

Democrats vow to erase state share of levee cost

Posted by [tbaquet](#) July 22, 2008 21:16PM



JENNIFER ZDON / THE TIMES-

PICAYUNE Congressional delegation led by House Majority Whip James Clyburn, left, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, center, Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, right, and Democratic Caucus Vice-Chair John Larson, far right, holds a press conference in Woldenberg Park Tuesday, July 22, 2008 to discuss and conclude their trip to the region.

U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Tuesday rejected a proposal from Gov. Bobby Jindal to use some of Louisiana's royalties from offshore oil and gas revenue to pay the state's \$1.8 billion share of future federal levee improvements.

Speaking at a news conference on the banks of the Mississippi River in New Orleans, Pelosi, D-Calif., said that rather than tapping money earmarked for restoring the state's fragile coast, she would seek to "find another way" to eliminate the expensive levee burden entirely. The discussion capped a four-day Gulf Coast tour by House Democrats.

Majority Whip James Clyburn, D-S.C., called on Jindal to push his fellow Republican President Bush to grant a wholesale waiver for the flood projects. Meanwhile, Rep. Charlie Melancon, D-Napoleonville, questioned why Jindal would be willing to give away a hard-fought source of money for the state's critical coastal restoration projects.

"I work with the governor, but I don't think we ought to be giving up that which is so important in the first defense of this city and this region, and that is the money to let us rebuild the coast," Melancon said.

Jindal, who as a congressman from Kenner sponsored the legislation that allowed Louisiana to collect the royalties, characterized Tuesday's rebuke from House leaders as "good news."

The governor said that in refusing his proposal, Democratic leaders indicated they will work hard to deliver what he really wants: 30 years, instead of three, for the state to pay its 25 percent share of \$7.6 billion in Army Corps of Engineers flood protection projects.

"Our original request was give us 30 years and then we'll be fully capable of funding the levee match," Jindal said in an interview after the congressional leaders spoke Tuesday. "When I suggested the partial use of

royalties, that certainly was not our first preference but a signal that the state is willing to be flexible."

Pelosi said Bush could solve the whole issue with "a stroke of his pen, " and Jindal has called on the president to sign an executive order providing more time to pay the levee cost-share. Jindal said he simply wants to avoid having to pay the big bill up-front.

When asked if he offered to give up some of the new Outer Continental Shelf revenue because the White House had closed the door on a longer pay period, Jindal said: "Nobody has ever said 'no' to us, either in Congress or the White House. . . . Nobody ever said it was an unreasonable request."

An emergency war spending bill signed into law last month included \$5.8 billion to build southeast Louisiana's flood-control structures to 100-year storm levels by 2011, but it also increased the state's share of the cost by \$200 million -- to \$1.8 billion -- and allowed just three years to pay it off.

Jindal said he never understood why the White House wanted to increase the state's cost-share from its pre-Katrina level, nor why Louisiana was not granted a longer period to pay. Time extensions were granted to California and Nevada following disasters. In dismissing Jindal's latest suggestion to use money earmarked for coastal restoration, Pelosi recalled a financing plan pitched in 2007 when the White House ignored precedent from other major hurricanes and refused to waive a 10 percent local cost-share for FEMA infrastructure projects.

During negotiations with Clyburn on that issue, "the president would say the state should use the other money it got from the federal government to pay the match money, " Pelosi recalled. "That's not logical."

Congress eventually forced the president's hand by including a waiver in a war spending package he wanted.

Clyburn, who also negotiated the recent war bill, said Bush this year threatened a veto if the Senate's attempt to give Louisiana 30 years to pay its portion of levee costs remained in the final version of the bill. However, a May 20 White House policy statement that listed several items that would trigger a veto did not include a word on the Katrina money.

Jindal said he wasn't privy to the negotiations between House Democrats and the White House and couldn't comment on who ultimately removed several Katrina-relief items.

But Jindal's replacement in Congress, Rep. Steve Scalise, R-Jefferson, said he doesn't buy the Democrats' explanation.

"There would not have been a veto if that 30-year repayment had been included, " Scalise said. "They arbitrarily pulled it out along with our hospital recovery money and the crime-prevention money."

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Categories:

Comments

twoidhd says...

Why anyone in NOLA would vote for a repug is beyond me...

Posted on 07/22/08 at 9:46PM

redfisher504 says...

It must be election time these Kraka's come out of the woodwork.
Where are they the rest of the time?
Oh yeah stealing yo money

Posted on 07/22/08 at 9:49PM

1Bucktooth says...

Rep. Charlie Melancon, D-Napoleonville, questioned why Jindal would be willing to give away a hard-fought source of money for the state's critical coastal restoration projects.

Hey Charlie wake up!! The wetlands in this area are dying and it is going to hundreds of years to bring them back if at all.

