

**RESTORE LOUISIANA TASK FORCE**

**June 9, 2017**

**Louisiana State Capitol  
House Committee Room 1**

*Approved*

**MINUTES**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**Mr. Jimmy Durbin** called the meeting to order at 9:32 AM.

**Mr. Durbin:** Good Morning everyone. Welcome to our Restore Louisiana Task Force meeting set for today's date, June 9, 2017. I think we're going to have a quorum if we have any business to take up. At this point in time I will ask the clerk to call the roll.

**II. ROLL CALL**

**TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Johnny Bradberry  
Mr. Roland Dartez  
Mr. Jimmy Durbin  
Representative Edward "Ted" James  
Mr. Michael Faulk  
Mr. Adam Knapp  
Mayor Dave Norris  
Mr. Michael Olivier  
Representative J. Rogers Pope  
Dr. James Richardson

**TASK FORCE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mr. Randy Cloutre (non-voting, ex-officio)  
Mr. John Gallagher  
Mr. Raymond Jetson  
Senator Dan "Blade" Morrish  
Mr. Don Pierson  
Mr. Sean Reilly  
Mayor-President Joel Robideaux  
Representative Rob Shadoin  
Commissioner Mike Strain  
Mayor Ollie Tyler  
Dr. Shawn Wilson  
Ms. Jacqui Vines Wyatt

**Ms. Dupont:** 10 members are present. Sir Chair, we do not have a quorum.

**LET THE RECORD SHOW THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS ARRIVED AFTER THE ROLL CALL:**

Representative Rob Shadoin

**SUPPORTING STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Patrick Forbes, Executive Director, Office of Community Development  
Mark Riley, Office of Community Development  
Pat Santos, Office of Community Development  
Dan Rees, Office of Community Development  
LaSonta Davenport, Office of Community Development  
Sandra Gunner, Office of Community Development  
Lori Dupont, Office of Community Development  
Robert Bizot, Louisiana Housing Corporation  
Nicole Sweazy, Louisiana Housing Corporation  
Pat Witty, Louisiana Economic Development  
Catherine Fairchild, Office of Community Development

#### **IV. CHAIRPERSON OPENING REMARKS**

**~ Jimmy Durbin, Restore Louisiana Task Force Co-Chair**

**Mr. Durbin:** Representative Shadoin is present, he's out just briefly, he will be back to make up eleven members. At this point in time we will pass on approving the minutes of the previous meeting and I will go straight to the chair talking points or opening remarks. I'm glad to say that numerous notable developments have happened since our last meeting. Substantial, meaningful strides have been made. Let's start with numbers first. Around 8,000 environmental reviews have been completed. Over 24,000 flood victims have completed the Restore Louisiana Homeowner Assistance Program survey. Again, we know that about 86,000 Louisiana homeowners have FEMA verified loss between the two floods so we will continue our outreach to those affected who have not taken the initial survey. The state has received another allocation from HUD for over \$51 million. While we appreciate this additional allocation, we are still in need of disaster assistance to cover our unmet needs. Our Governor and Congressional Delegation will continue to work in Washington to bring home the additional \$2 billion we desperately need for a full recovery. Later this morning we will hear the proposed plan to spend that \$51 million to further assist the survivors of last year's devastating floods. Two Housing Assistance Centers are now open and helping homeowners complete their applications and surveys; one in East Baton Rouge and one in Monroe. Additional Housing Assistance Centers will open soon – one in Lafayette on Monday and another in Hammond on June 19. Homeowners are also able to see the materials that will be used in their homes if they select the program's construction solution to rebuild their homes. Public Service Announcements started on May 29<sup>th</sup> and will continue to run for three consecutive weeks. This includes TV, radio and cable spots. Just last week the first distribution of reimbursement funds were issued to flooded homeowners and, as of today, all homeowners that are in Phase I and have successful environmental reviews have been invited to begin the application process. We will hear from the Governor's office about the Governor's recent visit to the Housing Assistance Center in Baton Rouge, as well as more details about the number of our citizens currently living in flood plains across Louisiana and the necessity of addressing watershed planning and projects statewide. I should note here that Mr. Harrell with the Livingston Parish OEP, who spoke at our last meeting, has requested that his presentation be pushed back to the next meeting. We will hear more from Pat Forbes with the Office of Community Development about updates on small business, rental and FEMA PA match programs. As a reminder, and this is extremely important, if you are a homeowner and was impacted by the March and August floods of 2016, please take the homeowner flood damage survey. It does not matter where you are in your rebuilding process. We need to know what kind of help you need in recovery. This is also the first step in applying and qualifying for assistance. And, everyone, please visit [restore.la.gov](http://restore.la.gov) regularly to sign up for email updates, get the latest information, FAQs on the survey and other topics. Okay, at this point we will move to item five and have the presentation by Ms. Erin Monroe Wesley, Special Counsel, Office of the Governor. Good Morning Ms. Wesley.

#### **V. GOVERNOR'S OFFICE UPDATE**

**~ Erin Monroe Wesley, Special Counsel, Office of the Governor**

**Ms. Wesley:** Good Morning Mr. Chair and members of the Restore Louisiana Task Force. At our last meeting we urged the task force to encourage homeowners to complete the online survey and announced the prospective opening of the first Housing Assistance Center in Baton Rouge, along with outreach events across the state. On Wednesday, May 31, Gov. Edwards had the opportunity to visit the Baton Rouge Housing Assistance Center located at Celtic Studios. The governor toured the facility and met with several homeowners who participated in the program. The governor personally distributed reimbursement checks for work already done by homeowners to restore their homes. Not only did he enjoy spending time with the homeowners, but they were equally pleased to be able to share their stories with the governor and express their appreciation for this program. To date, there have been eight closings with a total award amount of nearly \$289,000. While at the center, the governor met with a single mother of three children, including twins of which one is disabled. Her twins were nine months old at the time of the August flood. She is a teacher in East Baton Rouge Parish. There was an elderly veteran of the U. S. Armed Forces and his disabled wife and another elderly applicant whose home was affected by the August flood and she now has been able to return home. Some other applicants who have been helped by the program include a 73 year old resident of Youngsville in Lafayette Parish who was unable to travel to Baton Rouge for the closing, so the restore team went to her home to complete the process. A 26 year old single mother of three with one child who is disabled, had just bought her home in Tangipahoa Parish two months before the flood. She paid out of her pocket for the repairs and has been reimbursed by the program. These are a few examples of the real citizens who were impacted by the

historic flooding and they are getting real help through this program. It's exactly why we want to encourage all homeowners impacted by the March and August floods to take the all-important program survey, which they can access at [restore.la.gov](http://restore.la.gov) or call 866-735-2001. When homeowners first enter the Baton Rouge center they can immediately walk through the model show home to see the products and materials that will be used in their homes if they select Solution 1, the program managed solution. At this time, I would like to play a brief video of the model show home that the Governor was able to see, and that is available for homeowners.

### **A short video of the model show home was played.**

And that is the current showcase at the center in Baton Rouge. Again, the Baton Rouge Center is one of two assistance centers now open. The second is in Monroe and two more will open soon in Hammond and Lafayette. Homeowners can go to the centers to speak one-on-one with case managers as they begin their application process or get help completing the initial and necessary survey in order to participate in the program. In addition to the showroom at the Housing Assistance Center, case managers are available on-site as well as the call center. There is also a rigorous workforce training program at the center, and it has certified 43 lead-based paint inspectors and risk assessors. They are all Louisiana residents who will now be able to help their fellow Louisianans return home safely. More certified inspectors are anticipated. The goal of today's meeting is to provide recommendations to the task force with respect to the allocation of the state's third appropriation of roughly \$51 million to address our ongoing recovery needs. One of the recommendations to be outlined by Pat Forbes, Director of the Office of Community Development, is an allocation of \$9.8 million towards watershed planning or infrastructure enhancement. The first question we should ask ourselves is, what is the state's flood management issue? There currently exists a disjointed and underdeveloped approach to floodplain management in the state. The problem is no single entity has all of the tools, authorities, capabilities, or jurisdiction to establish and run a comprehensive floodplain management program. There is a need to produce a plan to develop and implement a comprehensive watershed based floodplain management program for the state. So, how do we approach building a statewide comprehensive watershed based floodplain management program? CPRA has developed a scope of work for a vendor to develop a program framework which will describe the requirements, authorities, agencies, and their roles and responsibilities for a successful floodplain management program. This program will have to coordinate with parishes and other local policy setting jurisdictions to get their buy-in prior to modeling and evaluating alternatives. In terms of deliverables, the contractor will be required to develop a program framework and implementation plan for a Comprehensive Watershed Based Floodplain Management Program for the State of Louisiana. At a minimum, the plan shall outline program goals and requirements; identify state agencies whose program participation is required for success and their roles and responsibilities; identify stakeholders and their respective jurisdictions; identify statutes, agreements, and legal basis for agency and stakeholder responsibilities; identify gaps in legal requirements and where agreements are needed between agencies; identify opportunities to achieve standardization and consistency across the program; identify current best practices in floodplain management; identify areas where best practices should be developed or improved; identify and describe the technical needs and requirements for the floodplain management program - these can be such things as imagery, databases, modeling, and data sources; develop a program implementation framework which describes how technical requirements will support programmatic decision making; address outreach and engagement requirements; and finally, prepare a project plan with dates and milestones for implementation of the Comprehensive Watershed Based Floodplain Management Program. The Army Corps of Engineers plans to pursue planning for a comprehensive study East of Mississippi River. Their purpose of this comprehensive study is to investigate the feasibility of providing flood risk management for the residents and businesses in the Amite River Basin including but not limited to East Baton Rouge, Ascension, Livingston, East Feliciana, St. Helena, Iberville, St. James and St. John the Baptist parishes. The study would include detailed modeling of the basin and development of alternatives to reduce flood stages. The study would determine if existing authorized projects in the basin should be modified and if additional improvements are warranted. This request has been submitted for inclusion in the fiscal year 18 budget. The proposal is also being considered for funding under the Silver Jackets Interagency Pilot Project Program. This proposal was also submitted for FEMA funding consideration as well. The CORP believes that all parties are aligned on the scope and necessity to complete this study. However, the issue is the availability of funding. I also want to share with you the work of FEMA's Hazard Mitigation team in partnership with the state's hazard mitigation efforts led by GOHSEP. The Louisiana Watershed Resiliency Study, which is a first of its kind effort led by FEMA's Hazard Mitigation team in consultation with Federal, State, and local partners, is designed to provide key information on recent flooding impacts and watershed characteristics by watershed. The study researched 22 watersheds impacted by the March 2016 flooding, August 2016 or both and will provide the following. Descriptions of 2016 flooding impacts by watershed. Examples are flooding event descriptions and impacted structure analysis. Descriptions of watershed characteristics. Examples are climate and precipitation discussion, water quality, flood plains, land cover changes, socioeconomic and demographic information and flood history. FEMA will provide their observations and will conduct a comprehensive outreach effort to share this

