

NEWS ALERT



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Homeland Security Committee

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, Chairman



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson**

### **“The 2007 Hurricane Season: Are We Prepared?”**

May 15, 2007 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the full Committee hearing entitled “The 2007 Hurricane Season: Are We Prepared?”:

“The purpose of this hearing is to examine whether FEMA is adequately coordinating activities with its partners on the State and local level as well as key stakeholders in the private sector. The 2007 Atlantic hurricane season officially begins on June 1st and will last until November 30th.

The fact that FEMA still has not issued the strategy that establishes practices and procedures for coordination among Federal, State and local governments is very disturbing.

I called this hearing to examine just how FEMA is doing, and whether all key stakeholders are ready to respond and coordinate effectively. As a Member from the Gulf Coast, I have a particular interest in seeing FEMA apply the ‘Lessons Learned’ from Katrina into practices for the future.

In the event that a hurricane makes landfall and puts our communities at risk, we need to know that FEMA will respond quickly and administer assistance in an evenhanded way.

Another key player that has some hard ‘Lessons Learned’ from Katrina was the American Red Cross. I am interested in hearing how the organization plans to coordinate with FEMA.

As we all know, FEMA’s response to Hurricane Katrina was abysmal. Last year, Congress passed major FEMA reforms with an expectation that we would see some real progress at this beleaguered agency.

I expect that Mr. Paulison will have an explanation for his agency’s failure to produce the National Response Plan within the required period. Mr. Paulison, explanations don’t excuse and excuses don’t explain. And FEMA will have a lot of explaining to do if it is not ready when a hurricane makes landfall this season.”

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