We want our protection to be added in the levee height itself. where the money can do some good. We don't want to rely on wetlands diminishing the storm surge 1 foot for every 2.5 miles of wetlands, because:
1-the wetlands do not exist anymore and it would take 25 miles of wetlands to reduce surge to acceptable levels.
2- the coastal restoration projects are band-aids with no real results, I doubt if they will even maintain what is out there now.
3- after the levee heights are corrected you guys can go play with coastal restoration if you think you can change mother nature, have at it!!

Posted on 07/22/08 at 9:59PM

ban3 says...

buckdumb

"after the levee heights are corrected you guys can go play with coastal restoration if you think you can change mother nature, have at it!!"

Changing mother nature is a major reason why we're in the position we're in.

Posted on 07/22/08 at 10:07PM

chazbe says...

Could it be that the ever-ambitious Bobby is trying to impress the conservative kingmakers with a stirring display of anti-big government bona fides?

Posted on 07/22/08 at 10:26PM

bluesgutter says...

"Rep. Charlie Melancon, D-Napoleonville, questioned why Jindal would be willing to give away a hard-fought source of money for the state's critical coastal restoration projects."
WHY?? BECAUSE JINDAL IS A BUSH LACKEY AND IS WILLING TO GIVE UP OUR HARD EARNED WIN OVER THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT...BUSINESS AS USUAL.

Posted on 07/22/08 at 10:51PM

bayoustjohn says...

Once again it takes an act of congress to do what Bush could do with a stroke of the pen.

And Jindal's offer is a disgrace.

Posted on 07/22/08 at 10:59PM

louisiana1 says...

bluesgutter

Edwin Edwards,,,, he sold the State for a sack of rocks... stop being a Dem-o-creap.. look the sky is falling
Kool-aid drinker

Posted on 07/22/08 at 11:01PM

aircheck says...

Don't panic here, Freezer Bag Bill Jefferson will get it all straightened out.

Posted on 07/22/08 at 11:39PM

nolakid57 says...

Hey,

Where's "Dollar Bill"? Was he part of the tour, showing other congressional reps around his city? With all respect to Melancon, why should the tour be led by someone from a neighboring district? Could it be that he is now rendered completely useless in Congress?

Still, I'll bet you that he gets re-elected and, if so, NOLA, you deserve what you ask for!

Posted on 07/23/08 at 12:51AM

xman20002000 says...

Why are Louisianians voting with the GOP when the state is so poor. The entire South went with the GOP on the issue of race and not they need Democrats to bale them out of this mess. Republicans are only conservatives in philosophy to get elected. The Democrats have traditionally been the people's party. They proof is in the pudding KATRINA.

I have never seen so much ignorance.... Please reread these comments and you see why you could not get a national party in this state...THE END

Posted on 07/23/08 at 3:53AM

tumadom says...

I believe Melancon went back in by default because he had no opposition. It was appropriate for Melancon to represent the interests of the State for many reasons. Jefferson works under a shadow and is running against numerous candidates for the seat that he currently holds and they did not want to give him free press and the tour bad press. I think everybody already knows that but sometimes it helps to express it.

Posted on 07/23/08 at 4:03AM

johnbgood says...

Still think Bobby is VP material? He is willing to give up some of the OCS money, when Congressional leaders are trying to "seek to "find another way" to eliminate the expensive levee burden entirely" and the governor is saying he only wants the payments extended from 3 years to 30 years. HE IS GIVING AWAY \$1.8 BILLION DOLLARS OF LOUISIANA'S DOLLARS. Why is he doing this? One of two reasons, he is either that dumb or does not want to put political pressure on the Republican administration - namely BUSH, to have to make the decision to approve or veto fully funding the projects for Louisiana. Who's interests is Bobby serving? Guess we need to do another recall petition, it seems that is the only time Bobby acts for the interests of the citizens of Louisiana. (He might have book smarts, but appears to lack common sense).

Posted on 07/23/08 at 4:40AM

louisiana1 says...

xman20002000

oh my God.... Kool Aid Drinker.

Democrats are the reason Louisiana, and New Orleans is the pretty picture that it is. the city of New Orleans, Victor Schiro, Moon Landrieu, Ernest Morial, Sidey Barthelmy, Marc Moral, Ray Nagin,,,, do you See Anyone from the GOP.. Katrina issues came from Gov. Blanco. over 40 years, of Demo. and what do you do. blame is the GOP... unbelievable This is the reason I changed Partys, wake up.....

Posted on 07/23/08 at 6:34AM

blueangold says...

Don't worry. The Messiah is a commin. He will make every thin O K. An dem rascally Republicans will be chased back to their country clubs and Nancy will gives us all dat money dem evil corporations been stealin all dees years.

Posted on 07/23/08 at 6:46AM

Coot says...