information to communities within these watersheds. FEMA has initiated the Louisiana Resilient Recovery Pilot Project with other federal partners representing the Recovery Support Function Leadership Group and Mitigation Framework Leadership Group in coordination with state and local partners to provide technical assistance for flood impacted regions. The work plan will involve communities within watersheds identifying issues and opportunities to work collectively to develop strategies to increase resiliency and reduce risk. FEMA and other federal partners will provide technical assistance in areas such as planning, land use, project scoping opportunities, and risk communication strategies. This pilot effort will transition to a state led effort over time and will provide opportunities for information sharing from one watershed to another. The schedule for the three phases is the Vermilion Watershed May 2017 through August 2017, the Lower Ouachita/Bouef Watersheds July 2017 through November 2017, and the Amite Watershed January 2018 through April 2018. Our team at DOTD is currently developing a Hydrologic and Hydraulic Numerical Model of the Amite River Basin. This numerical model will be developed utilizing the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Hydraulic Modeling Center (HEC) suite of software. This modeling will include statistical analysis of hydrologic data; processing and manipulating meteorological data to support hydrological modeling; simulating the complete hydrologic process of the watershed system, including event infiltration, unit hydrographs and hydrologic routing; the modeling applications will allow users to perform one and two dimensional unsteady flow calculations, sediment transport and water quality modeling; it will also project consequence assessments including loss of life and economic losses. Approximately 1,165 stream miles will be modeled, 380 miles in 1D and 785 miles in 2D. The cost to complete this project is roughly \$2.7 million with a final report and user guide being developed by January 31, 2019. And so again, the goal of this is to give you a high level presentation as it relates to all watersheds across the state. We did have some discussion at our last meeting around Comite. We want to broaden that discussion to include Comite, and again other interest based on where you are geographically in the state and across these parishes. Again, on the next meeting, we will have a much more detailed outline and structure of these individual watersheds and you will hear presentations from FEMA and other federal and state partners. But we wanted to shed some light and give you a snap shot of where we are at and where we plan to be over the next year or so as we move forward with these watershed projects. I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have. And yes, it is highly technical.

**Mr. Durbin opened the floor for questions.**

**Mr. Durbin:** Any questions to Ms. Wesley? Alright, thank you Ms. Wesley. Appreciate your comments.

**Mr. Durbin closed the floor for questions.**

### **III. APPROVAL OF JUNE 9, 2017 MEETING MINUTES**

**Mr. Durbin:** Okay, members of the committee, we will go back to item three, which is the approval of the minutes of the May 12, 2017 meeting. We have a quorum with Representative Shadoin.

**Mr. Dartez:** Motioned.

**Mr. Bradberry:** Seconded.

**Representative James:** Seconded.

**Mr. Durbin:** Motioned by Dartez, seconded by Bradberry and James. All in favor signify by saying aye.

**All Members:** Aye.

### **VI. LOUISIANA OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

~ **Patrick Forbes, Executive Director**

~ **LaSonta Davenport – Small Business Program**

~ **Robert Bizot and Nicole Sweazy – Rental Programs**

~ **Nick Speyrer – Homeowner Assistance Program**

**Mr. Durbin:** Moving to item six, alright, Mr. Forbes, Office of Community Development Executive Director will make his remarks.

**Mr. Forbes:** Good morning, Mr. Chairman, members of the task force. Thank you for having me here. I will get started with the presentation.

**Mr. Forbes began his PowerPoint presentation. The PowerPoint can be found on [restore.la.gov](http://restore.la.gov) website. During the presentation, Mr. Forbes was joined at the witness table by Ms. Davenport to discuss the Small Business Program,**

**Mr. Bizot and Ms. Sweazy to discuss the Rental Programs, and Mr. Speyrer to discuss the Homeowner Assistance Program.**

**Mr. Durbin allowed questions during the presentation therefore the floor was never officially opened.**

**Mr. Bradberry:** Pat, would you consider, you had 30 outreach events and it covered 750 people, that's about 25 per event, was that part of your expectation? That seems kind of low to me.

**Mr. Forbes:** We had very low participation at a couple of them. Hammond hardly had anybody there. The average is a little bit – thank you. Nick Speyrer with Emergent.

**Mr. Speyrer:** So the 750 homeowners were at those six specific all day events, Mr. Bradberry. The other 30 events varied. Churches would host them, community organizers would host them. So they would vary from ten people to a couple of hundred people at some of those events. So that 750 number is just for the six all day events.

**Mr. Forbes:** So that was a hundred and something per event. You can stay up here.

**Mayor Norris:** Pat, let me ask you, can you give us a breakdown by parish? I'd like to know if Ouachita Parish is responsive. Some of the parishes are going to respond a lot faster than others do. If we had a breakdown by parish of the number of people that possibly ought, whatever the population is that should be replying and then if we knew how many there were, maybe we could do some things on the local level to stimulate interest.

**Mr. Forbes:** We are going to get to that in about two slides, but thank you.

**Mayor Norris:** Okay.

**Mayor Norris:** I think local governments would be great to help. They'll have managed those meetings, or set those meetings up. If we had a good script to go by to make sure that we are giving the right information, I can assure you Monroe would do that.

**Mr. Forbes:** I appreciate that and that is exactly the strategy that we plan to adopt is to have force multipliers of our staff through city staff, through legislative staff, through church, through volunteer organizations active in disasters, all of those folks are eager to help and so our plan is to get the scripts, the document we've already printed.

**Mr. Speyrer:** Ten thousand flyers, so we are going to have all of this for you, Mr. Mayor. And very specific to your area, to where you can know the stats and we'll give you all the tools and resources and say tell us what to do and then we'll come help you.

**Mr. Faulk:** Pat, one avenue that you might not have thought about, many school systems have websites and we also have Facebook pages, and the parents are constantly reading updates, so if we could get a script, we could post it on our Facebook page, we could send it on the websites. School systems are registering students throughout the summer if you have something that we can put in the registration packet because I still have families that are displaced, and they pay attention to our Facebook page and our website because they are always looking for up-to-date information. I know Senator White is working on a very intense community outreach in Central and we are going to work with him but I think that's an avenue that you can pursue to tying with Mayor Norris here with local governing authorities.

**Mr. Forbes:** Right, thank you.

**Mr. Speyrer:** Mr. Faulk, it's certainly a great idea, something that we want to be able to do, mitigate the word out for anybody that's listening. You can broadcast today, on our website, if you go under the homeowner's assistance program, there is a navigation called 'Share with Your Community', and on that webpage we have all the social media assets, pictures, the text that you can use, and the downloadable flyer. We can send it to you as well, but for anybody else, you can go on the website to pull these resources, to try to make your job easier to share information through your communication channels.

**Mr. Bradberry:** So, we have changed the strategy on outreach and so forth, if you can summarize that for me one more time and again, I apologize, and then more importantly, what does this do to your budget?

**Mr. Forbes:** Actually I would not characterize it as changing our strategy. I'd say that this has been our strategy all along, and we have talked about it in this way. It's just that the more people we can reach, these 26,000 people that have completed the survey, we don't have to go reach them with that door-to-door handshake now. So, it's just a continuation of the strategy that we've been on. The budget, we have budgeted for outreach of door-to-door and all these things.

**Mr. Bradberry:** So, are you within the budget?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes, sir. We spent about, I think we had a million dollars in the first three months and we spent \$250,000 on the public service announcement so we are still within the budget.

**Representative Pope:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In following up on what Mr. Faulk said, if you will get with me afterwards, I'll give you my email and I have access to every superintendent in the state, we can get that information to and it will help expedite that and I'm certain they'll be glad to do that.

**Mr. Forbes:** Thank you.

**Mr. Durbin:** Pat, is that the one where you have your Public Comment Period running right now, between yesterday and June 20?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes, sir. Well, the comment period is open right now for a 14 day period, and then we will submit that. The reason, normally you would expect something this minor, to be what we call a Non-Substantial Action Plan Amendment, but whenever we modify who is eligible for benefits, it de facto, becomes a Substantial Action Plan Amendment. Which means we have to go through the 14 day comment period and all that, so we're in the middle of all that now, or just starting it, thank you.

**Mr. Durbin:** Those lenders are on the website and their contact information?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes, sir.

**Mr. Knapp:** Pat, the number is very low. I know that is probably frustrating for staff and the lenders. For those who have, still a fairly low number, 130 inquiries, only 15 submitted. For those that haven't submitted, is there any analysis with them about what is preventing them from being interested in taking up the program?

**Mr. Forbes:** I'm going to ask Ms. LaSonta Davenport to join me and she can tell you that.

**Ms. Davenport:** Good morning. No such analysis, as of yet. We are two weeks exactly today into the application period. We received our numbers from the lenders just this Wednesday. So, we may have a slight increase in that, between then and a couple of days. We can definitely reach out to our lenders. What they are believing is that the marketing, the outreach on the state level needs to actually happen, and getting that information out along with the homeowners outreach in conjunction with that, they believe that would increase the communication and increase the number of businesses that would hear about the program.

**Mr. Forbes:** Good question, we can reach back out to the lenders and see if they've got a feel for what are the impediments.

**Mr. Knapp:** You mentioned the rental housing program has to have a substantial action plan amendment to change the beneficiaries. Is that a substantial action plan amendment that has to go out for public comment?

**Mr. Forbes:** No, we wrote that action plan so that it was broader. We just refined those for the first run at it.

**Mr. Knapp:** Okay, thank you.

**Mr. Durbin:** Pat, let me just break in right now, I'd like to recognize someone that just came in the back of the room. We have with us at this time, Congressman Garret Graves. Congressman, welcome to our meeting, glad to see you. Okay, Pat, you are going to move to the third appropriation recommendation?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes, sir. Thank you.

