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DEPUTY WHIP

Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Environment and Public Works

Foreign Relations

Small Business and Entrepreneurship

Special Committee on Aging

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 28, 2007

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**BY HAND**  
**IMMEDIATE ATTENTION REQUESTED**

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
528 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Republican Leader  
United States Senate  
361-A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Byrd  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
311 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Top Louisiana Hurricane Recovery Needs For Inclusion In Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Bill

Dear Leader Reid, Leader McConnell, Chairman Byrd, and Ranking Member Cochran:

I write to make an urgent and very focused request that three top Louisiana hurricane recovery needs be added to the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Bill recently sent to Congress by President Bush.

All of these needs represent work already publicly committed to by both President Bush and the Congress. They are true emergency items in light of Hurricane Katrina which are completely appropriate to address in the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Bill.

Finally, needs two and three involve language only to allow the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to do its crucial work more quickly and efficiently; two and three do not involve additional dollars.

**1. \$1.3-3.2 Billion To Fund Ongoing Corps Work Already Fully Committed To By President Bush and Congress.**

The Corps of Engineers needs \$1.3-3.2 billion in additional funds to address the current budget shortfalls in hurricane, coastal, and flood protection work in south Louisiana. Many protection projects have been delayed as a result of funding shortfalls addressed by this request.

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**2. Language To Give The Corps Significant Increased Flexibility In Doing Its Emergency Post-Katrina Work In Southeast Louisiana, Which Will Save Time And Money.**

Full authorization to provide at least the current 100-year level of protection to all areas that were previously authorized to be protected is needed so that the Corps can begin work on projects as it is ready to be implemented. To date the Corps has taken a stovepipe approach to restoring and improving our protection systems. Several stovepipes do not make a system, and this inflexible approach has delayed our progress. This has delayed work on the West Bank, Plaquemines Parish, St. Charles, the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal, and critical protection in Jefferson and Orleans.

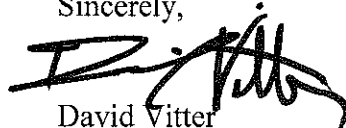
**3. Language To Accelerate From December 31, 2007 To June 1, 2007 The Time When The Corps Will Finalize Its MRGO Closure Plans And Proceed Toward Construction.**

Under the Fourth Emergency Supplemental for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, I included an amendment to require the Corps to produce a closure plan. The Corps currently plans to complete this work in December. The closure of the MRGO is imminent; there is no justification to delaying the next steps.

Once again, I believe this request is very reasonable and focused, and therefore extremely appropriate for inclusion in the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Bill, for all the reasons mentioned above.

Thank you for all of your continuing help. The people of Louisiana deeply appreciate it.

Sincerely,



David Vitter  
U.S. Senator

cc: The Honorable George W. Bush  
Joshua Bolten, White House Chief of Staff  
Don Powell, Federal Coordinator of Gulf Coast Rebuilding  
Rob Portman, OMB Director  
Lieutenant General Carl A. Strock, Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army Corps Engineers  
J. P. Woodley, Assistant Secretary of Army for Civil Works, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers