

H. Res. 551

In the House of Representatives, U. S.,

July 30, 2007.

Whereas Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated the lives of 4.5 million people through loss of life and personal injury; destroyed homes, businesses, and public property; displaced people; and damaged cultural assets and economies across the Gulf Coast of the United States;

Whereas Hurricanes Katrina and Rita destroyed nearly every home and business in Orleans Parish, St. Bernard Parish, Plaquemines Parish, and Cameron Parish; and thousands of homes in Calcasieu Parish and other coastal parishes also suffered flood damage;

Whereas Hurricane Katrina displayed winds peaking at 175 miles per hour;

Whereas Hurricane Katrina made landfall in the Gulf Coast region on August 29, 2005, as a powerful category 3 storm and the third strongest land-falling hurricane ever recorded in the United States;

Whereas Hurricane Katrina destroyed 275,000 homes, 18,750 businesses, and 875 schools in Louisiana, and is blamed for the deaths of 1,577 residents in Louisiana;

Whereas Hurricane Katrina caused four levees to breach, including the 17th Avenue Canal, the Industrial Canal, and the London Avenue Canal, resulting in flooding of the

city of New Orleans and the parishes of St. Bernard and Plaquemines; and nearly two years later, work on those levees is still unfinished;

Whereas, because of an insufficient levee protection system, approximately 80 percent of New Orleans was submerged for nearly one month in deadly flood waters;

Whereas Hurricane Katrina devastated institutions of higher education, including Delgado Community College, Dillard University, Loyola University New Orleans, Southern University at New Orleans, Tulane University, the University of New Orleans, and Xavier University of Louisiana;

Whereas nearly two years later, all colleges and universities in New Orleans have reopened, but enrollment is lagging, major infrastructure has not yet been rebuilt, many public schools remain closed, and private and public schools that have reopened are struggling to recover;

Whereas prior to Hurricane Katrina, the population of New Orleans was 484,674; but nearly two years after Hurricane Katrina, little more than half of New Orleans residents have been able to return to their homes;

Whereas Hurricane Katrina overwhelmed the capabilities of State and local governments and Congress appropriated billions of dollars for emergency response needs, such as evacuations, repairs, deployment of personnel, and other immediate relief efforts;

Whereas nearly two years after Hurricane Katrina, disaster relief efforts continue to be needed, especially for hundreds of thousands of displaced citizens;

Whereas Hurricane Rita made landfall along the border of Louisiana and Texas on September 24, 2005, as the

fourth most intense Atlantic hurricane ever recorded, causing \$9.4 billion in property damage;

Whereas Hurricane Rita completely destroyed several towns in Southwest Louisiana along the border of Texas and washed tons of potentially hazardous debris into the area's marshes, causing severe economic loss, detrimental health effects, and deaths;

Whereas Congress has responded to the devastation of the Gulf Coast region by providing billions of dollars in assistance, including tax relief efforts such as the Gulf Opportunity Zone, student aid, and disability services to victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and nearly two years later, Congress continues to provide assistance to expedite economic recovery in the region; and

Whereas the people of the United States have been extremely generous in their support for the Gulf Coast region, in addition to the outpouring of assistance from the international community, which continues to support the recovery efforts in the region: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the importance of the Gulf Coast region to the economy of the United States;

(2) recognizes the importance of the cultural contributions of the people of the Gulf Coast to the United States; and

(3) expresses its support for all individuals still affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita two years after these terrible natural disasters struck.

Attest:

Clerk.