## **VII. THIRD APPROPRIATION FUNDING RECOMMENDATION**

**Mr. Forbes:** Third appropriation recommendation, we have, as I think you all know, been allocated some \$51 million from a \$400 million congressional appropriation. I think we understand, although I'm not positive of this, that some \$236 million of that 400 million is held back at this point. Because the appropriation covers not only disasters that have already occurred, but disasters that may occur through calendar year 2017 and beyond, they've held back funds for other disasters. Certainly, there's the possibility that if other disasters don't occur, they don't occur at the level that ours has reached, that we may get additional funding from that. I'm sure Congressman Graves can shed some light on this if I'm erring on this, but at this point, the only thing that we're counting is the 51,435,000. There is not a federal register notice published on these funds yet. And so as such, we can't submit the action plan amendment for how we would spend those funds. But in anticipation of that federal register notice being published in the next couple of weeks, we thought it would be prudent to bring a recommendation to you today. And if you approve the recommendation today, we'll finalize the action plan amendment, get it translated, and have it ready to publish for public comment once the federal register notice is published. We don't expect there to be any dramatically different language in the federal register notice. It's just that we can't really go publish for comment until they put it out. I'll walk through now our recommendations of the 51 million for homeowner programs. We are recommending \$37 million, 471,000 be committed to that. There are a few different pieces to this. First is expanding the program to fund phase 1 NFIP holders. You have all heard from your constituents and the folks in your communities all over the state about people who bought insurance, did the right thing, still have a gap in their recovery. And

yet, they were excluded from our program because we didn't have enough money, and we thought they had resources. We've heard that, it's probably been the most common comment we've gotten since opening up the homeowner program. We have identified a group of people in phase 1 who have flood insurance and have a remaining gap, 626 households, and that is expected to cost around \$19 million. You'll see the \$29 million number there, but the group we're describing, our estimated cost is about \$19 million. The reason we put the entire remaining amount in this line item is because everything we're working from right now is estimates, how much each house is going to cost to rebuild, how many people we're going to get to actually register and apply through the program. We've made estimates, those estimates will certainly be off one direction or another. What we want to do is leave these funds here, and as our estimates get refined, as we start to build houses, we start to give people reimbursement grants. And as we start to refine who is and is not going to actually apply, if we identify additional funds, we'll continue to expand this through additional phases of folks who have flood insurance. The next batch is around SBA loans. As you all know, we have heard, also, from hundreds of people about applying for an SBA loan, being required to do that, getting the loan. And then having that loan be a duplication of benefits for their grant, making them, in essence, ineligible for our grants. That hasn't changed, we've gotten no relief. The governor asked again for relief from that, there's been no relief, in fact, there was a response that that is not going to happen. The one group of people that HUD does allow us to potentially add to eligibility for our program are low to moderate income folks who applied for SBA, were approved, but never closed. They declined the loan, they never closed on the loan, and that constitutes 108 households. And we thought that it was important, at least, to try to help that one group of SBA applicants who HUD has said we may assist. And so we've recommended \$5 million for that group of folks.

**Mr. Olivier:** Pat, just to be clear, we are talking about the homeowner expansion to the NFIP holders? So, this would be people who are fitting the category of, perhaps, elderly and low to moderate income, in that gap there? And your estimation is that's about 620+?

**Mr. Forbes:** That's correct, actually, phase one is low to moderate income, either an elderly applicant or persons with disabilities living in the household, and at this point, outside of the floodplain. Phase two is the same criteria but inside the floodplain. So, that would be our next expansion.

**Mr. Olivier:** So, if you are in the floodplain and you had flood insurance, there's going to be preference over being outside of the floodplain?

**Mr. Forbes:** Just the opposite. The phase one, if you remember, is all those criteria but outside the floodplain. So, those are the people we're proposing funding first, and then we'll move to inside the floodplain.

**Mr. Forbes:** So, the third piece in the proposal for homeowner program is \$3 million for severe repetitive loss communities. We have identified two communities. Congressman Graves was actually instrumental in getting the natural resource conservation service and USDA to come to a couple of communities, and talk about a wetlands recreation program that they have. If they can get the whole neighborhood to move out, they can build a wetlands there, so they can buy those folks out. One is Pecan Acres in Point and one is Silver Leaf in Gonzalez. And these are communities that have just flooded over and over again. I think you have heard me talk about Pecan Acres before, they've flooded some 10 times in the last 12 years. The folks can't afford flood insurance because they're below the flood levels so it's \$4 to \$6,000 a year. They're mostly low to moderate income, and can't even access FEMA federal assistance, because of their inability to buy insurance. That's one of the requirements to get federal assistance again, after you've gotten it once before. We have been exploring ways to assist them, there are a couple of different pieces here. One, already in the homeowner budget, are the funds that they would be eligible for through our program. We can go help them with rebuilding costs over and above what NRCS can offer them for buyout. But we're also, we've set this money aside to look at ways to potentially do land purchase, infrastructure investments. So that we can make this an affordable, feasible move for all the folks. One of the hang-ups to this is that it requires 100% participation in the neighborhood. And so the approach here is that some folks simply can't afford to participate. And we don't want to see the whole thing go down, because one or two families can't afford, based on their pre-storm value, buyout from NRCS to move. So we're looking at ways to make that incentive great enough, so that the whole community can decide to move and get out of a place that has been flooding them for years. Additional funding for rental programs, I think we've walked through this before. But in essence, in all our conversations with HUD, they look at our unmet needs analysis when they look at our allocations. And our unmet needs analysis is about 90/10 split in housing programs between home owner and rental. And so our strategy here is just to continue to keep that 90/10 split in housing programs. So this rental program allocation is 10% of the total housing allocation that we're proposing. And that will just be added to the other programs, or expanded programs, in the future. The last piece in this is a watershed planning recommendation of \$9.8 million. You heard Erin talk earlier about this a little bit. We have funded, through some other funding sources, the \$2.7 million for the Amite River Basin watershed modeling, it's very expensive. Our total estimate for statewide approach to watersheds on this line item would be some \$60 million. Certainly we can't allocate \$60 million to that today. But what we do want to do is be able to take advantage of the work that Aaron mentioned earlier that FEMA's been doing. Looking at prioritizing watersheds,

and looking at risk associated with each of those watersheds. And then be able to start to have some funds available to allocate, to help local governments and, Drainage districts, who have a tool to help them make the best decisions with their funds. If we don't get additional funding for infrastructure enhancement, we know that jurisdictions all over the state are spending money on drainage improvements every day. What we want to do is be able to give them the tools to spend that money in the best way possible, on the smartest thing possible, and from a watershed perspective rather than a local jurisdictional perspective. And so that's what these funds would be aimed at. There are a few different ways to prioritize, one's looking at the ten most impacted and distressed parishes. Certainly, we know that's where most of the damage occurred. We also will have, from this FEMA watershed assessment, information about the highest risk watersheds. That is, the watersheds that have had the most intrusion into the floodplain. The most structures, the most people living in the floodplain, consequently where the greatest dangers lie, where we might get the most benefit from investing in a tool that helps us make smart water management decisions. This is just a look at what the overall budget would look like with this recommendation.

**Mr. Durbin:** Question, Pat, going back to the watershed planning, and this committee agreeing to your recommendations, who would be the entity or entities that would qualify for drawing against that \$9.8 million?

**Mr. Forbes:** That's a great question, it could be local governments. It could also be, for instance, in Acadiana, the various parishes of Acadiana are considering creating another entity that is based on the watershed of the Vermillion River. So it's entirely possible that we could look to an entity like that. We could look to an aggregation of parish governments that were all around a single watershed. We could look to drainage districts which for the most part are arranged along watershed lines. So it could be any number of entities that might be. It would just be a matter of, really, some of the other initiatives that Aaron was talking about will lead to this. Going and doing these regional summits and these meetings with FEMA where we get the, for instance, Monroe, West Monroe, Ouachita Parish West Carol Parish, all of those parishes in the watershed working together. At that point, it may or may not matter whether there is an actual state created jurisdiction around the watershed. Or whether they've just decided to work together in a way that we figure out what the project is, and fund it through one or more of those entities. So it's still open at this point.

**Mr. Durbin:** So, if there is money that it may be forthcoming months from now through the Congressional appropriation, this \$9.8 million can be supplemented to assist further watershed studies?

**Mr. Forbes:** Absolutely, in addition to hopefully infrastructure enhancements, we can start funding some of the things that we determined to be the smartest and best use of the funds for improving flood levels in the future.

**Representative Pope:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To follow up on that, just for my information, this \$9 million plus, would that be based on a competitive application, or how we going to determine where that's going? I heard Erin talk about the number of watersheds around the state and I think all of us up here don't realize \$9 million is not going where it needs to go, and so my question to you is, how will that be dispersed?

**Mr. Forbes:** That's a good question. At this point, I would think that we would want to make the decision based on risk assessments for all those watersheds. In combination with the willingness and ability of the aggregated local governments to work together. Because that's going to really drive the success of this plan. In that case, it may ultimately wind up being a competitive process. So that jurisdictions can come demonstrate their willingness and ability to work together. And also we can use the risk assessments that we have and are developing. So that we can put those two things together and figure out the best places to go.

**Representative Pope:** So, if it is a competitive process, which probably will be based on your conversation, I assume that they are going to have to be really good to convince you, is that correct? Or your office?

**Mr. Forbes:** I don't know that it would necessarily be us, Community Development, this has been an effort among DOTD, CPRA and our office, and other state agencies that may get pulled into that as well. It will not necessarily be my office. It would more than likely be some commission, some river basin commission that would statewide consider all those and figure out where the money should go.

**Representative Pope:** But once the money got here it would be a state entity and a state determination.

**Mr. Forbes:** Probably making the decision, but not necessarily signing contracts with people to do the work. That would probably go to the local level but that is all to be decided.

**Representative Pope:** But we don't have to deal with the federal government anymore, that's what I'm getting at.

**Mr. Forbes:** No, sir, I wouldn't necessarily say that, certainly the Corps of Engineers is almost in all, included the Red River. It's almost unavoidable, but they wouldn't be involved in the contracting, but there certainly would be permitting and things like that if we go do construction.

**Representative Pope:** Yeah, that's what my fear was, thank you.

**Mr. Forbes:** That's only if we do construction. I think we can plan our behinds off without the Corps.



**Mayor Norris:** I think it's time, maybe this money could be the leverage to do it. If we don't start involving the water sheds, forget about jurisdictions of cities and parishes and this sort of thing. That we really never accomplish anything. I know of some drainage projects that are contemplated in a Parish that will put more water faster on the city of West Monroe. We don't have much choice about that. That means we need to put efforts a little bit more. Nobody thinks in terms of flood water detention very much. They just want to get, let me get it off my property, let the guy downstream worry about it. I think this may be an opportunity, and I know you've got plenty to do. But all things Erin talked about, she talked so fast. I'm still trying to process what she was telling us. But if we really are going to be serious about studying watersheds, then we ought to make funding. Any kind of funding for planning, or from construction that they base on applications from a watershed not from the City of Monroe, or West Monroe, or whatever it is. Especially in south Louisiana, the flood that you had, innovated a 100% of a parish. So you can't look at a particular jurisdiction and say, hey let's figure out how to solve ours. I think that ought to be, maybe it's going to require state law, or it's going to require some kind of requirement. That says, has this been vetted through the total watershed, rather than your city engineers saying, this is something to do. Think about that if we're going to. \$10 million is not a lot of money, but it's a lot of money that could be used to design projects based on watershed.

**Mr. Forbes:** Thank you sir, couldn't agree more. That is in fact the whole focus of everything that Erin was talking about, and what I'm talking about with the ten million dollars. It will absolutely be focused on those watersheds that can get together, and agree to approach their flood management from a watershed perspective.

