

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1804

June 27, 2008

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to request that you direct the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to permit the non-federal sponsor of 100-year hurricane and flood protection in the New Orleans metro area to meet their obligation over a 30-year time period.

Last night, the Senate passed a Supplemental Appropriations bill that forces Louisiana to pay a higher cost share than historic agreements have required and to make the payments without the benefits of long-term financing. Unfortunately, the original Senate version of this bill, that honored the historic cost shares and provided long-term financing, was not passed into law. I will continue working with my colleagues to address these deficiencies through legislation, but I seek your support in an administrative remedy for long-term financing.

Without long-term financing, Louisiana will face an unprecedented challenge in meeting the requirements of the non-federal cost share. Notably, the State may have to dedicate up to one-third of its discretionary budget towards the expenses, crippling ongoing recovery efforts. The extraordinary increase to Louisiana's historical cost share, paid on a compressed time frame, flies in the face of the Federal Government's commitment to restore South Louisiana after the failures of the federal levee system.

The authority to allow long-term financing of non-federal cost is derived from Section 103 (k) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986. That section states "...the Secretary may permit the full non-Federal contribution to be made...over a period of not more than thirty years from the date of completion of the project or separable element..." Clearly, the authority exists for the Federal Government to provide needed flexibility to Louisiana.

Given the authority under existing law and the dramatic implications of failing to provide a long-term financing option, I urge you to direct the Corps to execute a financing plan that is agreeable to the State of Louisiana.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,



Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senate

CC: The Honorable John Paul Woodley, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)