted in the removal and farm-site burial of 954 cattle that had frozen to death in the state's streams, rivers, and lakes. This division also assisted in the burial of an additional 13,768 cattle to avoid potential health hazards.

After the flooding, Department of Health staff members worked with FEMA and the Grand Forks Public Health Department to prepare 25,000 cleanup kits that would supplement supplies donated through the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army. In addition, nearly every division of the department was instrumental in flood recovery efforts. For instance, the Division of Waste Management worked with the Corps of Engineers to develop a plan for debris removal in Grand Forks and assisted the EPA in establishing a household hazardous waste collection and disposal program. The Division of Environmental Engineering was active in coordinating with OSHA to advise contractors about proper respiratory precautions during clean-up activities, providing oversight

inspections of contractors to ensure worker safety, and inspecting asbestos removal work sites to ensure worker safety and compliance with asbestos regulations.

North Dakota Highway Patrol

The North Dakota Highway Patrol (NDHP) is the functional coordinator for public safety. The agency is responsible for coordinating statewide law enforcement for the purpose of ensuring a safe environment for the citizens of North Dakota during emergency or disaster situations.

In response to the flood, the NDHP utilized its Emergency Mobilization Plan and activated the Tactical Response Unit. In addition, other NDHP personnel staffed the State Emergency Operations Center at Fraine Barracks, in Bismarck, which coordinates law enforcement and security operations for the area. In coordination with the Department of Transportation, the NDHP assisted in road closures, detour routes, traffic control, and escorts in the flood affected areas.

In an effort to help its own personnel, the NDHP established the "Cops Helping Cops" program, which allowed police officers from throughout the country to donate funds to assist officers who had suffered losses from the flood.

State Historical Society

The State Historical Society of North Dakota took early action when the many late winter blizzards struck and the threat of flooding became imminent. Because there are numerous historic sites, museums, galleries and historic buildings and districts along waterways, especially the Red River, the possibility of significant damage due to flooding was great. When the flood struck, the Society began to coordinate local, state, regional, and national efforts.

In response to the impending threat of flooding, the museum staff took early action by calling, writing, and working directly with historic sites, museums, zoos, and galleries throughout the state, to give them information regarding flood assistance and to determine the amount of damage these entities have sustained. In addition, the museum staff, along with the State Archivist, went to Grand Forks and spent several days working with volunteers they recruited statewide, to salvage, clean and dry most of the contents of the Grand Forks County Historical Society's damaged exhibits.

The Society's archeological and historic preservation staff efforts were directed at review of the impact of federally-funded flood relief project on cultural resources in the state. Particular efforts in Grand Forks focused on providing mapping and location information to the City of Grand Forks and FEMA regarding the location of historic properties and districts within the city's boundaries, and identifying the rest of the city that remain unsurveyed. Other efforts in Grand Forks include providing printed information to owners of historic properties regarding methods to return their historic buildings to habitable/useable status while preserving their significant historic features, and awarding the City of Grand Forks a grant to hire a staff person for the Grand Forks Historic Preservation Commission.

North Dakota Housing Finance Agency

The North Dakota Housing Finance Agency 's initial response to the flood disaster was to assist flood evacuees in locating temporary housing by obtaining waivers from HUD and the IRS to permit vacant units in HUD Section 8 and Low Income Housing Tax Credit projects to be utilized by evacuees without regard to the normal tenancy restrictions. Currently, the NDHFA continues to help flood victims with recovery, repair, and mitigation.

In assessing the impact of the flooding on NDHFA programs and participants, the NDHFA sent letters to 580 Grand Forks first-time homeowners regarding forbearance of their May home loan payment. The NDHFA also sent out a homeowners questionnaire regarding property damage assessment, the status of coverage, and the employment status of homeowners. In addition, besides extending the deadlines for several of NDHFA's programs, the NDHFA created an interest rate reduction program, the Disaster Recovery Buydown Program, which is available to households which have experienced a flood-related involuntary relocation and those which have sustained more than 50 percent damage to their principal residence.

North Dakota Department of Human Services

The North Dakota Emergency Operations Plan assigns functional coordination of individual and family assistance to the North Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS). The purpose is to provide emergency or disaster victims with services necessary to meet basic and special human needs.

The North Dakota Department of Human Services is an umbrella agency that provides human services in the areas of aging, mental health, addiction, child protection, public assistance, Medicaid, child support enforcement, and energy assistance. The Department administers its programs through eight regional human service centers, the Developmental Center, a residential facility for persons with developmental disabilities, and the North Dakota State Hospital. Economic Assistance programs are state supervised and county administered.

During the response phase of the flood, the DHS coordinated with the American Red Cross, the North Dakota Health Department, and the North Dakota Long-Term Care Association to relocate vulnerable children and adults who had been receiving care from nursing homes, basic care facilities, and home and community based programs. Additionally, the DHS applied for and received a federal waiver which simplified the process for Medicaid recipients to access medical services. Further the DHS provided technical infrastructure and technical assistance to the Grand Forks County Social Services office so it could offer displaced Grand Forks county residents Food Stamps, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Medicaid and other necessities.

Information from other states that have had similar disasters indicates North Dakota should expect increased caseloads related to child and elder abuse and neglect, alcohol, and drug abuse, mental health issues, and increasing severity of mental illness. Therefore, the DHS has funded a staff of 192 to provide crisis counseling, provided funding to locate vulnerable elderly, earmarked an additional $200,000 for the rebuilding of the Child Care System in Grand Forks, and acts as a focal point for statewide information and referral for special need social service issues.

North Dakota Insurance Department

The North Dakota Insurance Department took quick and decisive action to help Grand Forks residents impacted by the flood of 1997. During the initial weekend of the flood, the Department added a 24-hour voice mail messaging system to the Department's 800 number, revised internal staff functions to add staffing to the hotlines, created a resource file for staff to use in assisting consumers, issued a bulletin to all insurance companies with insureds in the Red River Valley requesting that they institute a policy deferring premium payments for consumers for a period of 60 days, and issued a press release regarding the use of public adjusters in the state.

Additionally, the Insurance Department participated with private interest groups and state agencies in developing and presenting a training program and videos to brief attorneys on issues and problems relative to the flood disaster. To provide direct access to consumers, the Department colocated an office in Fargo with the National Flood Insurance Program and a branch office in Grand Forks, when the residents were able to return to their homes. Finally, the Insurance Department, in conjunction with the Institute for Property Loss Reduction and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, co-sponsored a "flood insurance summit", which sought ways to enhance the flood insurance program and sales of flood insurance.

Job Service North Dakota

The evacuation of Grand Forks meant the closing of nearly all Grand Forks businesses,which represented 34,013 wage and salary jobs. It was estimated that as many as 15,000 workers would file claims for unemployment insurance as a result of the flood. As of August 15, 1997, 12,162 claims were filed; the majority in the first two weeks following the evacuation.

To provide services to the unprecedented number of people coming into Job Service offices across the state, staff in local offices worked extended hours and weekends. Offices in Grafton and Fargo experienced the greatest number of new claimants, and staff from Grand Forks, Williston, Dickinson, and Jamestown volunteered to work in those offices. Staff from the Department of Labor regional office in Denver, and employees from the Colorado state unemployment insurance division volunteered to work in the central office to help take and process claims.

The Job Service office in Grand Forks served as the headquarters for the "One-Stop Shop" licensing center for

transient merchants and contractors. In addition, a central location, phone number, contact person, and crisis management team were established within the agency to coordinate the need for help with available staff, to facilitate accurate communications, and provide a source for problem solving throughout the agency.

The Grand Forks Job Service office was not flooded, and as a result, they were one of the first agencies to be reestablished. Cleanup workers and reconstruction workers were in high demand, and up to 1800 job openings were listed in the first week after the flood. Nevertheless, there were many people without jobs who applied for unemployment insurance and continued to seek for work. More than 500 people had been employed in various occupations. The Disaster Assistance Program (DAP) has assisted in finding work for many people and it has provided thousands of labor hours towards the cleanup and restoration of the community.

Office of Management and Budget

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is composed of Fiscal Management, Information Services, Central Personnel, Central Services, Office of Intergovernmental Assistance, Facility Management, Risk Management, and State Radio.

The Fiscal Management Division of OMB serves as the central professional fiscal office of the executive branch which is responsible for statewide accounting, payroll, financial reporting, and budgeting. After the flood, Fiscal Management established special revenue and expenditure codes on the Statewide Accounting Management Information System so all expenditures related to the flood could be tracked and all revenues accounted for. In addition, Fiscal Management produced a revenue forecast to assess the impact on sales and income tax, agriculture, real estate, construction, employment, and income for the remainder of the 1995-97 biennium and for the 1997-99 biennium.

The Risk Management Division was responsible for drafting Disaster Relief Agreements between the State and the City of Grand Forks and the state and the County of Grand Forks. Risk Management also provided local authorities with authorization forms for debris removal, which the local authorities could present to private landowners prior to any debris removal activities.

The Information Services Division (ISD) assisted in establishing new telephone and data services for state and county agencies that were forced to leave their normal place of business. ISD sent a telecommunication technician to Larimore, ND, to establish data and voice services for those agencies that relocated in Larimore.

The Division of Facility Management is responsible for the development, maintenance, and preservation of the State Capitol Complex in Bismarck, North Dakota. The division also approves and keeps records of all leased office space throughout the state. During the flood, Facility Management worked with the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army to establish a collection site for flood relief donations. The division also authorized use of the visitor's parking lot to park a semi-trailer for collection of relief donations. Over a period of five weeks, 12 semi-trailer loads of recovery goods moved through the collection process.

The Central Services Division provides departments and agencies centralized services to meet user needs through the administration and management of Central Duplicating, Central Supply, Purchasing, and Surplus property. During the flood, Central Duplicating provided on demand services for necessary printed materials and forms. Surplus Property focused on obtaining sandbags, food supplies, and generators to help cope with the emergency flood needs. The Surplus Property operation organized and purchased 482,000 sandbags from Japan. State Purchasing prioritized and handled emergency purchases for state agencies.

Central Personnel's primary role in the flood was to help coordinate benefits information and to recommend the use of special benefits for employees within affected agencies. Central Personnel responded to the Governor's Office request for assistance with an overall policy direction on employee needs by preparing information and recommendations for a statewide policy.

The State Radio Communications is covered in a separate section.

North Dakota State Plumbing Board

Immediately after the Red River inundated the City of Grand Forks, the North Dakota State Plumbing Board, in cooperation with the State Health Department and local city governments, provided assistance with bringing on-line the potable water and waste water systems. After residents were able to return to their homes and begin rebuilding, the State Plumbing Board provided technical assistance to local plumbers.

Department of Public Instruction

After Grand Forks was evacuated, the Department of Public Instruction immediately requested that all North Dakota school districts accept flood displaced children as resident students for the balance of the 96-97 school term and assured school districts that they would receive foundation aid for flood displaced students enrolled at their schools. The Department also made an agreement with education officials in Minnesota and South Dakota to admit flood displaced students to their schools regardless of their state of residence.

The Department's food distribution office worked to arrange delivery and allocation of commodity foods that were donated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This food was distributed to the Red Cross and Salvation Army, which together provided more than 1.3 million meals during the duration of the flooding disaster.

The Department received a waiver from the USDA on the application process for children applying for free meal benefits. As a result, all flood-displaced children were allowed to receive free breakfasts and lunches at host schools for the duration of the 1996-97 school year without the need to submit an application. This resulted in about 2,600 children receiving 2,621 free breakfasts and 40,567 free lunches in April and May of 1997.

North Dakota Secretary of State

Under the provisions of Chapter 43-07 of the North Dakota Century Code, the Secretary of State is responsible for the licensing of contractors. As a result of the flood and in anticipation that numerous contractors and merchants would be seeking licenses to work in Grand Forks, the Secretary of State, along with the Attorney General, established a One Stop Shop licensing center at the Regional Job Service Center in Grand Forks. Other participants in the "One Stop Shop" were Job Service North Dakota and the Workers Compensation Bureau.

Besides issuing contractor and transient merchant licenses, the One-Stop Shop licensing center was also responsible for issuing photo identification badges to all contractors (whether new or existing) and all of their employees. Although ID badges had not been used in the contractor licensing process before this time, it was jointly decided among the state agencies and the city that it would be good protection for the citizens of Grand Forks if ID badges were issued. Additionally, criminal background checks were completed on each person before they were issued an ID badge. These background checks resulted in approximately 25-30 arrests for outstanding warrants.

From April 27 to May 30, 1997, the One Stop Shop issued ID cards to 1,766 employers and employees. From June 1 to July 22, 1997, the One Stop Shop and the city center issued 684 ID cards. In all, there were a total of 2,450 ID cards issued to 544 different contractors and their employees. Further from April 27 through July 22, 1997, a total of 448 contractor licenses were issued from the Office of the Secretary of State. Of these, a total of 165 licenses were issued in the Grand Forks One Stop Shop licensing center.

North Dakota State Radio Communications

North Dakota State Radio Communications (NDSRC) is the State Warning Point for emergency situations. In response to the Red River Valley flooding, NDSRC furnished additional radio equipment to law enforcement, the Division of Emergency Management, FEMA, and all others associated with the flood. After the Grand Forks Public Answering Point for 911 was forced to evacuate, all 911 calls for Grand Forks County were transferred to NDSRC. State Radio Communications handled all their 911 calls until the first week in June. Further, State Radio Communications had the law enforcement data circuits moved to the temporary locations of the Grand Forks Police Department and Sheriff's Office, along with Electronic Communications, Inc., of Bismarck, furnished the equipment to enable them to get back on line for law enforcement data communications.

When the One Stop Shop was set up for streamlining the process for transient merchants and contractors licensing, the Bureau of Criminal Investigation would fax information to State Radio Communications, who would then make inquiries on the individuals via the National Crime Information Center and the State Criminal Warrant

Information System. If information came back that an individual was wanted, State Radio Communications would notify the Bureau of Criminal Investigation. Through this process, more than 20 arrests were made and approximately 24 illegal aliens were identified.

North Dakota Tourism Department

This past spring's flood disaster in the Red River Valley had a short and long-term impact on the state's tourism industry. It was the Tourism Department's mission to help these flood stricken communities deal with immediate tourism issues, such as the closing of attractions, road reports, the canceling of events, as well as overcoming the long-term impact of decreased visitation to North Dakota due to misconceptions and fears about the flood.

The Department's primary mission was to contact industry people at the local convention and visitors' bureaus, chambers of commerce, or individual attractions to assess any damages. This included whether attractions were closed, events were canceled, and whether the closings and cancellations were temporary or permanent. This information was then passed on to potential travelers and the public. Another important tactic included contacting local people or the Department of Transportation to assess road conditions and identify what roads were closed so the Department could warn travelers and direct them to alternative routes.

The flood disaster and its prominence in the national and international media not only impacted Grand Forks, but also the entire state. The public's perception resulting from the negative publicity was that the entire state was flooded, not just Grand Forks. Therefore, in anticipation of a decrease in visitation by out of state travelers, the Department launched an aggressive in-state advertising campaign, featuring Governor Schafer, encouraging North Dakotans to vacation in "their own backyard" this summer.

The campaign was so successful that North Dakota inquiries increased 439% in June 1997 over June 1996. Several attractions throughout the state reported increased visitation ranging from 5% to 137%, with North Dakotans comprising a large percentage of the visitors. The Department also implemented a regional and national public relations campaign to begin overcoming the negative impact and misperceptions from the flood.

To help the Red River Valley with its promotional efforts, the 1998-99 State Highway map will feature many tourism opportunities existing along the banks of the Red River. Next year, the Department's tourism guides and publications will feature more heavily on the Red River Valley and another regional and national public relations campaign will be implemented.

North Dakota Tax Department

The primary function of the Office of the State Tax Commissioner is to administer taxes imposed by the North Dakota Legislature. Therefore, the Department's focus in responding to 1997's blizzard and flood related disasters was to ease the tax return filing and compliance requirements whenever possible.

The Tax Commission granted extensions for filing individual tax returns and extensions for tax withholding and sales tax returns for businesses located in Cass, Pembina, and Richland counties and for the cities of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks. During the extension periods, all penalties and interest were waived. Further the Department identified property tax statues that could be suspended by executive order allowing adjustments to property valuations by the Assessor. In doing this, the assessor could review and adjust the valuations of flood damaged property without requiring the property owner to file an application for abatement.

To help with recovery efforts, the Tax Department provided taxpayers with copies of previously filed income, sales, and income tax withholding returns needed to replace records lost during the flooding and to apply for disaster assistance. The Department also initiated payment agreements with taxpayers that were unable to pay taxes because of the disaster.