**Dr. Richardson:** What time period do we have for spending that money? Is there a time limit?

**Mr. Forbes:** All of these funds have a six year from appropriation, I think it is.

**Dr. Richardson:** So, that should be more than enough. In fact, \$10 million, can go in about six months probably, at least.

**Mr. Forbes:** Unfortunately.

**Dr. Richardson:** Yes and I just want to second Mayor Morrison's statement, if we do it city by city, we're killing ourselves.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir, no intention of doing that. This is in fact aimed at if all we have is \$10 million to do this at the very least, what we can do is demonstrate for the rest of the state what a watershed based approach looks like. To manage in floods, rather than the jurisdictional approach. That's also the objective of these three summits that Aaron talked about in basin, and the north shore. Is to demonstrate the not only benefit, but necessity of approaching flood drainage work, and flood management through a watershed.

**Dr. Richardson:** And, who did you say at the end of the day was going to have the final say so know where that \$9.8 million goes? You didn't say exactly.

**Mr. Forbes:** I didn't, I'm leaving that open, but I want to make sure that everybody knows that DOTD, who currently has flood management jurisdiction around the state to a certain degree, the CPRA who has tremendous modeling and scientific capabilities, GOHSEP, who has been working with FEMA on this watershed assessment, and also Community Development, just by virtue of the community development block grant funds, we have all been working together towards this idea, and I'm certain that as we get to the process of defining who gets the money and for what that will be a joint approach.

**Mr. Knapp:** Is the \$9.8 million sufficient to complete any single one of the watersheds? This wasn't mentioned in three phases that are going to be happening into the phase watershed program in three different regions of Louisiana. Is the \$9.8 sufficient to complete any single one of those region watershed modelling?

**Mr. Forbes:** It would be. We're spending \$2.7 million on any reverberation. And this is probably one of the biggest ones that we'll have to look at, and they had to do, they had to gather all new data. To be able to do that, that was an expensive piece. Part of what we will do with this is look all the water shades and what we have already, what sort of data? What sort of plan? How old those data sets and plans are and start to asses exactly where the biggest risks are and the biggest unknowns. So that then we can go do modeling. The H&H modeling yes, probably you could do depending on the size of the water sheds maybe three, four, and five. Again, depending on the size.

**Mr. Faulk:** So, in essence, you are saying instead of shooting a shotgun, we are going to shoot a rifle and focus.

**Mr. Forbes:** Hopefully three or four shots with a rifle, yes.

**Mr. Faulk:** Okay, and there's still people in communities when we have a rain, they are still very, very antsy about and we had a three inch rain in central and we had holes that flooded again. And so, these folks are still, in the back of their mind, have the fear. And I know there has been a lot of talk about the Amite River diversion. I know there's a lot of talk about the Red River and stuff. But you know, we can plan and study all we want, we still have people being impacted.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir, I understand. With funding as limited as it is, it seems critically important to make sure that we make the wisest decisions with the limited funding we have regarding what projects to build. And as Mayor Norris suggested earlier, we've seen a lot of drainage projects that might help a neighborhood and hurt three neighborhood or hurt an entire

parish below. So it really takes a scientific approach to make sure that we not only do no harm but get the greatest benefit that we possibly can from the tax money that people are spending every year on their drainage districts.

**Mr. Knapp:** Just coming back to this. I think one observation of all different entities is the complexity of a lot of different groups being involved. CPRA has clearly modeling a scientific ability. The Water Institute to the Gulf might be another good partner. I know they work with the CPRA quite closely. It might be a way to centralize some sort of alliance of all these research partnerships.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes, thank you.

**Mr. Durbin:** Mr. Forbes, have you completed your recommendation?

**Mr. Forbes:** I have. So at this point, as I've suggested earlier, if the task force is amendable, I'm suggesting an approval by the task force of this recommendation. So that whenever we do get the federal register notice, we can publish as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Durbin:** Representative Pope, you have a question?

**Representative Pope:** Thanks for taking my question before the motion, and I do have one or two comments that I would like to make before we possibly move on this. Number one, and I apologize for not being on the conference call this week. We were doing other crazy things around this building, or the lack of crazy things around this building. Lack of is a better term. But your recommendation and I am looking at it. You had talked about awhile ago I guess the home owners program expanding it. You got \$29 million in there right now. You said you probably wouldn't need but \$19. Is that correct?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes, sir,

**Representative Pope:** Could it be a possibility of taking that \$10 million now and before we take action on this in moving it to the watershed so we'll have more monies to do something with that with?

**Mr. Forbes:** It's absolutely within the authority of the task force sure.

**Representative Pope:** I guess I would need some feedback from you as to why we would not want to consider that because I think it would be something we may want to consider.

**Mr. Forbes:** It is entirely possible. Yes, if you did that you would be restricting assistance to flood insurance people who are flood insured just to phase one until we identify additional available funds from under subscription of the program or we get additional funds from an additional appropriation. So, at this point, the \$10 million would not be enough to move into phase two and so it would be sitting on the sidelines until we get more data or more money. Is that the kind of information?

**Representative Pope:** Well, I accept your thing but I'm not sure I agree with it but I'm going to let it go at that.

**Mr. Forbes:** Which piece? I'll make sure I'm clearly answering.

**Representative Pope:** Well, it's the piece where it says homeowners program, expand program fund to phase one of the NFIP, National Flood Insurance Program. You indicated you put \$29 million in there and indicated in your explanation that you probably wouldn't even need \$19 in phase one.

**Mr. Forbes:** That's right.

**Representative Pope:** You want to take the other \$10 and do what with it?

**Mr. Forbes:** That's what I'm trying to say, sorry I wasn't clear. You are exactly right, it's going to be sitting on the sidelines until we identify other funds to go to phase two.

**Representative Pope:** Absolutely. Well, I'll just go ahead and say it, I'm suggesting we might want to consider putting it into the watershed then wait. I mean, Mr. Faulk is up here talking about the Comite Diversion. I mean, we've been trying to do this forever, and you've heard the story and you've heard all the people and the way that people here chose not to come today to make a, you know, for whatever reasons, presentation. But unless we start doing something to be proactive in that. I mean, I'm not sure we're helping a lot of these people. I'm being honest with you. I mean, if they're going to continue to flood, what have we done? You've heard my spill before and I'm not going to bore these people up here with it.

**Mr. Forbes:** I echo your frustration. Whenever we're investing billions of dollars, not only in CDBG funds, but FEMA public assistance and bank loans and people's retirement. All those billions of dollars into these watersheds and not being able to do much to help make the risk of future flooding less, it's extremely frustrating. This is our attempt at getting started on that. I have no argument against moving \$10 million more into that.

**Representative Pope:** Not to interject any political aspect on this but since the Congressman is here, I know that he's worked extremely hard to try to get additional funding for this, he may want to help comment on that, I don't know. But anyway, I'm going to let it drop. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Dartz:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Along the lines of Representative Pope, the action we take today, this is it, it's final? If we go down the road and realize we may be able to move some of that \$10 million, can we amend this resolution?

**Mr. Forbes:** Absolutely, we always have the option of submitting an additional action plan amendment that reallocates funds from one program to another.

**Mr. Dartez:** The reason I said is we're trying to figure out if we can, I understand completely what you're trying to do, and having had \$10 million buffer for phase two, but if we can realize we may not need it all, we can address Representative Pope's issue, of more watershed funding. I just want to make sure that we're not locking ourselves in today, if possible.

**Mr. Forbes:** You have the additional options of not allocating the full \$51 million today. You could propose an action plan amendment that allocates some portion of that and leaves a portion of it unallocated for a later action plan amendment if you wanted to consider further modifying the allocations among these different programs.

**Mr. Dartez:** With that said, Pat, does that hamper you at all dealing with the federal government, if you go with an action plan?

**Mr. Forbes:** No.

**Mr. Dartez:** All right, thank you.

**Mr. Knapp:** Mr. Forbes, as you were just getting to the point I was going to raise and I completely commend and back up what Representative Pope is suggesting about how to potentially reallocate and change these things. Now on the calls that we had to talk through these, the importance of the categories that are in here for homeowner needs, the additional gaps of homeowner needs, I think you'd find very serious consensus around most of the categories. The challenge of the phase one that you described, that \$19 million. Those who were LMI households declined, who did decline SBA loans. The severe repetitive loss communities, the rental housing programs, those together add up to I think, \$31.9 million of the \$51 million, if I'm doing my math right, which is always a question. The gap that would be after that would be around \$19 million, a portion of which would be the \$10 million that is the difference on that homeowner program. But you could look across other categories including, I guess you want to talk about the watershed program but what I was going to suggest is there's a question between the Comite construction sides of this also. On the call and I think it'd be worthwhile just making sure we're explicit in the conversations that have been had about this. The CDBG funding is really, by staff's read of this, not a great source of construction funds for the Comite project. And the concerns have been complex to get through it at this moment, but in the staff's conversations about it, it gets into a question of whether you stick with the core as the primary lead project manager on the Comite project, and the challenges then of using CDBG or HMGP if you go in that direction. And then if you choose to break up with the core, the possibility of using some of these sources, CDBG, capital outlay, HMGP, whatever other sources you might want to blend together come with their own other problems of the ownership of the project in the future. That is all seemingly wrapped up in to this conversation as well. Which is, if you wanted too, start construction on a project of which this \$19 million might be a means by which to start some of that depending on what choices could be made. The presentation from Ms. Wesley as it suggests, there's a lot more data and modeling that would be the wisest choice from the staff's recommendation is to make some decisions based on the best information about what mitigates future risk and then allocating dollars accordingly. If I'm following all this together, the sense is, is that CDBG shouldn't be held aside for construction. It should be used as much as possible for planning in the watershed. I think it would be important to hear that the administration, the staff, GOHSEP, believe that there is a means by which to see Comite funding secured for construction with the many different resources that are out there for that possibility. And if that is the case, I think that gives some confidence to folks that there is a future path and a commitment to finding the resources to getting that done. Which would then lead us with confidence into the need for the watershed planning to go forward. All which is to say, if all that is right, I support making the adjustment that Representative Pope is recommending. With the confidence too, that the team at the state level are looking at how to find a way to get that \$200 some odd million dollars for construction allocated through the many sources that are out there.

**Mr. Forbes:** I can't speak for the Governor's Office but I have been involved in many meetings where all those entities are working very hard to arrive at a way to get the Comite funded.

**Ms. Wesley:** No, I'll echo those comments again. Erin Monroe Wesley, Special Counsel, Office of the Governor. We are laser like focused on co-meet in addition to other watershed projects. We talked earlier about the broad scale planning purpose. And you'll see the \$9.8 going toward that broad scale planning. But as it's specifically relates to Comite, the Governor's talked about his several trips to Washington D.C. I believe he's gone 10 times now since August. And on each occasion he's asked about and demanded money for Comite. And certainly Congressmen can attest to that, and the full delegation can attest to the fact that we're working together to ensure that that \$125 million from the Corps is allocated to the state, it's certainly not been easy. We've asked for infrastructure enhancements as part of our CDBG request, and we were denied those infrastructure enhancements. And so we're still continuing to battle with the broader Congress to fight for those additional co-meet dollars. So that's certainly a commitment from the Governor's office as we then tie that into the planning efforts over all around those 22 watershed projects.

