



News Release

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SBA Hurricane Loans Exceed \$2 Billion In Massive and Historic Disaster Recovery Operation; More Than \$1 Billion Approved in December Alone

WASHINGTON – In less than 30 days, the U.S. Small Business Administration has approved another \$1 billion in long-term disaster loans to the victims of the three hurricanes this fall. In total, the SBA has now approved more than \$2 billion in disaster relief funds to assist those affected by the devastating hurricanes that struck the Gulf Coast and Florida. The SBA is currently averaging more than \$36 million in loan approvals a day in December to the small businesses and homeowners who need assistance.

Loan approvals reached the \$2 billion mark Friday.

“This massive effort is showing month-by-month, week-by-week and day-by-day the kinds of historic results we’ve expected all along in bringing long-term relief to affected homeowners and small businesses,” said SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto. “Despite the substantial hurdles caused by the damage and dislocation of these storms, the SBA and its workforce continue to approve disaster loans at a record pace.

“While maintaining our responsibility to taxpayers not to approve loans that cannot be repaid, we have still approved over \$1 billion in less than 30 days and \$2 billion in four months, which is a faster disaster response than the SBA has ever given to any disaster in our 52-year history,” Barreto said.

“I can tell you that this is the SBA’s top priority for the people in the Gulf Coast and Florida areas, and we are working tirelessly, with the greatest dedication and compassion to help those affected by this terrible disaster,” Barreto said.

Barreto noted that only one other disaster in the agency’s history has exceeded the \$2 billion mark – the Northridge Earthquake of 1994, at \$4 billion in approved loans. The Florida hurricanes of 2004 topped out at \$1.86 billion.

“To respond to this unprecedented catastrophe, the SBA disaster staff has grown five times larger than it was before Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast on August 29, and we have performed more than 146,000 site inspections in just three months, what is normally a full year’s worth of inspections,” Barreto said. “Even though the SBA is approving loans faster than it ever has in our 52-year history, we will continue to do everything we can to move even faster.”

For more information about the SBA’s Disaster Assistance loan programs, visit the SBA Web site at http://www.sba.gov/disaster_recov/hurricanes/.