North Dakota Department of Transportation

During this past year, the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) counted nine major storms that closed down the Interstate highway system. This count included a total of 12 separate closings on either I-29 or I-94. As a result of the heavy snowfalls, the NDDOT had all 18 of its snow blowers and 13 seven ton V-plows

working in the eastern half of the state, and 320 snow plows were used across the state. Nevertheless, because of the significant amount of snow, the NDDOT received additional assistance with snow removal. The NDDOT borrowed two snow blowers from the Montana DOT, seven US Air Force snow blowers, two Air National Guard snow blowers, 30 National Guard dozers, and hired contractors. In total, approximately 1600 pieces of equipment and 450 employees were used for snow removal during the peak of the disaster.

In January alone, the NDDOT spent $2,746,866 on snow removal. After the three-day blizzard in April, $259,587 was spent on snow removal. The total for the entire winter was $5,738,335. During a normal year, however, snow removal expenses are about $2.2 million. Eligible costs for the disaster was $3,741,150 with a total reimbursement from FEMA of $2,805,863.

North Dakota State Water Commission

The State Water Commission (SWC) is responsible for the management and regulation of the use of water resources in the state of North Dakota. The SWC is divided into five divisions: Administration, Planning and Education, Water Appropriation, Water Development, and the Atmospheric Resource Board. All five divisions, and nearly all employees, were involved with and contributed significantly to the 1997 flood relief effort.

During the first two weeks of the flood, the SWC supported the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on a 24-hour basis. Working with the EOC, the SWC monitored river stages and flows, provided flood updates at daily briefings, and arranged for flood fighting equipment and supplies to areas of need. Further, the SWC coordinated with county water resource districts and county commissions on a daily basis throughout the state to provide technical information and flood stage forecasts to areas not included in the National Weather Service forecasts. When the pipe spillway for the Iverson Dam near Leeds, North Dakota, failed on April 23, 1997, SWC staff completed a dam breaching operation and used two large pumps to lower the reservoir's water level.

Other flood response efforts of the SWC engaged in were developing maps of areas inundated, modifying HEC-2 hydraulic models to identify potential inundation areas, assisting in the location and construction of the Washington Street emergency dike in Grand Forks, assisting the city of Grand Forks and the National Guard with developing an emergency water supply, and assisting the U.S. Geological Survey with stream gauging. As for recovery efforts, the SWC has met with Grand Forks officials and the Corps of Engineers to discuss alternative flood projects and locations.

In addition to assisting Grand Forks, the SWC has been very active with the Devils Lake flooding situation. As the local sponsor for the Devils Lake outlet, the SWC and the Corps of Engineers have conducted many studies and held meetings on the alternative sizes and alignment, and downstream impacts. SWC has also contributed funding to the city of Devils Lake for cost share on a flood levee projection project.

North Dakota Workers Compensation Bureau

One week after the flood, a representative from the North Dakota Workers Compensation Bureau (Bureau), along with several staff members from other state agencies, traveled to Grand Forks to establish the "One Stop Shop" merchant and contractor licensing program. Because of the significant increase in out-of-state workers and contractors doing business in Grand Forks, the Bureau decided to impose a stricter policy as to the out of state employers' minimum contacts requiring North Dakota workers compensation coverage. The stricter policy was applied to all Grand Forks registrants with employees and required the establishment of a North Dakota Workers Compensation account, regardless of their otherwise applicable "other-states" coverage. This simple, clear policy allowed faster processing of applications, simplified ongoing compliance enforcement and will promote the full reporting of all North Dakota payroll for premium collection.

From the Grand Forks location alone, the Bureau opened 101 new employer accounts. For those new accounts, the Bureau billed annual premiums of nearly $204,000 and immediately collected initial payments of almost $84,000 of that amount. In addition, the screening of contractors allowed the Bureau to collect over $40,000 of severely delinquent premiums before allowing the registration of the employer.

Home Away from Home ... and the River...brings Peace of Mind

Cliff and Eleanora Arntz had lived in their Grand Forks home for 43 years. They had raised their six children there. But when the 1997 flood devastated their city ... and their house ... the couple knew they could never return.

Not wanting to leave Grand Forks, the Arntz' voluntarily sold their flood-ravaged home to the city and moved to the west edge of town -- far from the river that swallowed their entire neighborhood. Now, the couple says, they feel safer because they no longer live in harm's way.

Securing the Future
New Permanent Dike Construction Underway

For 115 years, Grand Forks has embraced and fought the Red River of the North. Known to reach mammoth proportions from snowmelt and heavy rains, the river many times has forced the city to use both permanent and temporary levees to protect itself from floods.

But the epic '97 flood proved that even the best efforts weren't enough. Fortunately, the city already was several years into a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers study to evaluate flood-protection systems. Engineers were able to accelerate the study and design a new permanent flood-protection project that will serve Grand Forks well into the future.

To make way for the nearly $400 million project, the city acquired land and homes near the river. Construction began in 2001 and is targeted for completion in 2004. When it's finished, the city will have a sophisticated protection system that includes water diversion, a larger, higher earthen levee system and 2,200 acres of open greenway.

Don't Ask this Guy to Design an Unsafe Building...
Architect Bill Schoen Takes the High Ground on Disaster Prevention

Local architect Bill Schoen remembers the 1997 flood well. When the water receded and he had a chance to take stock of the situation, the news was grim. He was a victim not once, but *five* times.

His house and the four commercial properties he owned all flooded. By the time Schoen, now 50, repays his Small Business Administration flood-repair loans, he'll be 75 years old.

It was an experience that has changed Schoen for life.
Now he is on a mission ... to design safer buildings that
will withstand the effects of flooding and other disasters.

Since the disaster, Schoen has incorporated disaster-resistance features such as eliminating basements, elevating utilities, and incorporating waterproof membranes in both the public and private buildings he's designed. He has taken steps to protect his own properties as well.

Building by building, Schoen is changing the face of Grand Forks.

Safer, Drier, Higher...Grand Forks County Office Building

Record flooding in Grand Forks in 1997 devastated the city's downtown retail and business district. Among the casualties was the Grand Forks County Office Building, which sustained about $2.4 million in damage. Two nearby buildings, also housing county agencies were damaged as well.

When county officials chose to construct a new building, they looked for ways to build it better and minimize damage from another flood. In keeping with local floodplain ordinances, the building site was elevated 4 feet before the structure was built. As an added precaution, a special "penthouse" level was added to house the building's mechanical and electrical systems to keep them high and dry as well. The new $18.5 million structure was completed in January 2000.

Mind Your Business...
North Dakota Entrepreneur Embraces Disaster-Resistance Measures

Hal Gershman is a quick study in the classroom of natural disasters.

When Grand Forks was hit with record flooding in 1997, the warehouse for one of Gershman's liquor stores got wet too.
Floodwaters stopped a mere six inches from going inside his store and ruining about $100,000 in inventory.

Determined not to be a victim again, Gershman built a new store and adjoining plaza on a site that he first elevated about 5 feet to keep the buildings high and dry. That move not only had aesthetic benefits, he says, but it has provided critical flood protection for his own business as well the plaza's tenants.

But Gershman didn't stop there. In 2000, when he decided to build a store in Fargo, about 75 miles south and on the same unpredictable river, he elevated that site too. In the midst of construction, torrential rains flooded much of the city, including the corner intersection around Gershman's store. Because of the site elevation, the property and structure escaped flood damage. That lesson, Gershman says, proved his investment in disaster-resistance measures has paid off.

Building the Ground Up at Alerus Center

In 1995, the city of Grand Forks decided to build a state-of-art arena and convention center. Two years later, when a devastating flood brought the city to its knees, officials decided to take another look at the project, still in the contract document stage. What they found was a potential problem. The main event space originally was designed to be recessed 14 feet. Because most of the belowground spaces in Grand Forks had filled with floodwaters, city leaders opted to raise the main event space to ground level in an effort to reduce the impact of any future flooding.

The center, which opened in February 2001, now can be used in an emergency as a disaster staging area because of its size, easy ground-level access and safe distance from the river. In August 2001, it was used to shelter residents during a severe storm packing hurricane-force winds. Normally, it is used for athletic events, concerts and trade shows. The adjoining convention center features a 25,336-square-foot ballroom and 12 meeting rooms.

Downtown Corporate Center -
A Vision and One Bold Step for Grand Forks

With a downtown in shambles after an epic flood and fire, Grand Forks leaders knew they needed to take a bold step to restore the faith that their city could come back.

So the city built a two-building corporate center to replace the burned-out office space and to provide a downtown anchor that would spur other flood-recovery projects. Knowing that another flood could come someday, several features were added to the buildings to reduce future damages. The buildings are encircled by special concrete flood walls hidden behind the facades; waterproof membranes have been installed to prevent seepage; utilities have been elevated; special flood-protection barriers have been custom-made for all ground-level doorways, and an emergency generator has been upgraded and relocated to the roof to keep it well above floodwaters. The project was funded with Community Development Block Grants, Economic Development Administration funds and local revenue bonds.

A Flood Won't Stop These Presses ...
Grand Forks Herald Builds Back Better

The *Grand Forks Herald* newspaper fascinated the nation in 1997 when it valiantly continued to publish daily, despite the fact that its offices and printing plant were under siege first by flood and then fire. When the disaster was over, the *Herald* had lost the irreplaceable -- 118 years of photographs, almost as many years of news clippings, and many historic books and documents. Even before the floodwaters had receded, newspaper executives vowed to rebuild. And they took the disaster's lessons to heart by taking steps to better protect their operation from a future flood. Now, the *Herald's* new office building has been elevated 1 foot above the base flood elevation. Mechanical and electrical systems are located on an upper floor to keep them high and dry. Newspapers and some photographs now are electronically archived and stored remotely out of state. And the paper's printing operation has been relocated to a new 50,000-square-foot-building on the western side of the city, far from the river that claimed it once before. The *Herald* earned the 1998 Pulitzer Prize for public service, which recognizes excellence in community journalism, for its daily coverage of the flood despite the loss of its facility.

New Twist on an Old Tale...
Historic Phoenix Building Rises from the Flood

In 1897, the Phoenix building in downtown Grand Forks was rebuilt after a devastating fire the year before.

In 1997, a devastating flood nearly wiped it out again. But thanks to the efforts of four local businessmen, the historic building has been given new life...yet again. And this time, it has been better protected to withstand future flooding.

The building is one of three historic structures, hidden by a mid-1970s mall façade, that have been renovated as part of Grand Forks' flood recovery. To reduce future flood damages, the owners have filled in all but one of the basements (the remaining basement has been kept intact to serve as a storm shelter), elevated the utilities, installed a waterproof membrane to prevent groundwater seepage, and creating indoor parking spaces. The measures are designed to meet local floodplain ordinances governing historic structures in a floodplain. The buildings feature commercial spaces on the ground levels and spacious apartments on the upper floors.

Steaming Ahead with Disaster-Resistant Measures

The 1997 flood left little in the city of Grand Forks untouched. At the University of North Dakota, the toll to the school's buildings and equipment was about $40 million. But staggering financial losses weren't the only problem. The university's 11-mile steam line system, which heats the entire campus, 18 other buildings and the city's hospital/medical complex, was so damaged it was literally blowing up in places. School officials had no choice but to replace the entire system. The price tag: $25 million.

To protect that investment and to minimize future disruption of service, several disaster-resistant features have been added to the system -- all designed to keep dry the mineral wool insulation that surrounds the steam lines and provides protection from the intense radiant heat that the lines produce under normal conditions. Now, new manhole stations sit a foot or more above ground level to keep out surface water. From there, curved vent pipes that extend another 12 to 18 inches to further thwart water from getting to the lines. There are additional shutoff valves and floor drains. And each manhole station has been surrounded by an impervious sealant to prevent belowground seepage.

Celebrating the Past, the Present and the Future
The Grand Forks Town Square

As Grand Forks began post-flood rebuilding in 1997, residents envisioned a new downtown that would include open, positive spaces.

Urban planners on loan to the city to help with the flood recovery suggested a town square where the community could come year-round to enjoy a variety of activities. That vision led to the construction of Grand Forks' new Town Square on a prime downtown corner, which also serves as the city's gateway from neighboring Minnesota.

What is ideal about the project is that it replaces flood-damaged buildings with open space, a better use for area that is in a 100-year floodplain.

The square itself, which features vendor-style concrete booths, an elevated stage, a children's play area and a large, open center space, was constructed using flood-resistant materials and providing opportunity for water to flow right through so that both maintenance and potential damage would be minimal.

Since it's completion in the fall of 2001, the square has been home to ice skating, open-air concerts, city celebrations and a spring-summer Farmer's Market.

Story Sources: 1) *Journeys, North Dakota's Trail Towards Disaster Resistance*, published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and available online at www.fema.gov/reg-viii
2) City of Grand Forks

Disaster Resistance...
Grand Forks Water Treatment Plant Leads the Way

When an April 1997 flood hit Grand Forks, it spelled disaster for the city's infrastructure. Hard hit was the municipal water treatment plant which, despite valiant efforts, flooded from both the inside and the outside. As a result, the city was without drinkable water for 23 long days.

Determined to avoid that kind of impact again, the plant has been fortified to better withstand a future flood. Much of the facility's key infrastructure has been elevated to levels above the record '97 flood, such as the transformer, shown below.

Special flood shields, which can be attached if a flood is forecasted, have been made to fit over the ground-level doors and windows. Crucial air compressors and important records have been relocated to upper floors. An extensive flood emergency operations plan has been written to provide critical floodfighting maneuvers in a future event. And finally, the city already has begun work to gradually move the facility off the banks of the river and into an area that is at a lower risk for flooding to ensure a safer, long-term solution.

Historic Building Booms Again

For more than three years, the "Boomtown Building" patiently waited for a new home. Once located on the banks of the Red River, it had to move to make way for a new $400 million dike that will protect Grand Forks from future floods. The problem, though, was where to put the circa-1888 building, named for its rectangular "boomtown" façade.

Urban development and historic preservation officials worked tirelessly to find a solution that would preserve and protect one of the city's oldest and historically important structures. In the end, they were able to move it across and down the street from its original location. Even though that means the building still is in a floodplain, officials were able to site it on a new foundation without a basement. That effort will help lessen water damage and still preserve its historic designation. The city will sell the building with the intent that there be a first-floor commercial or retail use with an upper-floor apartment.

Keeping Disasters in Check ...
A Strong Defense for New Hockey Arena

When University of North Dakota benefactor Ralph Engelstad decided to build the school a new hockey arena, he wanted a state-of-the-art facility that would rival the best professional arenas in the country.

That meant providing a stunning design, the best equipment, quality materials and one more key factor: disaster-resistant features. The new $100 million arena is located in Grand Forks, a city that in 1997 was ravaged by blizzards, flood and fire.

To ensure that the facility better weathers future storms, Engelstad and his architects provided built-in protection from three common events in North Dakota -- blizzards, floods and wind.

To minimize flood damage, an elaborate dewatering system was installed beneath the facility's 100,000-square-foot foundation that will intercept and carry off groundwater before it reaches the structure. Also, a waterproof membrane has been added to the foundation walls to further protect against seepage. In the event of overland flooding, custom-made metal panels can be inserted into footings to keep water from running down the facility's lower-level ramp.

For added wind resistance, a heavier metal was used for the roof to minimize the chance of high winds. And to handle the big snowfalls common in North Dakota, a snow fence and electrical melting system has been added at the roof level to catch sliding snow, melt it and drain it through the building's gutter system.

Testimony of Marc H. Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League
Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
"Recovering from Hurricane Katrina: The Next Phase"
Wednesday, September 14, 2005

Chairman Collins, Senator Lieberman, esteemed members of this Committee – I am honored to have this opportunity to share with you my thoughts on how America should address the urgent and long-term needs of the survivors of Hurricane Katrina and how we should approach the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast area.

As you know, the National Urban League is the oldest community-based civil rights and direct service organization in the country. Through our 102 professionally-staffed affiliates, located in 35 states and in the District of Columbia, the National Urban League works to ensure, in a non-partisan way, economic and social parity and full civil rights for African-Americans and other people of color. I come to you today, not only as the president of this great organization, but also as the former mayor of the great city of New Orleans, the city I served from 1994 until 2002.

Until two weeks ago, few Americans could have imagined the disaster that has befallen the rural areas, the towns and villages and three of the major cities of the Gulf region.

And even fewer, I suspect, could have imagined the harrowing conditions that many endured in its aftermath throughout the area and especially in New Orleans.

But the news reports of the toll taken—and, it must be said, those that have shown Coast Guard officers and other military personnel, beleaguered police officers, and private citizens acting heroically in the face of great danger—have provoked multitudes in the U.S. and abroad to prove once again that a profound reservoir of human kindness binds human beings together far more tightly than we often otherwise acknowledge.

I saw that quality—an entire community expressing its solidarity with the victims of Hurricane Katrina—on wondrous display for myself while visiting Houston, Texas last week. I was there visiting the Astrodome, Reliant and Convention Centers, where thousands of evacuees are being housed, with Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama, Representatives Sheila Jackson-Lee and Al Green, Mrs. Barbara Bush, Governor Rick Perry, and Houston Mayor Bill White.