**Mr. Richardson:** Erin, all of the planning for financial needs will include federal money?

**Ms. Wesley:** And there are some state dollars, correct if I'm wrong Pat, but there is some state dollars as well that can be allocated.

**Dr. Richardson:** But not to fund the whole thing?

**Ms. Wesley:** This is just for planning purposes.

**Dr. Richardson:** Just for planning?

**Ms. Wesley:** Just for planning.

**Mr. Forbes:** This is for planning, but there is capital outlay funding set aside for the non-federal share for the Comite Diversion as well.

**Dr. Richardson:** Okay, yes, but still, federal funding is essential?

**Ms. Wesley:** Yes.

**Dr. Richardson:** And we have no control over that? Except in a very indirect way.

**Mr. Forbes:** Right.

**Mr. Durbin:** Alright, I heard a comment probably 30 minutes ago from response comments by Adam Knapp that, and Pat I think you said this, \$2.7 million will be spent on the Amite Basin. Tell me where that, who came up with \$2.7 million will be spent on the Amite Basin.

**Mr. Forbes:** Shortly after the floods, we started recognizing the massive damages in Amite River Basin, we started looking for funding opportunities beyond the CDBG funds, and located planning funds from previous disaster that we could spend on that effort. And so, in order to not wait for the federal appropriation, and all that that entails, we started, last fall, looking at how do we take these funds and get them to work on the Amite River Basin immediately. So, we went to DOTD, who has contracts with firms to do this sort of hydraulic and hydrologic modeling, and they selected a contractor and we provided the funding.

**Mr. Durbin:** So, I'm confused up to this point. The \$2.7 million to be spent on the Amite Basin that is not coming out of the \$9.8 million?

**Mr. Forbes:** No, sir. We got that from another source.

**Mr. Durbin:** Okay, so my final question that I have is how does the guidelines that will be coming from HUD through the federal register publication, is the \$9.8 million going to be factored into their guidelines or is something that OCD has flexibility with?

**Mr. Forbes:** They stress housing needs and meeting unmet housing needs. But they also leave open as evidenced by the fact that we've been able to invest in some PA match and small business development. They also allow expenditures that make the housing expenditures more viable. And so, woefully expect that they would allow this spending on this planning effort. To the extent that we could get all low to moderate income housing un-met needs met, our hands would be much freer to do infrastructure projects. But until we can meet, fully meet, all the low to moderate income housing needs. We're going to be in sort of a tight spot with respect to how much we can spend on other, other initiatives.

**Mayor Norris:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wonder if putting another \$9 or \$10 million into planning will help advance the Comite River project. The Corps of Engineers has done a study and they have made their analysis on the cost benefit. What are you going to accomplish with another study?

**Mr. Forbes:** I don't think that any, none of the money we are talking about today if spent on planning would have any impact at all on the Comite River Diversion because it is part of the Amite River Basin, which we are already modeling.

**Mayor Norris:** So, it doesn't get you any closer to construction.

**Mr. Forbes:** No, sir. If we had \$20 million in planning, in all likelihood, none of it would advance. Comite or anything else in the Amite River Basin because we are already spending \$3 million on that.

**Mr. Durbin:** Any other questions or comments from the committee? Alright.

**Mr. Forbes:** So, we put a draft motion in your binders for consideration.

**Mr. Durbin:** That's tab six. And we need to regain our quorum, we are missing two state representatives. Okay we have Representative James in the back. Can somebody stick their head outside the door?

**Representative Shadoin:** Never have a meeting right after the legislature.

**Mr. Durbin:** Okay, I recognize Roland Dartez.

**Mr. Dartez:** Mr. Chairman, I move that we accept the recommendation, resolution.

**Mr. Durbin:** Okay, we have a motion by Roland Dartez to accept the recommendation, seconded by Johnny Bradberry. Any questions, comments. Call the roll. Yes, one by one. Okay, turn your microphone on.

**Ms. Dupont:**

Mr. Bradberry	<b>Support</b>	Mr. Gallagher	<b>Absent</b>
Mr. Dartez	<b>Support</b>	Mr. Jetson	<b>Absent</b>
Mr. Durbin	<b>Support</b>	Senator Morrish	<b>Absent</b>
Mr. Faulk	<b>Support</b>	Mr. Pierson	<b>Absent</b>
Representative James	<b>Support</b>	Mr. Reilly	<b>Absent</b>
Mr. Knapp	<b>Support</b>	Mayor-President Robideaux	<b>Absent</b>
Mayor Norris	<b>Support</b>	Mayor Tyler	<b>Absent</b>
Mr. Olivier	<b>Support</b>	Dr. Wilson	<b>Absent</b>
Representative Pope	<b>Support</b>	Ms. Wyatt	<b>Absent</b>
Dr. Richardson	<b>Support</b>		
Representative Shadoin	<b>Support</b>		

**Ms. Dupont:** Eleven approvals, Sir Chair, the resolution has passed.

**Mr. Forbes:** Before I step away from the table I wanted to say a couple of things. We've had a couple of major staffing changes in the Office of Community Development. We have added Mr. Mark Riley as the Chief of Staff to take Mr. Gaudet's place. I'm sure all of you are familiar with Mr. Riley and his work at GOHSEP. And Mrs. Lauren Nichols is going to be the Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives, which will do a lot of the work around our policy and already does around our policy development for action plans and those sorts of things, as well as for the planning initiatives that would be using these funds for the watershed work. Without any other questions, thank you very much.

**Mr. Durbin:** Thank you. I see we have IEMs representatives in the audience on the front row. Mr. Mabry, any one of you like to make a public comment? Giving the committee and whoever's watching across the media an update on how things are going in the state of Louisiana? You weren't on the agenda, and I surprised you with this invite, but I'm interested myself.

**Ms. Beriwal:** Thank you very much, Mayor, and members of the task force. I'm Madhu Beriwal. I'm President of IEM and we're happy with the progress so far. It's been five weeks and as you heard we've had eight checks go out. We have 4,000, over 4,000, applicants that have access to the applications at this point. About 200 of them have completed their applications. We've got 8,000 environmental assessments done, about 8,100 so far. And we have the Housing Assistance Centers open, two of them open. One of them will be open today in Lafayette. And Hammond will be starting Monday of the week after. So I think it's a good start. The team has been working very hard and we know that this is just the start of it. So it's the end of the beginning. And so we really have a long ways to go through the program but I'm heartened by the progress made by the team so far.

**Mr. Mabry:** Yeah, I would jump in and echo both of these comments here. I think we did everything we said we would do the last time that we met. And I'm proud to say I'd invite everyone out to our service center. And one thing that we talked about earlier that Nick spoke to, and both Pat, is the outreach. And we're taking that to the communities that is the next step of this program. We've had a lot of outreach into communities. Both our mobile center and our plan that we're putting together next week to really get out into the communities, where there are mobile outreach centers to take in applications and surveys. But I'm very proud of where we at. Especially having ran Mississippi's, New York's, I can tell you we get checks out the door faster, because I was there. Okay, and it was good to have the governor visit. I would recommend everyone come over to the facility and visit as well. Going back to the targeted outreach and where we've got the data down to the census tract where the people are. And as Nick mentioned earlier, we will be getting that information out to you all so you can help us with this outreach. We do appreciate everyone's support and I think things are going well.

**Mr. Bradberry:** We are hearing good things and I would expect an answer that would not be any less than what you have already stated, but what are some of the hurdles you have been faced with? What are the people telling us? What are some of the things that are roadblocks that are slowing us down and we make up in other areas? But this is not a perfect world, ladies and gentlemen. So tell us some of the things that you feel we need to continue to focus on and get improvement on, to make sure that we expedite getting people back in their houses as soon as possible.

**Mr. Mabry:** Sure, as you know in any of these programs, there's federal requirements. And getting the documentation from the applicants is one of the things that you have to do. I would say it's not a roadblock, but it's a challenge. And that's the reason we have these mobile intake centers to go out and get the information. Scan it, upload it, and document it. I think we've addressed a number if these as we move through. The lead-based paint, we knew that was going to be an obstacle. And we mentioned earlier that we had the 43 individuals, residents in Louisiana passed that test. And we need to get probably about 25 to 30 more certified, but that's a week-long test and it's a pass or fail. I mean there's a number of folks that did not pass the test. So that would be one of the hurdles. The income verification is one that you got to get through, get everyone's income, so that's a challenge, but I believe we're getting through those.

**Ms. Beriwal:** I think the biggest issue that we are dealing with right now is public outreach and making sure that people come in. We know that we have done a lot already in the last five weeks to let them know about the program. But I think it's important to really go out and do micro-targeting. Go to the communities, go to the outreach centers, put the outreach centers in the community, at the churches, and at the libraries so that people can come more easily to us. And we can directly also go to the people, to their homes, and start to get to people directly. I think this is the most important thing that we need to do right now, is have the number of people that complete the surveys go up from the current under 30,000 to closer to that 60,000 mark.

**Mr. Bradberry:** A little bit, that seems to me to be the big hurdle getting people, getting exposed to people and letting get exposure to the process. And I commend your effort, now you're rethinking on how you're going to do that. So I really support that and I encourage you to keep that up.

**Ms. Beriwal:** Absolutely, and I appreciate the support from the task force members and from all the representatives. Because if we can get their support to reach out to the people to their constituents and see where we have large packets of homeowners that are affected. And have their representatives who they know and worked with already, reach out to them and say we really need you to come into the program and see what the program can do for you. So I think this is, the challenges will continue but we'll have challenges in sequence and this is the current challenges, is to and we are really using the same plan that we had as Pat Forbes said, but it's going to the next phase of it. We've done the mass broadcast effort already, and now we're going to the micro effort, that's the micro-targeting of specific neighborhoods, specific census tracts. Last time when we were here, you asked who some of our team members were. We were not prepared with a detailed answer but we have an answer today. We have a brochure made with the names of all of the companies that we submitted the bid with. And we'll leave this for the task force members to see the numbers of companies that are, particularly the 28 companies that are from Louisiana, on our team. So you know who they are.

**Mr. Bradberry:** So, option one or the option two for the homeowner, either doing on their own or getting someone from the registry to it, how is that coming? Are you seeing what you thought you were going to see relative to homeowners using option one versus option two?