Glad I moved.

Posted on 07/23/08 at 6:53AM

louisiana1 says...

Keep trimming the fat Bobby,,, and maybe one day instead of hearing a giant sucking sound. it might be replaced my a popping sound from the Demo. releasing the nipple of Louisiana

Posted on 07/23/08 at 7:00AM

garifer says...

I don't know why the democrats think that you can pour billions upon billions into creating strong levees and restoring the wetlands at the same time when there is no actual proof that you can do both at the same time and they will actually work.

Posted on 07/23/08 at 7:47AM

kingfishla says...

Why anyone would ever vote for a DummycRAT is beyond me! It's a good thing we caught them in these lies publicly or they might have gotten away with it. Jindal never gave away any of our royalties and Bush never threatened a veto if we got 30 years to pay off the levees.

Thank God we have good reps like Steve Scalise who won't let the evil Democrats in Congress (who have a 9% approval rating by the way) get away with robbing us blind and then lying about it. Geaux Steve and Geaux Bobby!

Posted on 07/23/08 at 7:49AM

milwriter says...

xman20002000:

We know how Bush II and the feds botched the Katrina response. But if the state and local level responses to Katrina and the debacle of the reconstruction effort are the best of what the Dems (the people's party) can offer, I will continue to wear the independent label, thank you.

As an aside, Dem-controlled senates and houses going back to the Clinton years share the blame for failing to exercise congressional oversight and inadequately funding LA levee systems. The people's party and the elephants failed to maintain this important infrastructure. The levee and hurricane infrastructure failures were pre-ordained well before Katrina and Bush II's terms in office.

Posted on 07/23/08 at 7:49AM

widewater says...

Jindal got the Oil Royalties bill cranked up in the House. And he moved it through. Our Senators didn't run with it and created a watered down ORB. Better than nothing. Now Jindal's bill, which included opening up offshore drilling on the east and west coasts, looks smart considering the price of gas.

Pelosi doesn't want a nasty rig off of her coast. But she wants to tell us how to spend our Oil Royalties. No wonder the gas prices are out of sight. Maybe a California Rig would help;

but as far as Pelosi is concerned, a new offshore rig in California is also, out of sight.

So what is she doing down here?

Go back to the land of Fruits and Nuts.

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4200/is_20060821/ai_n16689329

Posted on 07/23/08 at 7:50AM

1Bucktooth says...

Ban3 maybe you can call Scottie and beam the wetlands back in place. Dumbazz!!

Posted on 07/23/08 at 8:09AM

lilpooky says...

I'd like to find out what kind of numbers the oil and gas royalties are bringing in before I decide what to think about all of this. If anyone can provide a link...

Posted on 07/23/08 at 8:25AM

Astrid says...

Blueangold may be on to something. Since Louis Eugene Walcott (alias Farrakhan) says the messiah is going to fix everything, we only need to relax and enjoy it. This is a little long, but it builds to a heart thumping conclusion:

http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=farrakhan+-+the+messiah&search_type=&aq=f

Posted on 07/23/08 at 8:29AM

MINESHAFT says...

Demo's vow! HA HA HA HA HA HA! FUNNY!

Posted on 07/23/08 at 8:49AM

WateryHill says...

It's great that the Louisiana delegation has taken such a strong stand to fight for better payment terms. After all, hasn't Louisiana already paid enough in terms of both life and property?

Posted on 07/23/08 at 9:01AM

harengirl504 says...

Good sneaky tactic, Jindal. Make them think you want one thing when you really want another. Is he

serious???? So far, looks like our hopes of getting a governor that's worth anything are lost.

Posted on 07/23/08 at 9:20AM

Dinky3 says...

The use of "snub" in the headline suggests Bad D.C. Democrat dissed poor li'l Bobby and the State of La. No so, apparently.

Posted on 07/23/08 at 9:27AM

dshacks says...

Democrats, Republicans, Independents, blues, greens, reds, and whatever else ya'll want to call yourselves - it really doesn't matter.

The problem remains that a wonderful city, community and society has grown up in an area that is well below sea level. It's flooded before and without fail it is going to flood again. It won't matter what you call yourself or what uniform you're wearing, if you can't cooperate, in more than a constant game of name calling, no one will be any better off next year than they are this year.

Lt. Governor Michael Landrieu just made an impassioned plea during an address to the Washington Press Club on July 22. In it he focused attention on the fine, hardworking committed people of New Orleans and Louisiana. What he told us here was that the people there were ready to rebuild and needed the help and support of the rest of us in the country to get the job done. After reading these comments, that are more back-biting and bitter than thoughtful and forward looking, it's hard to offer that support without severe reservations.

But then it's your city, state, and life you can be as mean and uncooperative as you want....can't you?

Posted on 07/23/08 at 1:11PM

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