money wisely. We need to limit it to the extent we can while still taking care of our obligations from the Federal Government.

I have looked at the things that we need to do to protect New Orleans again. It is below sea level. There was 16 feet of water standing in parts of New Orleans. That whole area with standing water is below sea level. We have to find a way, and there was discussion whether we could construct below sea level. Those questions landed on my ears. Actually, I thought they were prudent questions that needed to be asked, deliberated upon, and we need to bring more facts to the table before we can come up with a definitive answer.

But when you look at New Orleans and see the downtown buildings that rise up out of the water, and I was able to see it on a day when it was a bright blue sky, and the sunlight reflecting off the downtown buildings made the water blue, as the downtown buildings stood up, I looked and it was clear to me, yes, you cannot let a great city like New Orleans stand in water and not be reconstructed better than it was before. We need to rebuild the city, but we need to rebuild the city in a wise fashion.

My first recommendation is New Orleans, the levees that protect it and the systems that protect it from a hurricane, be constructed in preparation for a category 5 hurricane. If you can imagine a worse one, let us reconstruct for that. Let us do the hurricane mitigation work so the worst storm we can imagine cannot come in and do the kind of damage that Hurricane Katrina did to New Orleans.

The first step is as the water in Lake Pontchartrain increased by that 14 to 15-foot average water depth, and as it went up another 8 to 10 feet, because of the storm surge from the gulf, as the low pressure center raised the level of the water in the ocean and that hard south wind at 150 miles an hour drove that water up into the lake, stacked it up against the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain and filled that lake up with 8 to 10 feet more water, and then when the hurricane shifted to the east and winds came from the north, it drove that high wall of water down against the levees on the south side of Lake Pontchartrain. The waves added another 8 to 10 feet, it washed over the levees and flooded the city.

We know what happened, and to prevent it from happening again, I believe we need to do the engineering study, do the financial analysis, but repair the levees on the outlet of Lake Pontchartrain to a level that can protect Lake Pontchartrain itself from a category 5 hurricane so it cannot be breached, and to put hurricane gates in where necessary so we can close those in the event of a storm and keep the ocean water out of Lake Pontchartrain. That is step one.

Step two is if it gets in there or if there is a surge of the water in there, and I do not know if it is possible to have that kind of an effort under any kind of a storm, but if the water does get into Lake Pontchartrain, then we need to be prepared for the second level of protection.

That second level would be to build the levees between Lake Pontchartrain and New Orleans to an elevation that will protect New Orleans from 25 feet above sea level from a category 5, and then to put hurricane gates in at the inlets of the canals, the 17th Street Canal being the most infamous of them all. That can be done and protected. We need to come out with a cost and engineering analysis of that and make a decision in this Congress.

I believe if that cost is anywhere near reasonable, we need to get that done before there is new construction going on down below sea level in New Orleans itself. So that is two systems that would protect New Orleans from a flood.

I point out there is a significant amount of construction done in the world below sea level. Holland is one of those examples. I am told a third of Holland is below sea level; and when I was told that, I said they have reclaimed another portion from the sea since when I went to school and a fourth of the nation was underwater. That is probably the case. They continually reclaim. They construct below sea level. I believe we can do that in the area of New Orleans. I have some more questions from the engineering perspective that I do not have the answers to, but protect the outlet of Lake Pontchartrain to keep the ocean water out and storm surge out, and keep the water in Lake Pontchartrain there by putting gates at the inlet of the canals, and perhaps raise the level of the hurricane levees on Lake Pontchartrain.

The third thing is the pump stations have to be raised up well above the high water mark of this flood, and they need to have redundancies built in so they can pump water if the power goes out. If the power goes out, they automatically kick on. And the water that is being pumped out of New Orleans now over the last week and a half or so, it is a massive quantity of water. It is 27,000 cubic feet per second, more than twice the amount of water that runs down the Missouri River at Sioux City, Iowa, in the area where I live.

Mr. Speaker, Florida has a lot of experience with reconstructing in preparation for category 5 hurricanes. They have perfected a lot of the method of how to prepare for a hurricane, how to evacuate, how to zone the houses and the buildings so they are prepared for that kind of wind and damage. Requiring shutters is one thing, and building off the ground is another. There are a number of ideas from an architectural standpoint. There is much that has already been established. We should look at that opportunity to take the language of those zoning restrictions that they have and the emergency response system that they developed in Florida and bring that into Louisiana, Mississippi and parts of Texas; but Louisiana needing the most help, it appears.

I think we can learn from our experience. We need to also be able to have a Federal requirement on the construction of the levee so if there is a levee that can be breached and put that much property in jeopardy, we need to have Federal oversight over that levee. There is much that can be done and should be done.

I will be involved in the effort to identify the mitigation work and looking at the cost and the engineering design and the recommendations. I would also point out that there will be a population loss in New Orleans. I do not know that number, no one knows that number, but perhaps a loss of a quarter of the population, perhaps more. If that is the case, the homes that will be condemned, many are still under water today, that will be the last place that needs to be reconstructed.

The reconstruction of the homes can go in the higher elevation areas where they do not have water. Those decisions need to be made so people can make plans for the future. That is part of this Congress' responsibility. Wherever there are Federal dollars, we have an obligation to the taxpayers that they are spent wisely.

There are private sector solutions to this, and we need to listen to our representatives from that area, those that are advocating for less pressure on taxpayers and more pressure on individuals, and the solutions of tax credits and I will say commerce-friendly zones, tax free zones, for example, lay all of those ideas out on the table.

The gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) and the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JINDAL) both have been very active, along with the other Representatives from Louisiana. The gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MCCRERY) has been very vocal here. I am looking forward to their input and working in cooperation with them so we put a solution together that will leave a legacy of making it better when things are bad in the event of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2360, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma (during the Special Order of Mr. KING of Iowa), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109–242) on the resolution (H. Res. 474) waiving points of order against the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2360) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.