**Mr. Mabry:** That's an interesting question. Being an auditor, I look at numbers. And out of the let's take the ten okay, we've had eight people close. We've got two scheduled to close today. What's interesting to me and these are phase one phase two people. Seven of the ten have been reimbursement only. Okay, so they finished their construction, which I found interesting. Now, that's probably not representative at this point, but the other three were construction. Two of the three were homeowner managed construction and one is solution one. If you look back and you get back to the original RFP, I think the projection was 10 to 15% in around solution one. It's tough to tell where it's tracking right now with the ten. But I mean look we had one out of the ten, so that's around 10%. It's too early to but to tell you where they're going to land. But what we wanted to do and when you come over to the center and you see what we built, I mean we built a house, essentially. You walk in, you can see the materials, you can touch them, you can feel them to encourage folks, especially in solution one, to participate with a solution one builder. A lot of folks don't have the capacity to be able to manage on their own and I wanted to see that materials that they would get, show them I don't know if that generally-

**Mr. Bradberry:** How is your registry coming for solution two?

**Mr. Mabry:** Well we built a, and I'll get you the information, but we've built a website intake that we've got forms, and we can vet the contractors. The registry is not up yet, but that is, so we've been working towards that.

**Mr. Knapp:** It looks like about, I'm looking at tab four of our package that looks at the ten most impacted parishes and those that are missing surveys. Or percentages of missing surveys versus those completed, it looks like about 61% of the missing surveys are in three parishes. Where the most severe impact has been East Baton Rouge, Livingston, and Ascension. The highest percentage uptake has been for surveys in East Baton Rouge, but still, there's a big overall number of missing surveys. Is there a way to know, are you all asking the question, if those that are not completing the surveys are doing so for any reason because of future flood risk in the water shed?

**Mr. Speyrer:** That's a great question, Adam, Nick Speyrer again. We're hearing a variety of things a lot of people aren't doing the survey at these outreach events. And it's been enlightening, and we've adapted our messaging that we're doing to try to encourage folks to take the survey. In addition to that, Adam, those have mostly been people that were somehow looking to find us. We started outbound calls this week, so we've got the database from FEMA. We've got the addresses, we've got the phone numbers. And our customer service reps, if they have a spare minute, they've got a list of people that they're doing outbound calls for. We're going to get that report today. There's a variety of reasons we're sort of anecdotally tracking, haven't heard that just yet in terms of the flood risk concern. But certainly, we're trying to gather that information and make sure our messaging is appropriate in relation to that.

**Representative James:** Thank you. Adam asked one of the questions, and I know one of my constituents is here. And you guys are going to hear from her doing the public testimony. But I continue to hear, and this one is telling that only one

person decided to do the state managed. And you're going to hear, because I constantly hear about frustrations with shelter at home. And there's a huge fear there about the state-run programs. So I hope that in your conversations, I know that you guys are going to have to do a lot of selling because of a lot of heartburn there. The second piece I have, this morning I saw one of the commercials. I want to reiterate my comment from the last meeting. I think it's very important that we include some of the homeowners to give their story because homeowners are going to need to see that their neighbors used the program, and they were successful at it. And hopefully now that we have a bit of break again, I want to reiterate to you guys that myself and my colleagues, I know I can speak for Representative Pope and Representative Shadoin, use us. Let us help you guys put out that messaging. I do social media a lot, and whatever else I need to do to, to kind of get that message out there. But I know that the concern has been a fear from shelter at home. One question, because I get calls from contractors as well, all you guys, is there when an opportunity closed for some businesses that want to get involved? Because I get questions, how do they contact you guys? How do they get involved? So give me an idea of what I can tell those folks when they contact me.

**Mr. Mabry:** Sure, there is opportunities, and we are going to be building, especially in the construction and trades area, and what I need to do for you, Representative James, is give you the website where they can register. We've got a phone number as well, and that is where the opportunities will be.

**Representative James:** Okay, yeah, because I just didn't know what to tell them folks that are calling. I know you guys have a very good team. I've kind of followed you guys, but again, we get those calls, but I want to reiterate, and you're going to hear from Ms. Collins, who is here. The concern has been frustration with the previous program, and I know that, I speak to folks and I also spoke, there's a gentleman, and I hate to waste your guys' time. But there's a guy who works here, I forgot who he lobbies for. But he was a flood victim, and he decided not to because his home is already completed. And his story is I want to allow my neighbors, who didn't have their opportunity that I had to make sure, not to say that he didn't have to pull money from things. But I hear that as well, like I want to allow other flood victims who may not have the resources that I had to move forward. But I try to continue to tell even those folks to apply and submit the survey because I know that we need to get that information to tell our story about why we need more funds. So I just wanted to put that out there, because I've heard that a couple times.

**Mr. Mabry:** We appreciate that, and to your earlier point about setting the expectations, absolutely on the money. And that's the reason we built that home, at the facility. You can touch it, you can feel it, and you can go out to the website and see it. And as far as completing the survey, we absolutely must get people in. And if we want some more money, additional allocation, we need to demonstrate the need. And the way to demonstrate the need is through the survey.

**Representative Pope:** Well, I couldn't go without just telling you what I think today. And I've said this before and I refuse, I want to know, when I got here, I wasn't going to say it again but I have to say it again, based on comments I've heard. And just the opposite of what Representative James, and I think he's right on target about people. The people that I talk to every day in the world that I live in, they're not too concerned about filling out a survey because they know that there's nothing at the end of the rope, right? That's the bottom line. They get the fact that there's nothing there for me. And two, is the bureaucracy that we've had to deal with the federal government, which you all have no control over. So don't take this as a slap on the face. That's not what I'm trying to do here. If we go to FEMA, we have to fill out a form. Then you're referred to SBA, you have to fill out another form, which happens to be the same damn form. You understand? And then it's another form, if that 12% that had insurance, they have to go through the hoops and the dance, and I think that that's why Pat's recommended to do something about it. With that, which I'm all for it, I applaud it, because those people have to fight the mortgage companies and the insurance companies. So that's the reason that my people are not really concerned about this. Because they've already gone out there and taken what resources they've had or wherever they could go to borrow their extra money that they could get to borrow and float another loan. Even though that they've had a mortgage and all that, they've got third thing. And they just tell me, Representative Pope, you've got to be nuts. You've got to be crazy, I'm not filling out anymore forms. Why would I want to do that? There's nothing at the end of the tunnel. And that's frustrating, it's frustrating for me, it's frustrating for them. And that's my last soap box.

**Mr. Durbin:** Okay, gentlemen, anything else to offer? Nobody else wishes to ask you a question. Thank you for your presentation and update.

**Mr. Mabry:** I'll leave these pamphlets here for you as well.

**Mr. Durbin:** Thank you, okay, Congressman Graves, would you like to come up and make a few comments? We welcome you. I'm not going to ask you any questions, we are just going to take your comments.

**Congressman Graves:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, all of you, I appreciate the work that you do and I appreciate the opportunity to be here. Just in listening to the comments, I wanted to respond to a few things, number one, on the \$51 million, Mr. Forbes noted that for the first time I've ever seen, there's a reserve fund that's been set aside of that \$400 million

and the third of the CDBG funds. Approximate \$227 million I think, is the amount that they've set aside in reserve. I've never seen HUD do that before, we're meeting with Secretary Carson next week, and that's going to be a big part of our discussion. It's going to be for the register notice, it's going to be about releasing some of the remaining CBDG funds to the State of Louisiana. There is some disparity between some of the numbers we have and some of the numbers HUD is using to inform the Appropriations Committee regarding the impacts. And so we're working to continue to reconcile those to get additional funds, whether it be through the remaining \$227 million that we have previously appropriated or through the Fiscal Year 18 Appropriations Bill that we're going to have to have done by October 1<sup>st</sup> of this year, so message there is that we are working on additional funding. Number two, the discussion on the Comite project, Mr. Bradberry's here, Chairman Bradberry's here and I'd ask any of you. Name a Corps of Engineers project that has been finished in the last, I think I can say 20 years. With the exception of the Hurricane Protection System, were the repairs to the hurricane protection system after Katrina. Name one, you all are from all over Louisiana, name one, here is my point. The only one that I can think of, General Bradberry, was that I think we did Davis Pond in maybe within 20 years. We have projects that date back to the Kennedy administration that have not been completed. Now, does that mean that these Corps of Engineers projects have not advanced? No, we have taken projects and we have used other federal funding streaks, we have used state funds, and we have advanced these projects. For example, if I remember correctly, as a result of some of the work that the CPRA has done. I think we've put \$350 million in state controlled funds into the Gulf Project in, not Corps of Engineers money, state-controlled funds, in some cases, federal funds, in some cases state funds. Right now, you through your task force, in addition to the hazard mitigation funds, probably have about \$2 billion. Approximately \$300 million through HMGP and approximately \$1.7 billion through CDBG. I know there's been a lot of discussion about this concept of, if you take CDBG funds you're taking away from flood victims. And I understand that and very sensitive to it as you are, I think there's an important calculation that could be performed here though. Number one, if you do rough math, approximately the elevation of 1,200 homes would pay for the Comite project. Number two, you have a number of people, because I know I've spoken to them, and Mr. Mayor, they're some of your former constituents. That are sitting there with that insurance check, sitting there with the possibility of a check here trying to decide, am I going to invest this back in my home, right here in your community, Representative Pope, because they're concerned about that repetitive flood, it was just mentioned, Mr. Faulk that a three inch rain caused flooding in Central. And so the Comite project provides value, it's going to reduce the number of people that are going to have to elevate their homes, therefore generating cost savings for flood victims. It's going to reduce the number of people, or excuse me, it will reduce, it will reduce the number of people that are in the floodplain for NFIP, saving money potentially. Number three, it will reduce flood insurance premiums for some folks, again, saving money for flood victims. While making our community more resilient and giving that I think, psychological security that so many people are looking for. That progress is being made to make these communities more resilient, more flood proof. So there's \$2 billion available, right now I think that while there are some hoops we would have to jump through with CDBG. And with HMGP to advance that project I do think there's a path there, the CPRA in the past has used CDBG funds. Has used Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds to advance flood projects in Louisiana and I think we can do it in this case as well. So, I just strongly urge you to continue to visit that, to keep that in mind, and I think you can do it where you're still providing great value to the flood survivors.

**Representative James:** Congressman, I definitely want to take the opportunity since you are here, and you and I, we chat offline a lot. And there's no secret that I made some very strong comments from here and on the House floor. But I do want to take the moment while you're here to publicly recognize you for the work that you have done and even in my frustration about what I considered politics, even in my comments I've actually been adding to the problem, so to speak in some of my comments, but I do want you to know that your work hasn't gone unnoticed. And the frustration is shared because I hear it from my neighbors, just like you hear it from your constituents as well. And I just wanted you to know that in this process I would hope this is not. I know your staff has been here but we need to hear more from your office on what's going on. And of course, you're only one of an entire delegation, and some of my comments have been directly pointed at you. But I know that since you and I share the same area, sometimes it may seem that it's coming across that way. But it's not lost on me that you are a bear fighting and working with us. And again, today, I didn't know about the difficulties with these Corps projects, that's something that I would not have known had you not come here today. Because I would continue to say, why aren't they up there fighting for those dollars? Again, I just wanted to take the opportunity to at least recognize the work that you are doing. I'm not saying I'm not going to pick on you in the future, but thank you for what you are doing and let's continue this line of communication that we have going on.

**Congressman Graves:** Mr. Chair, if I can briefly respond. Let me just say two things, number one, look I'm not going to tell you that I've batted a thousand or the delegation, in regards to flood recovery. There are some things that I got frustrated by with our delegation I'll tell you, some of the conversations I had with the Appropriations Chairman and others. If we're on YouTube, they'd be viral right now, I voted against the last Appropriations Bill. Out of frustration, a number of things including the flood recovery dollars. So I'm not going to say that everything that's happened up there has been perfect. I've



been very frustrated by a number of things that have happened and things that have not happened. Going over to Comite project, I just want to remind you and I know that many of you know this. That project had a funding drought for a number of years, there was an environmental logjam that we got involved in. We were able to break that environmental logjam in the roughly two plus years that I've been in Congress. After receiving no funding for a number of years and a complete logjam between the state River Basin Commission and the feds. We have been able to secure just over \$20 million in that two and a half year period. Look, I know it's not enough and if I was writing in the checkbook it certainly would be much more than that. I have a meeting with the head of the Corps of Engineers coming up in the next two weeks for us to have another discussion about this. We met on it probably about a month ago. And so we're going to keep working with every pot of money that is available out there. And Chairman Bradberry will tell you, some of the projects we've been able to build for flood protection, for cost restoration and others. We pulled together, Mr. Chairman, if I remember right, six different funding streams to build one project. And just try to find everything we can to piece it together and bring these projects across the finish line. And I think there's going to have to be some creativity for the Comite Project as well, but I do think there's some significant resources out there available to help advance the project.

**Dr. Richardson:** One question, you said, you're going to meet with Secretary Carson. Does he have the authority to move the money? Because you said it was apparently you said put into a fund as a kind of reserve fund. Is there for future storms or just for past storms?

**Congressman Graves:** Well, in the discussion we had with them, they said future. That is nothing that I have found that would prohibit them from releasing some propel storms as well, provided that we can demonstrate, that I guess the easiest way to say it is that our numbers are right in regards to the unmet needs, because there is some disparity there between what they have told the appropriations committee, and what our numbers are showing.

**Dr. Richardson:** Okay, and that would be up to the secretary to decide that, and make that decision.

**Congressman Graves:** That's correct, and Dr. Richardson, I want to be clear that even if we hit a grand slam and we're able to get all \$227 million released to Louisiana, based on our calculations and I'm sure Pat is shaking his head back there, up and down, not sideways, the needs go beyond the \$227 million.

**Mr. Durbin closed the floor for questions.**

## VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

**Mr. Durbin:** Alright, the chair declares public comment period at the end of this meeting, it is now open. Anyone wishing to come forward, take a mic and you are welcome to make a public comment. We're lining up, okay. Do we have cards?

### **Ms. Charlette Minor, Representing Self**

**Ms. Minor:** Good afternoon, and I appreciate this opportunity to speak. As a flood victim myself, we are grateful for the resources that we have been blessed with to be back in our home. And on behalf of our neighbors we do appreciate that opportunity to, we've been given information to apply. Again, from a semantics standpoint, with survey, my husband comes home every day and says, we have to fill out the survey. And I show him even if we do, from my prospective being in the housing, we would still exceed 120% AMI. So, we hadn't, but for the sake of my husband, we did complete the survey. But I come for the landlord program that's a part of the rental program to ask you all to give two considerations. The landlord program allows for if you do new construction only for nonprofits to be able to apply. On behalf of some of the non-profits, it requires that you have to go and get a bank loan first. That's kind of challenging for some non-profits we had to go to get that. I would ask you to possibly consider the units five to seven. You can only get like \$500,000. Those units also require if you do five to seven, at least two of those have to be at 50% AMI. What that means is basically two of the, if you're doing six units two have to be at 50% AMI, and the other four at 80% AMI. If you're going to get a bank loan, for most non-profits, they're going to do it based on the appraisal of the regular, you go into finance criteria. That's kind of difficult. What I would ask you all to consider is the non-profits is that just as you would do with one unit the cap is \$150,000, potentially increasing that to \$150,000 of the unites 5 to 7. That way, if you required the 50% AMI, the rent is very low. So for example, in Livingston Parish, that rent is after you take out the utility allowance, would be about \$561. If you're going to get a bank loan, there's not enough rental income that is feasible to pay the bank back out for the difference. It's a finance issue. So, it's a great product, but if you are asking banks to participate and nonprofits to participate then you've got a feasibility number on the 50% AMI. At least consider for the 50% AMI, fully fund that at a \$150,000 per unit. I just wanted to put that on public record. And also for that program, for that landlord program, at least consider for-profits to participate in that for the new construction. Right now, you only have the full profit being able to be able to do it if it's the units that have been plotted. But at least get consideration, so everybody could participate in bringing communities back whole.

### **Ms. Paula Collins, Representing Self**

**Ms. Collins:** I'm Paula Collins. I'm a resident of Park Forest subdivision, and I'm here today because I flooded on August 13, I had just gotten out of the emergency room, and the streets were flooded and I wanted to get back home. That was about the time I woke up, 9 am, I was unable to drive out of my driveway. Because I've lived in the house over 16 years, and my street never flooded from standing water. I could not fathom that we would flood, to the manner that we did. About 3:30, my daughter said, Mom, I think we need to get out of here. And my husband agreed, so we called 911 to be rescued. But nobody ever came. 6:30, there was a boat that drove up to my door with some guys who'd seen on Facebook that my granddaughter said please don't let my grandmamma drown. And these guys came and took us, helped me get in the boat. We got in with what we could, just the one bag. And there was so many people in our community that were left. And it just happened to be sick people. So the boat was picking up additional people. When that boat picked up additional people, one guy was a diabetic like I am. Another family was sitting on the hood of their car. He had heart problems. This boat only could take like ten people. The boat turned over, and we had to walk in water that met my chest. And you could see the snakes in the street. And when it turned over, my back turned over, but I still had my medicine. I lost my clothing, so all I had was what I had left. And to make a long story short, that was the most traumatic night of my life. I worked for the Department of Labor Workforce Development 26 and a half years. And I retired on disability. My husband is 69, and he retired on social security. We built a home for ourselves. I wouldn't be here today, if the federal government had not allotted money to help those recover. Because we didn't live in a flood area, we were not required to have flood insurance. We were assisted by FEMA, and of course you know that that was ten months ago. We bought things to help recover, but we couldn't recover fully. The shelter in place program came in to help. Because there was no accountability for that program, I think some of the construction worker does ran roughshod. I'm embarrassed to show you how they left my house, how they left my bathroom. I had bought a tub, a bathtub, I had bought a toilet. They took pieces of sheet rock, and replaced just placed it anywhere on there. The inside of my house flooded to the air condition, rusted my air conditioner started making a lot of noise. I contacted my state representative, and I say I want to be back, I'm trying to get back whole. If they could buy like a hot water heater. The guy says, well, we don't know if that's in the budget. I bought the hot water heater. They did nothing for my house, they didn't buy a sink. As I understand it, because we now only have one door, interior door in our home. And that was to the bathroom. And they said that that was all there was supposed to do to, to make sure we had a bathroom that we could use. So we don't have, everything is open in the house, we don't have that. I dare not trust another contractor, who said that they're coming in for my good. Working for the Department of Labor, I did a lot with contracts. After Katrina, I was responsible for making sure that workforce development activities happened in the trailer parks that they developed across the state. I did that I sought to everything being done. Nobody came to my house to see the mess that these people left with their recovery. I went to the model home, the model home they're talking about was, there's no bedrooms, there's just a kitchen and a bathroom, and a washroom that you can see. So I understand that they're doing that to the best of their ability. Recovering to me means more. And while I'm not in a position to say what you will give, I will appreciate if the program worked to the point that. As I am recovering, I didn't have a laminate counter tops in my house. What are you going to do help me get me back to the pieces that I had before? Money was wasted, totally wasted with shelter in place. I don't want to repair just to get by. I would rather repair to the ability that this program can help. But also in the manner that I would like, such as the things that I like. So if I need flooring, because the allergies, I don't want carpet. But tell me how much you'll give me for flooring, and I'll do that. So, when I went to the model home I said, I'm in phase one. And they said, well, you're lucky, you're on the top of the list. And I been telling people to rephrase that because to be in phase one, you have to be elderly, you have to be disabled, and you have to have low to moderate income. So it's not just a bargain to be in phase one. I didn't receive the application. They said that, I heard this morning that all phase one applicants have received an invitation to apply for the application. I didn't receive it. And I checked my email just now, so I got the invitation today, but that wasn't given to me before. Why am I frustrated? I'm frustrated because, it's taken too long, too much red tape, too much redundancy to get it done. Why are people not applying? Because they don't believe, they haven't seen any success. They don't know anybody personally whose house, or who's been reimbursed. That they could come forward to consider the real people, the people who are impacted by this. I apologize for the way I'm dressed but it's been 24 hours at the hospital with my brother. And I didn't have time to go home and freshen up, and look good for the committee. But, I'm here, because if you can help me expedite the program. I hear a lot of statistics and numbers. But in our community where our houses were valued at over a \$100,000, now, or in the \$80,000 range because of the flood. My car insurance, because I lost two cars. It's increased, it's doubled. My homeowners insurance, went from \$1500 to \$3,000 a year. And I didn't have flood insurance. They said, they increased my homeowner's because I called to find out if I had flood insurance. And that's called an inquiry, and they give you a claim number. Now I am required to have flood insurance, because if any event happens in the future, and FEMA has helped me once. They've told me to get flood insurance, and if I don't have flood insurance then I can't get any assistance from FEMA in the future. So I want you to understand where we are. So much has changed, there's so many demands but to be able to sleep in a house when you can close your doors, where you can walk around, where you can cook. And be comfortable and not live in a bathroom with holes in it. And they destroyed my plumbing. Some kind of

way they changed the pipe, so now the air condition leaks through the bathroom piping, and we have to dump the water every day. When we washed two or three times just for that. When the water comes on in the new bathroom, you have to get rid of the rust or whatever that's coming out of the pipe before you can take a bath. This is the United States of America and as a citizen of the United States of America and the state of Louisiana, I just don't think that I shouldn't live the way I'm living. So I implore you to please, not only will you get statistics and numbers but like Mr. Pope said it, real people having real problems. And I just don't want to throw away any more money with shelter and place because if that had been given to me and someone made me accountable, I'd be straightening my house now. Somebody, somewhere else had probably charged half the money in labor charges. You know how it is when you have state contracts I was part of it, where I could go to Home Depot and get a chair for \$100, but I had to use Prison Enterprises, which charged \$300 for a chair. I don't think we need to waste our money like that. Trust the people and make us accountable. I'm sorry.

