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June 4, 2009

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
H-218 U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 2051

Dear Chairman Price and Ranking Member Rogers:

As you continue negotiating the FY2009 Supplemental Appropriations bill, I ask that you consider including the following provisions that we spoke about regarding Hurricane Ike relief. Hurricane Ike may very well have been the second most destructive hurricane in U.S. history, behind Hurricane Katrina, and these requests will add greater flexibility to federal funding and help Texans rebuild their lives and communities.

1. I request the extension for 100 percent federal funding of debris removal and emergency work (Category A and B). As of April 26, the 100 percent federal funding for debris removal and emergency work was reduced to 75 percent. The counties hardest hit by the storm (Brazoria, Chambers, Galveston, Harris, Jefferson, and Orange) had not finished debris removal as of that deadline and they are beginning to stop debris removal operations because they cannot afford to pay the required 25 percent local match. Providing 100 percent federal funding for debris removal will help finish cleanup of the storm.
2. I request that the local cost share for Stafford Act eligible projects be waived. Although the cost share has been adjusted for at least 30 disasters in the past 10 years, FEMA has repeatedly denied the State of Texas' request to waive the local cost share or decrease the local match from 25 percent to 10 percent for Categories C-G. Currently, local communities have to bear the burden of the 25 percent match requirement. Under this current cost share, the City of Galveston would be required to pay \$400 million as a local match, which is more than 5 times their annual budget. Waiving the local cost share will help cities like Galveston access federal dollars and move forward on rebuilding their communities.
3. I request that restrictions be removed from Community Development Block Grant funds to allow state and local governments to use these funds as the local match for any other federal program.

The aftermath of Hurricane Ike still impacts the lives and communities of Texans along the Gulf Coast. I greatly appreciate your leadership and continued support for Hurricane Ike disaster

relief and I ask that you consider including these requests in the FY2009 Supplemental Appropriations bill. Should your office need any additional information, please contact Jeff Morehouse at 5-2571.

Sincerely,



John Culberson
Member of Congress

Thank you

Mr. Chairman -

this is vitally important for our local

taxpayers to help us recover from

this terrible natural disaster -