I was there to support former Presidents George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton who had been asked by President Bush to organize the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund to aid the evacuees. I was also there to listen to, comfort and support thousands of my former neighbors and constituents who had been through such an unspeakable ordeal and so desperately need our government's help to rebuild their lives.

All of our Urban League affiliates have mobilized to help direct resources to stricken Gulf communities and to aid evacuees coming their way. Led by our Houston affiliate, the Urban League movement has been in the forefront of the effort to find evacuees housing, jobs and other needed services.

I have been gratified and greatly moved by the tremendous outpouring of help from community-based and private organizations across the country and, indeed, around the world. But while private help is necessary and appreciated, this tragedy requires a concerted, dedicated and wholehearted response from our federal government.

Hurricane Katrina is a national tragedy of epic and unprecedented proportions. In responding to this crisis, our government's number one priority must be to help protect and restore the lives of the hundreds of thousands of citizens whose worlds have been disrupted and destroyed. We must every day and in every way put the people first.

Toward that end, the National Urban League last week laid out a "Katrina Victims Bill of Rights," which sets forth the immediate actions that Congress should take to protect the victims and ease their burdens.

The first step is to create a victims compensation fund for the hundreds of thousands of citizens injured, killed and displaced as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

Within days after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Congress passed and the president signed legislation authorizing a 9/11 victims compensation fund, which eventually provided more than $7 billion in compensation for the victims of 9/11. As it did then, Congress must take immediate and decisive action to begin compensating American citizens whose lives have been disrupted by this major national tragedy.

Second, Congress must provide for federal disaster unemployment assistance to every worker left jobless by this tragedy and provide a meaningful benefit that meets the needs of unemployed workers and their families. Half a million hardworking Americans, through no fault of their own, have been thrown out of work and, in many cases, have seen their jobs disappear altogether. We owe it to these workers to help them support their families as they struggle to get back on their feet.

Third, we must ensure that the hundreds of thousands of citizens displaced by Hurricane Katrina continue to have full voting rights in their home states. If we can see to it that Iraqi citizens living on our shores are able to vote in a war-torn land halfway across the world, we can certainly guarantee that the displaced citizens of Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi continue to have full voting rights in their home states and districts. Our displaced citizens want and deserve a voice in the rebuilding of their communities. We must not compound the tragedy visited upon them by disenfranchising them at a time when the most fundamental tool of citizenship – their right to vote – is more important to them than ever.

These are but a few of the immediate actions that must be taken to address the suffering of so many American citizens affected by the hurricane and its aftermath. But as we take these critical steps, we must also - right now - lay the groundwork for the long, complex and crucial task of rebuilding the areas devastated by Katrina.

The public and private sectors of America must imagine a new Gulf region—a region with its cities and towns and economy rebuilt, a region with its people whole again.

First, the federal government must fully commit to a Gulf-wide rebuilding effort that meaningfully includes Gulf residents in every aspect of the planning and execution – strategy, jobs, contracts, procurement, etc. This effort requires a built-in job-training component and a substantial commitment to a diverse workforce up and down the ladder in order to ensure that all of the citizens of the Gulf benefit from the billions of dollars that will be needed for its reclamation.

This can be done in a number of ways. For example, a substantial portion of jobs generated by federal funds should be reserved for residents of low-income communities affected by Katrina. Local hiring requirements should be included in rebuilding contracts and businesses that already employ significant numbers of residents from low-income communities should be given preference.

Another way is to guarantee that all jobs generated by federal funds pay a living wage and provide health benefits. The recent suspension of federal prevailing wage standards is counterproductive and should be rescinded since it will cut the pay of the people who need it most - hurricane victims who desperately need to earn a living wage.

Second, the commitment to racial and economic diversity must be especially evident in the rebuilding of New Orleans, so that the city is rebuilt substantially by those who called it home and that the vibrant diversity that made it so attractive continues.

Local and minority-owned businesses from the affected regions should receive a fair share of federally funded rebuilding contracts. This should apply to all rebuilding projects that receive federal grants, tax credits, or other financial assistance. Any state or local procurement laws that prevent such targeting of jobs and contracts should not apply to activities conducted with federal rebuilding funds. This limited action is fully consistent with the principles of Section 3 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1968, which establishes similar hiring and contracting requirements for federal housing and community development funds.

Third, there must be a national commission to study what went wrong with the early-warning system and relief effort and identify how best to protect not just New Orleans but also other cities and regions from such natural catastrophes in the future.

These broad ideas are just the beginning of the discussion that must occur in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. But they outline the shape of the only fitting memorial to its

victims—to act in a way that improves the lives of all Americans in and far beyond the Gulf.

As we face this daunting task, we must work together to move forward and think outside of the boxes that restrict and divide us. This will take commitment, focus and, most important, imagination.

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you my thoughts on the restructuring effort. I look forward to working with you in the coming months and years to revitalize the Gulf region. We are all in this together and together, we will regroup, recover and rebuild.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

14th. September 2005

A testimonial to

The United States Senate

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

By

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

On

"Recovering from Hurricane Katrina: The next phase"

The International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) would like to thank the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security for their invitation to testify at this hearing. I would first like to convey, on behalf of the President and the Secretary General of the International Federation, and on behalf of the 181 Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world, our most heart-felt thoughts to the people of the United States, and more especially to those individuals directly affected by Hurricane Katrina. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, representing the collective humanitarian force of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation and all of its 181 member national societies, is dedicated to assisting in the recovery of those impacted by the consequences of natural and man-made disasters by "mobilizing the power of humanity", as reflected in our mission statement. As a Movement, we are only too familiar with the images of these past weeks, from other disasters around the world - the Indian Ocean Tsunami, the earthquakes in Bam and Gujarat, Hurricanes Mitch, Ivan and so many others.

Although members of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement share a common mission, the nature of each disaster response can vary given the economic situation, the role of the government and other agencies, the overarching needs of the public and the capacity of the national society. In the United States, American Red Cross disaster relief focuses on meeting people's immediate emergency disaster-caused needs. Today, the American Red Cross faces the largest relief operation in its history and it is with both an honour and duty that 154 staff from 80 Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world, the International Federation and the ICRC have been asked by the American Red Cross, a founding member of our Federation, to assist them in this enormous and critical task

Equally, as the waters of disaster recede, the need to rebuild lives, property and above all hope must take priority. It is with that challenge in mind that we would like to share with you some of our experiences, lessons and observations, for your consideration as you move forward in your response efforts. The humanitarian actors may be greater in number and the economies in which they work, stronger but the principles of sustainable recovery remain the same.

What next?

Recovery link the emergency phase with the long-term development process. During the recovery process, special attention must be given not just to reconstruction of infrastructure, hospitals, schools and homes, but it has to also foster economic revitalisation and belief in a better future. This can be achieved in many ways and will likely require the participation and coordination of many different humanitarian and government actors. Such support may come in the form of support to small businesses and assistance to the local economy, credit schemes, loans and financial incentives. The first priority for victims – be they a farmer in Ethiopia, a fisherman in Sri Lanka, a waiter in New Orleans or a doctor in Iran - is to re-establish their livelihoods and to regain control over their lives. As such, they should be fully supported in the recovery of

productive assets. Attention must also be given to restoring social services and rebuilding local infrastructure. The recovery process should identify areas for initial impact and seek to support a return to normalcy, while long-term reconstruction is being organized. Nevertheless, post-disaster recovery should not be a simple restoration of pre-existing livelihoods and infrastructure. Instead, it should be treated as an opportunity to implement better development policies which strengthen the resilience of disaster prone populations against future hazards, to "Build back better," and to strengthen individual faith and confidence.

How?

- **Supporting spontaneous recovery.** Within days of even the most devastating disasters, such as those in Bam and Banda Aceh, there is a part - and often a large part - of the population whose natural resilience and positive determination motivates it to return to normal and move on. The spontaneous recovery carried out by individual communities should be recognised and supported by the recovery process and regulatory frameworks and financial resources should enable and further this spontaneous activity. Equally important to recognise, however, is that parts of a population can be rendered helpless by a traumatic event -- and recovery must therefore address both these realities. The critical role of volunteers in both response and early recovery activities is aptly demonstrated by the actions of some 80,000 American Red Cross volunteers in the Katrina response.
- **Recovery must be inclusive.** Populations both directly and indirectly affected by a disaster must be identified and taken into consideration in recovery plans. It is important to not isolate an affected population, as doing so can cause resentment and tension between those assisted and those not eligible for assistance. Recovery initiatives must be participatory. Headway in the recovery phase can been severely handicapped without the buy-in of communities affected, whether they be contemplating the reconstruction of the World Trade Centre in New York City, recovering from a Tsunami in a remote fishing village in Papua New Guinea, or rebuilding shelter following an earthquake, even in Bam, Iran where a highly centralised form of management might have been anticipated. Affected communities need to feel a genuine sense of ownership and a role in determining what will become their new community. After Hurricane Mitch, the Gujarat earthquake, and in almost all post-disaster communities, some form of national consultation, involving community groups and leaders, was included in the recovery process.
- **Recovery must be sustainable.** Recovery efforts must help build capacity at the local, regional and national level. They should seek to support and strengthen local governance mechanisms and to build the resilience of those affected through activities such as income generation, vocational training, employment and credit. Post-disaster recovery interventions need to be timely in order to be effective. Yet, at the same time, recovery efforts – and authorities implementing them – should not be driven purely by the need to "do something fast". The opportunity to review existing policies, improve risk reduction, disaster preparedness, response plans, and hazard and risk mapping and emergency training is critical. In fact, the need to do so will never reach a more aware public than at this stage. Communities should be rebuilt to be more resilient to natural hazards, and previous environmental, industrial or social risk factors can be mitigated or even eliminated thanks to heightened political support. Rebuilding communities and lives without addressing the underlying causes of the devastation – whether weak construction in Turkey, unplanned urbanisation in Venezuela, or unprepared populations in the Indian Ocean – would be tantamount to humanitarian malpractice.
- **Recovery must be needs-based.** Recovery must take into account the specific vulnerabilities of certain populations and the specific challenges faced by particular groups. Natural disasters primarily and most critically affect the poor and vulnerable, and can further entrench poverty. Recovery must avoid creating the same inequities that existed before. In most situations where Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies work, it is clear that a gender dimension must be mainstreamed into recovery plans. Sensitive issues around cultural, tribal, racial or ethnic divides further complicate the process - but cannot be ignored without reinstating or even aggravating previous inequities.

Critical Factors:

- **Ensuring a Coordinated Response:** To establish a coordinated effort in the midst of a disaster is difficult, and often seemingly impossible. However, when achieved, coordination lays the foundation for effective response by authorities at local, regional and national levels. Coordination involves building long-term relationships and sharing information platforms between humanitarian operators, public authorities, funding institutions and donors, and above all the very public and communities affected. When roles and responsibilities of response agencies and actors are clearly defined and publicly understood, coordination is a more likely outcome rather than a 'hoped-for' result.
- **Building Back Better:** Regardless of how devastating, every disaster offers a unique opportunity to build back better homes and schools, and to establish new livelihoods, opportunities, and hope. Ironically in some cases, the disaster itself helps break the cycle of poverty through improved infrastructure. In Afghanistan and Angola, better schools have meant not just new buildings, but also green space, play areas, and less crowded classrooms. In countries impacted by Hurricane Mitch, Red Cross efforts helped improve living conditions, and in Bangladesh and Vietnam, our coastal mangrove planting projects improved the environment and strengthened resistance to cyclones. "Building Back Better" also means more trade opportunities - such as the possibility proposed by former President Clinton in his current role as the UN Special Envoy for the Indian Ocean Tsunami - to invigorate the housing construction business and trade conditions through the rebuilding of Tsunami-affected communities.
- **Relocating Displaced Populations:** Relocating affected populations - from and back to devastated areas - is fraught with sensitivity. Some of the displaced will never return, while some will never leave, and both extremes must be managed during the recovery process. Special attention must be paid to the needs of the 10-15% of the displaced population who are particularly vulnerable and often fall through the gaps. The loss, fragmentation and dislocation of families can have long-term psychological and social risks. The man in Bam who refused to leave the pile of rubble that was once his home and under which his family lay is no different from the resident of New Orleans, who still today, seeks to remain in his flooded house. The process of relocation is often knotted in security issues, evacuation dilemmas, land rights and titles, and often feelings of threat and jealousy from host populations. Public authorities can be challenged by the simultaneous need to find new land, assess environmental and other disaster risks, and assuring a source of work, education and transportation for the displaced population. Transitions from sudden homelessness, to temporary, semi-permanent, and finally permanent accommodation are sensitive.
- **Involving the business and private sectors in disaster management:** The Indian Ocean Tsunami has demonstrated, more than ever, that the business and private sectors have a significant role to play in post-disaster recovery. While this may seem natural in developed countries, in those less developed it is a new and promising source of aid. Opportunities exist for logistical, material, technological and technical support from the private sector. The provision of financial and human resources can be an important input in the context of broader and longer-term cooperation and partnership.

Finally, a word from Johan Schaar, Special Representative of the International Federation's Secretary General for the tsunami operations, "Whether Katrina was America's tsunami is debatable, what is true of both, and is so in most disasters, is the endless grief of those who lost loved ones, the courage of the rescue, relief workers and tens of thousands of volunteers and the selfless generosity of strangers who opened their doors and gave of themselves to help those in need." All those devastated by disaster or conflict - be they Iraqi, Iranian, Caribbean, Indonesian, or American - have the same need for dignity, community, privacy, and above all for the belief that a better life awaits them.

WRITTEN STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
JIM HAYNIE, PRESIDENT
(ARRL)
THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AMATEUR RADIO
BEFORE THE
SENATE HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

WASHINGTON, DC
SEPTEMBER 14, 2005

Madam Chairwoman Collins and Ranking Member Lieberman, as President of ARRL, the National Association for Amateur Radio, it gives me great pleasure to provide this statement for the record to the Committee on the successful efforts of Amateur Radio operators providing communications for First Responders, Disaster Relief agencies, and countless individuals in connection with the Hurricane Katrina relief effort. As has been proven consistently and repeatedly in the past, when communications systems fail due to a wide-area or localized natural disaster, Amateur Radio works, right away, all the time. This report is not, therefore, a statement of concern about what must be changed or improved. It is, rather, a report on what is going right, and what works, in emergency communications in the Gulf Coast, and what can be depended on to work the next time there is a natural disaster, and the times after that.

Right now, an all-volunteer "army" of approximately 1,000 FCC-licensed Amateur Radio operators is providing continuous high-frequency, VHF and UHF communications for State, local and Federal emergency workers in and around the affected area in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. These communications are provided for served agencies such as the American National Red Cross and the Salvation Army, and to facilitate interoperability between and among these agencies; First Responders; FEMA, VOAD (National Volunteers Active in Disasters) and other agencies. Trained volunteer Amateur Radio operators are also providing health and welfare communications from within the affected area to the rest of the United States and the world. In the past week, the Coast Guard, the Red Cross, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency all put out calls for volunteer Amateur Radio operators to provide communications, because phone lines and cell sites were inoperative, and public safety communications facilities were overwhelmed due to loss of repeater towers and the large number of First Responders in the area. Amateur Radio operators responded *en masse*: Approximately 200 Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) trained communicators responded to the Gulf Coast in the past week. The Red Cross has now said, a week after they issued the call, that they have enough radio operators and Amateur Radio communications facilities. The number of Amateur Radio operators providing communications in the three States, either deployed or awaiting relief duty on-site or at a reserve facility in Montgomery, Alabama, swelled from 800 to 1,000 in a week. Many more thousands of radio amateurs outside the affected area are regularly monitoring radio traffic and relaying thousands of messages concerning the welfare and location of victims.

The principal reason why Amateur Radio works when other communications systems fail during natural disasters is that Amateur Radio is not infrastructure-dependent, and is decentralized. Amateurs are trained in emergency communications. They are disciplined operators, and their stations are, in general, portable and reliable. High-frequency Amateur Radio communications, used substantially in this emergency communications effort, require no fixed repeaters, cable or wirelines. Portable repeaters for VHF and UHF communications can be provided via mobile facilities (many Amateur Radio groups have deployed communications vans in the Gulf Coast for precisely this purpose) in affected areas instantly. There are now approximately 670,000 licensees of the FCC in the Amateur Service at present, which assures the presence of Amateur stations in most areas of the country. Emergency communications are conducted not only by voice, but also by high-speed data transmissions using state-of-the-art digital communications software known as *WinLink*. As Motorola's Director of Communications and Public Affairs stated yesterday: "Amateur Radio communications benefit us all by having a distributed architecture and frequency agility that enables you to set up faster in the early phases of disaster recovery and can provide flexible and diverse communications...Motorola believes that the Amateur Radio spectrum provides valuable space for these important communications."

In Mississippi, FEMA dispatched Amateur Radio operators to hospitals and evacuation shelters to send emergency calls 24 hours per day. At airports in Texas and Alabama, radio amateurs track evacuees and notify the Baton Rouge operations center of their whereabouts so their families will be able to find them. Amateur Radio operators in New Orleans participated directly in locating stranded persons, because local cellphone calls could not be made by stranded victims due to the inoperative wireline systems in the area. The Red Cross deploys qualified amateur radio volunteers at its 250 shelter and feeding station locations, principally in Mississippi, Alabama and northern Florida.

The local 911 operators could not handle calls from relatives calling in from outside the affected area, so they passed those "health and welfare" inquiries to amateur radio operators stationed at the 911 call centers, for relay of information back to New Orleans to facilitate rescue missions for stranded persons.

Amateur Radio has provided a communications link between Coast Guard helicopters and emergency centers because the ambulance crews couldn't contact the helicopters directly. In Texas, Amateur Radio operators are working 24 hours per day in the Astrodome in Houston and the Reliant Center next door, and as well in the Harris County Emergency Operations Center. In San Antonio, at the Kelly Air Force Base, radio amateurs from Montana are providing local and national health and welfare communications for evacuees. These examples are repeated throughout the Gulf Coast and in the cities in the southern states receiving large numbers of evacuees.

The Salvation Army operates its own Amateur Radio communications system using Amateur Radio volunteers, known as SATERN. In the Hurricane Katrina effort, SATERN has joined forces with the federal SHARES program (SHAred RESources), which is a network of government, military and Military Affiliate Radio Service (MARS) radio stations. MARS is an organized network of Amateur Radio stations affiliated with the different branches of the armed forces to provide volunteer communications. SATERN has, in the Katrina relief effort, received

over 48,000 requests for emergency communications assistance, and the affiliation with the SHARES program allows the Salvation Army to utilize Federal frequencies to communicate with agencies directly. This is but one example of the innovative and reliable means by which Amateur Radio right now provides organized interoperability on a scope far beyond that now being planned for local and State public safety systems.

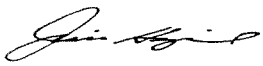
Amateur Radio is largely invisible to both the FCC and to Congress on a daily basis, because it is virtually self-regulating and self-administered. It is only during emergencies that the Amateur Radio Service is in the spotlight. At other times, emergency communications and technical self-training and advancement of telecommunications technology occupy licensees' time. For the first time ever, in recognition of the work of Amateur Radio Operators in this Hurricane Relief effort, the Corporation for National And Community Service (CNCS), which provides strategic critical support to volunteer organizations which in turn provide services to communities, has made a $100,000 grant supplement to ARRL to support the Katrina emergency communications efforts in the Gulf Coast. This enables ARRL to reimburse to a small degree, on a per diem basis, some of the expenses that radio amateurs incur personally in traveling to the Gulf Coast to volunteer their time and effort. The CNCS grant is an extension of ARRL's three-year, Homeland Security training grant, which has to date provided certification in emergency communication training protocols to approximately 5,500 Amateur Radio volunteers over the past three years.

ARRL wishes to commend the FCC's Enforcement Bureau for its efficient and successful efforts during the ongoing Hurricane relief in monitoring the Amateur Radio High Frequency bands to prevent or quickly remedy incidents of interference.

The Committee should be aware that this vast volunteer resource is always at the disposal of the Federal government. The United States absolutely can rely on the Amateur Radio Service. Amateur Radio provides immediate, high-quality communications that work every time, when all else fails.

Respectfully submitted,

ARRL, THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
FOR AMATEUR RADIO



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Testimony
of
The International Bottled Water Association

Submitted to
The U. S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Recovering From Hurricane Katrina: The Next Phase

September 14, 2005

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Introduction

The International Bottled Water Association (IBWA) welcomes the opportunity to provide the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs with the bottled water industry's perspective on relief efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast of the United States, and suggestions on how to improve the current system to provide quality, safe drinking water to those in need during future natural disasters or other catastrophic events.

IBWA is the trade association representing all segments of the bottled water industry. Founded in 1958, IBWA member companies include U.S. and international bottlers, distributors and suppliers. IBWA is committed to working with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which regulates bottled water as a packaged food product, and state governments to set stringent standards for safe, high quality bottled water products. In addition to FDA and state regulations, the Association requires member bottlers to comply with the IBWA Code of Practice, which mandates additional standards that in some cases are more stringent than federal and state regulations. Under the IBWA Code of Practice, each bottled water plant must undergo an annual, unannounced inspection by an independent, third-party organization. The vast majority of bottling facilities in the United States are operated by IBWA member companies and subject to the IBWA Code of Practice requirements and annual inspection program.

1. The Bottled Water Industry Has Always Been at the Forefront of Disaster Relief Efforts

Clean, safe water is a critical need for citizens and first responders immediately following a natural disaster or other catastrophic event. Unfortunately, the availability of water from public water systems is often compromised in the aftermath of such an event. During these times, bottled water is the best option to deliver clean safe drinking water quickly into affected areas.

The bottled water industry has always been at the forefront of relief efforts during natural disasters and other catastrophic events. Throughout the years, bottled water companies have immediately responded to the need for clean water after natural disasters, such as Hurricanes Andrew, Charlie, and Katrina, or the terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center. The bottled water industry looks to IBWA to help coordinate activities with state and federal government agencies and organizations, such as the American Red Cross and Salvation Army. Working together, we determine the quickest and most effective way to deliver safe bottled water into affected areas to augment other relief efforts.

An example of this experience was the bottled water industry's response to the September 11, 2001, attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center. IBWA worked with the Salvation Army in identifying a staging area in Northern Virginia for bottled

water being delivered to the Pentagon. The industry began shipping product to that staging area in the afternoon of September 11, 2001. In addition, IBWA identified one of its member companies' facilities (Snowbird Spring Water in Jersey City, NJ,) on the western shore of the Hudson River as a staging area for bottled water being delivered across the river to "ground zero" in New York City. IBWA then notified its member bottlers of this location and they began shipping bottled water to the facility before the end of the day. IBWA also worked with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and National Guard so that bottled water and other goods could be staged at the facility and transported into New York City.

Bottled water companies have also worked with municipal water systems to provide the public with clean, safe bottled water when the public drinking water infrastructure is compromised or when the water does not meet state and federal health standards. An example of such a situation occurred last year in Washington, DC, when lead levels in some parts of the public water supply exceeded the action level set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Bottled water and point-of-use systems were used to meet the drinking water needs in the affected area until the Washington Area Sanitation Commission was able to reduce the lead levels to meet EPA standards.

2. The Bottled Water Industry Has Experience Working with the Department of Homeland Security

IBWA and the bottled water industry take their role in natural disasters and other catastrophic events extremely seriously. IBWA has been working closely with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and FDA since the passage of the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 (the Bioterrorism Act) (Pub. L. No. 107-188). IBWA has assisted the agencies in addressing security, response plans, and infrastructure protection for critical sectors of the U.S. economy (specifically the food and agriculture sector). In fact, IBWA attended the initial DHS meeting to organize the food and agriculture sector into a coordinating council that has since become known as the Food and Agriculture Sector Coordinating Council (FASCC). Because of its participation in the FASCC, IBWA has key staff registered with DHS for contact in the case of nationally designated disasters and need for bottled water.

In continuing the bottled water industry's partnership with the federal government, a representative of the DHS recently briefed the IBWA Board of Directors and Committee members on the National Infrastructure Protection Plan and National Response Plan. In addition, IBWA was invited to participate in the DHS TOPOFF 3 exercise in Trenton, NJ, which was aimed at testing the federal, state and industry response to a biological attack. In the TOPOFF 3 exercise, IBWA was requested to respond to the need for safe drinking water in the aftermath of the simulated attack. IBWA provided participants in the exercise with information on how the bottled water industry would have responded. IBWA also outlined the well-established response by the bottled water industry that has been executed effectively time and time again.

IBWA is an active member of the Manufacturers and Processors Sub-Council of the FASCC. As a member of the Sub-Council, IBWA has access to the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) that was designed to facilitate communication with the food and agriculture sector on infrastructure protection and disaster response issues. This system includes communications to prepare for and respond to hurricanes and other events of interest to the food and agriculture sector.

In addition, IBWA was the first food industry to complete a CARVER + Shock security risk analysis with the FDA, representatives of state health agencies, and members of the bottled water industry as part of the federal government's critical infrastructure protection plan. IBWA continues to work with government partners in reducing potential security risks to the bottled water industry. These efforts include research on potential countermeasures, increasing public awareness of the results of the analysis and countermeasures, and implementation of mitigation strategies by the industry. IBWA and FDA presented the results of these efforts to the FASCC and Government Coordinating Council at their quarterly meeting in January 2005.

3. The Bottled Water Industry's Response to Hurricane Katrina

After Hurricane Katrina made landfall, many IBWA members immediately sprang into action and were bottling water around the clock to help meet the demand for clean, safe drinking water. However, IBWA members and staff initially experienced difficulties in getting information from federal agencies on where to deliver donated bottled water. Our members were contacting the IBWA offices for direction on where to deliver the bottled water and for contacts within the affected areas to ensure efficient deliveries when their trucks arrived. It was evident from watching the media coverage of the aftermath of the hurricane that bottled water was urgently needed.

IBWA reached out through formal channels to state and federal agencies with offers to solicit and coordinate delivery of bottled water donations. IBWA asked these agencies to provide us with information we could distribute to our members concerning who to contact in order to provide bottled water deliveries to those in need. IBWA also raised this issue directly with an official at the Department of Homeland Security, who acknowledged that there were logistical problems and assured us that steps would be taken to correct the situation. IBWA was surprised to learn from DHS that bottled water was not among the priority items they were seeking. At that time, we were told that "fuel, housing, and transportation" were their main concerns.

Rather than wait for the formal efforts to become more organized, IBWA members and staff made direct contacts with officials in the affected towns and cities, and the Louisiana and Mississippi Municipal Leagues, to provide bottled water to those in need. Based on communications with local officials, staging areas and contact persons were identified and communicated to IBWA members. In addition, the direct contacts with local officials assisted the bottled water industry in identifying areas in need of bottled water and allowed us to coordinate the delivery of product. For example, IBWA received a call from someone in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, who had spoken with the sheriff's office

in one of the affected areas and was told that they had not been contacted by relief agencies in the four days since the hurricane made landfall. IBWA coordinated the delivery of bottled water to that sheriff's office from a bottler in the Commonwealth of Virginia the very next day.

A key facet of IBWA involvement during Hurricane Katrina has been to provide the bottled water industry with specific information regarding staging areas where bottled water shipments may be dropped as well as other contacts throughout the affected region. We have been updating this information on the IBWA web site as it becomes available and informing members about updates via e-mail and fax alerts.

Unfortunately, IBWA has not always been provided timely information from state and federal relief agencies. We learned about the official websites for the southwest (www.swern.gov) and southeastern (www.seern.gov) emergency management networks from the National Association of Manufacturers. We immediately distributed this information to our members but were surprised not to have received it directly much earlier from DHS or FEMA.

Throughout this entire experience, we have learned of many heroic acts on the part of the bottled water industry. From IBWA members personally driving truckloads of bottled water and other relief supplies into affected areas, to shipments of multiple truckloads to remote communities—in many cases as the first responders on the scene—to the execution of staff/member partnerships to help identify and make arrangements with stricken communities for direct relief deliveries, the bottled water industry stepped up to the plate to provide products to those in need. To-date, IBWA members have provided at least ten million bottled water servings--and counting--ranging from 16-ounce bottles to five gallon bottled water cooler containers. This is in addition to the tankers of bulk drinking water supplied by IBWA bottlers and the unreported quantities of bottled water from other IBWA members and non-members who are taking action.

These efforts do not include the bottled water provided under formal arrangements with relief agencies, such as FEMA or local emergency management organizations. It is evident that bottled water and other relief supplies are now being distributed to Hurricane Katrina's victims through official channels. Those critical relief efforts will be vital in the longer term as clean up and recovery efforts begin and continue for some time to come.

4. <u>Lessons Learned and Recommendations</u>

As the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Relations Committee begins to examine how the federal government can better respond with relief efforts during natural disasters or other catastrophic events, it will be necessary to consider how to provide citizens with clean, safe drinking water in a timely fashion. And bottled water is the best way to accomplish that goal.

Because IBWA represents the vast majority of bottled water producers in the United States, we would welcome the opportunity to be involved in any efforts aimed at establishing a workable system for delivering and distributing bottled water during natural disasters or other catastrophic events. Our past experiences and technical expertise can help legislators and other government officials better understand the issues involved.

We offer the following thoughts on ways to improve the response by all relevant agencies and organizations in the event of natural disasters and other catastrophic events. IBWA provides these recommendations, not to lay blame or point fingers, but as suggestions on how we can perform more effectively as a team during future responses to natural disasters or other catastrophic events.

A. Incorporate Volunteer Relief Efforts into the Formal Planning Process

After Hurricane Katrina, as well as other recent hurricanes, there was a period of time immediately after the event occurred and before sustained relief efforts could begin, when very little bottled water was being delivered to those in need. This gap was filled by donations from bottled water companies and other disaster relief organizations.

The role of volunteer efforts clearly needs to be incorporated into the formal planning process of relief agencies. In order to meet the urgent demand for clean, safe drinking water immediately after a catastrophic event, donations of bottled water can augment supplies that may be stockpiled or being delivered by relief agencies. No one company or relief organization can be expected to meet all of those needs. IBWA believes that the bottled water industry has time and again shown its willingness to deliver bottled water into affected areas quickly and efficiently. As formal relief efforts and public water systems recover and provide drinking water to those areas, the need for such volunteer efforts diminishes.

In order to ensure efficient and immediate delivery of bottled water into the affected area, information concerning designated staging areas and places for bottled water to be delivered must be communicated to IBWA prior to an event, or as quickly as possible thereafter. Once this information is received by IBWA, we can inform our membership, who can then immediately concentrate on production and delivery of bottled water. Such efforts would fill the "gap" in product delivery between the immediate aftermath of an event and the beginning of formal relief efforts.

B. Establish Clear Channels of Communication Between Government Agencies and Private Industry

A clear communications channel for private industry and trade groups to communicate directly with government agencies should be established immediately. This will provide IBWA and others with information concerning staging areas and delivery contact persons as quickly as possible. Because clean, safe water is one the

basic needs for human survival, communication with the bottled water industry should be a high priority.

IBWA, which represents the vast majority of bottled water facilities in the United States, is uniquely situated to coordinate such communications, solicit volunteers, and work with relief agencies to ensure timely delivery of bottled water into the affected area(s). Through email, fax, and the IBWA website, such communications can be instantly and efficiently accomplished if IBWA receives the needed information from the government in a timely fashion.

IBWA believes the basic platform for such communications is fundamentally in place at DHS, through FASCC and HSIN. IBWA has been an active participant in these groups and believes they can play an important role in the critical infrastructure protection and national preparedness process. Direct communication between the relief agencies and IBWA, as well as communication through the FASCC and HSIN systems, should be encouraged to help prepare and respond to natural disasters and other catastrophic events.

C. IBWA Volunteers to Coordinate Relief Efforts on Behalf of the Bottled Water Industry

IBWA offers its resources to solicit, coordinate, and communicate with federal and state relief agencies and other organizations on behalf of the bottled water industry immediately prior to and after a catastrophic event. We believe these efforts will mitigate a potential "gap" in providing bottled water between the immediate aftermath of a catastrophic event and formal relief efforts being delivered.

Based on the recent experience of Hurricane Katrina, IBWA bottlers from as far away as Colorado, Maine, New Hampshire, Ohio and Virginia were willing to assist in relief efforts by providing bottled water to the affected areas. Many of those bottlers worked through IBWA to address the needs for clean, safe drinking water in areas hit hard by the hurricane. These actions augmented the efforts by relief organizations to provide bottled water to affected areas throughout the states of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. Many of these bottlers placed their operations into twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week production schedules and solicited additional resources to deliver bottled water into the affected states. It takes teamwork and coordination to meet the needs experienced on the Gulf Coast as a result of Hurricane Katrina. No one organization can be expected to handle this enormous undertaking alone.

Summary and Conclusion

IBWA welcomes the opportunity to work with Members of Congress and federal and state agencies to develop a workable system to address the need for safe, clean drinking water after natural disasters or other catastrophic events. IBWA and the bottled water industry stand ready to help develop solutions that will better enable federal, state and local emergency response agencies to act with greater efficiency and speed when

delivering bottled water during future relief operations. IBWA's broad-ranging expertise can help government officials better understand the issues involved as they attempt to create a more workable system. IBWA is the voice of the bottled water industry in the United States and is therefore uniquely qualified to serve as the private sector coordinator for these efforts.

IBWA believes that the "can do" spirit of the bottled water companies can be effectively tapped to provide relief to those adversely impacted by catastrophic events. The bottled water industry is proud of its response to such events in the past and looks forward to assisting in developing improvements to the nation's current disaster relief system. Clean, safe drinking water is an essential element of human survival and bottled water is the most efficient and effective way of providing it quickly and efficiently in time of natural disasters or other catastrophic events. IBWA stands ready to assist the Committee as it begins its important work.

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