**Mr. Durbin:** Now, don't be sorry, Ms. Collins. We thank you for coming up and sharing.

**Mr. Dartez:** Thank you Mr. Chair. Ms. Collins, first off thank you for being here. Second, you don't have to apologize. I think you look fantastic and your worst day is better than my best day. I can promise you that when it comes to that. But in all seriousness, I apologize and I am saddened to hear your story. I can promise you this, when we started this shelter at home program and I know I can speak on behalf of this committee, the Governor, Pat Forbes' office, the intent was to do the best that we can to get you home and if it's appropriate, Pat, if you don't mind coming up, I need to find out who oversees these guys. I don't want to call anybody out publicly but after the meeting, if we could find out who these folks are, I can tell you this we work with the Association of General Contractors who have a complaint division and they've been extremely proactive in getting to the bottom of situations like this, and I'd just like to find out, Pat, is that your office that we need to work with?

**Mr. Forbes:** It's not, GOHSEP ran the Shelter at Home program but they know who the contractor is for each house and should be able to identify the contractor.

**Mr. Dartez:** Ms. Collins, I can tell you I have a long history with GOHSEP and I know their best intentions are going to be with you. So, after the meeting, I know some GOHSEP folks are here, if we can, at least get that name and start the process of reviewing it. I'd love to find out, get to the bottom of it. If we need to remove those folks from the list of working with our people, we need to remove them.

**Ms. Collins:** I just want to say when they came in, we had purchased 40 sheets of sheetrock. That was my bed. I slept on those sheets of sheetrock until my husband was putting them in and once they were put in, we slept on the floor. And I bought the little things, the little twin air mattresses. He and I slept on the floor on air mattresses because we didn't have a bed. We had to go back home because I was spending more money in hotels, thinking I should be spending this money getting somewhere to stay. Just because a person has been affected by a flood doesn't mean they're ready to settle for anything. I stayed a week at a place called Red Roof Inn I'm no better than anybody else, but there are some things that make me afraid. And my husband and I felt uncomfortable in that place, and we just knew we would feel more comfortable at home. It was three weeks before anybody else came on the street. That's the way we lived in the house.

**Mr. Dartez:** I know Pat, this committee and AGC all have the best interest for citizens so, and I appreciate Pat for working with us to try to get to the bottom of this because I know that that is not the intent of any of this. And I am so sad to hear your news today. So, thank you for being here today and I echo what Representative Pope and James have talked about, this committee needs to hear the real life stories, so thank you for just being here ma'am, we appreciate you.

**Representative James:** Ms. Paula, I wanted, you know how I feel about you and I've been hearing your story for quite some time, so thank you for being able to come up here. I know you've been through a lot. Not just since the flood, but in the last 48 hours. So I want to thank you for coming, to allow the committee members to hear your story. Mrs. Collins lives in my neighborhood and I pass by, I see her house very frequently and she doesn't even like people talking about me on Facebook. Somebody talked about me she sent me a text saying she was like who is this guy but again just thank you for coming and sharing your story with us.

### **Mr. Jim Tucker, Representing Tucker Properties**

**Mr. Tucker:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members. Thank you for this time and I listened to this fine lady and it brings back such memories of all the problems we had during Katrina. I really, having dealt with it in my district at the time, I really feel for you all, Representative James in particular. And Representative Pope, I know what you all are dealing with. It's very, very difficult and my heart goes out to you all and to your constituents it's very tough. I'm here today representing my company Tucker Property Management. I have a question that I'd like clarified. We began the process, let me back up, we own 136 unit apartment complex in Hammond, outside of Hammond and we're interested in participating in the Neighborhood Landlord Rental Program to build some additional units. We have ten acres there we've owned forever that we are ready to build, have plans, specs, designs. It was all ready to go in 2008 when the financial collapse happened and had to pull back, but everything is done, ready to go. And I prepared to participate in the Neighborhood Landlord Rental Program. And I went to the Baton Rouge meeting and I'd read all of the written materials without being able to participate

in the program and so forth, it looked like we could probably fit, bring some affordable housing on the property that we have. I got to the Baton Rouge meeting where a member of the LHC staff noted that for the new construction for profit developers were being excluded. I couldn't find that anywhere in the documentation, and I will try to find out to confirm that that's the case. I heard this lady who sat right here say, that that is the case. And I just like to confirm, A. that it is the case that for profits cannot participate in new construction in the neighborhood landlord rental program to build affordable housing in the affected areas. And if it is the case, can somebody explain to me why it's the case? Because that doesn't make any sense to me. The idea being the public policy being that we want to develop as much affordable housing as possible. And tapping the for profit development community to do so, is something that happened for time immemorial. So I don't know exactly, a, if it's correct, that is the primary reason. Even if it is b, is there some way or is that public policy that I think should be continued, or is that something that possibly this committee should consider altering?

**Ms. Minor:** Let me add some clarity to that, Charlette Minor, what I read in the policy is that it could go either way. By going to the Baton Rouge meeting and asked that question and they clarified that it was only for non-profit, but what I read it appeared to have some, it could go either way.

**Mr. Tucker:** I was saying, wait, this is what the flyer says right here, that a private for profit property owner who is eligible under the program.

**Mr. Durbin:** Good question. Mr. Forbes can you shed some light on this?

**Mr. Forbes:** Mr. Bizot is gone who may be able to answer this question better but I think I can hit it at a higher level at least. What's in the action plan and what is in the current policy can vary will be different. We'll write the as we have in may instance, write the action plan more expansively. So that as we figure out that we're not going to be over-subscribed, from the non-profit prospective. That we can still move to the for profit landlords without need of an action plan amendment. So it's entirely likely that the action plan doesn't exclude for profit landlords from the new construction, but that is the policy at this point. A policy that's subject to change, if we don't get enough subscription from non-profits. It's also my understanding that it is not for profit landlords are eligible for the program. But only for properties that flooded in the event, and that they owned and flooded in the event. Not for prospective work, not for something maybe that they bought and want to go rebuild. Subject to change, if we don't get this sort of affordable units that we need out of the programs that we have right now. But it's too soon to say whether that's the case.

**Mr. Tucker:** I think you are correct part on where it stands, but to me that policy still doesn't make any sense. If anything, it should be reversed, because at the end of the day, the for-profits pay taxes. I pay school taxes, I pay municipal taxes, and the non-profits don't. And I'm the head of a non-profit health company, so I'm not knocking non-profits, they do a great job in this case. But I think in the process, it would have been, and it should be changed, so that both can participate. At this point, people have to spend money to put these applications in place. I'm lucky, mine is pretty much done. I can do mine and maybe or maybe not fall at the bottom of that line, but still in the money. But you're eliminating for profit developers across this state who might come in and help build affordable housing for people who need it. And I don't understand the public policy of pre-empting the opportunity to non-profits. That doesn't make good policy to me. Public sense to me, public policy sense.

**Mr. Forbes:** And it's subject to change as I said, if we don't get the subscription through the non-profit. There are advantages to having nonprofits do it. We can get extended affordability time versus what we might buy from for profits. I probably can't articulate all of the reasons, advantages, at this point, but there are reasons for doing that. And in fact, I think for the multi-family, we can do for profits who flooded, and we buy that affordability going into the future.

**Mr. Tucker:** You can, but if the public policy is to build more affordable housing, why would the policy exclude anybody from contemplating building more affordable housing?

**Mr. Forbes:** Just because it was a shortage of funds. From a budgetary perspective, we don't have enough money to go do all the affordable rental that we would like to build. And so consequently, we have to focus on what we think is going to buy us the most economical for the longest affordability times. And that is the way the program is designed at this point.

**Mr. Tucker:** Well, the affordability timelines is again somewhat who is a for-profit in that affordable arena in New Orleans. I have a thirty year affordable property. So the affordability doesn't change between for profits and non-profits. You can hold me to the same accountability. But if I can't participate in the program, I can build units and have them done before the end of the year, if you tell me go today. I don't understand, most for profits can move more quickly. I just, to me it's a bad public policy, and I would ask this committee to consider having it changed.

**Dr. Richardson:** Pat, whose public policy is this?

**Mr. Forbes:** We submitted the action plan to HUD that describes all the things we might do with this funding. If you recall, we also have a piggyback program in the action plan. That we've not rolled out as a funded program yet, but it's in the action plan if we decide to do that. The policies around each of the programs are done at Louisiana Housing Corporation.

**Mr. Tucker:** Well, they told us it was an OCD issue.

**Mr. Forbes:** Well, we certainly worked with them.

**Mr. Tucker:** I didn't believe that, quite frankly, I thought it was odd that you all would take that position.

**Dr. Richardson:** So, they've been telling us it's LHC, and Jim you are saying they tell you it is OCD.

**Mr. Forbes:** I'm not saying that we don't have any involvement in that policy development, but in the end, Louisiana Housing Corporation runs the program.

**Dr. Richardson:** So, where would we go if we want, and I also want to sympathize with Jim, he has property, wants to build apartments on it, I don't understand why that should be a negative.

**Mr. Forbes:** Right, it's not a negative. Again, I wish we had ten times the amount of money we got to build affordable rental housing, we would be engaging Mr. Tucker and every other for-profit developer.

**Dr. Richardson:** But the issue is not you having enough money, you have limited resources. If he can get it done right now, well, that's the issue.

**Mr. Tucker:** And with all due respect Pat, somebody made the report earlier. You've got 12 applicants today on \$36 million for maximum of \$500 apiece. That's \$6 million. At worst, or actually I should say at best, the policy that's in place today is delaying the ability for affordable housing to be built in the affected areas. Because in the folks who sat here earlier said, that they were asking for a delay in the deadline, so that more people could apply. Well there are people ready to apply, but they can't because they've been excluded, because they're for profit. That doesn't make any sense to me. It's delaying the entire recovery in this particular area.

**Dr. Richardson:** So, if we want to ask for a review of this policy, to whom do we ask, you, Pat?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes, sir.

**Dr. Richardson:** And how long will it take you to review it? And then, who would have to make the final decision at that point?

**Mr. Forbes:** We could report back to the task force at the next meeting, we'd be glad to do that.

**Mr. Tucker:** With the deadline being the 16<sup>th</sup> of this month.

**Mr. Forbes:** Again, knowing that if we don't engage all the funds with the current eligible applicants that we can extend the deadline and expand the eligible applicant pool.

**Mr. Durbin:** Okay, so we can revisit this at the next meeting. Put it as a discussion and action item.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes, sir.

**Mr. Durbin:** After you make your review and presentation?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes, sir.

**Ms. Minor:** You know just to be, Charlette Minor again for the non-profits, for the 50% AMI to give consideration to at least fund that at the \$150 which you already have in place. So that if a non-profit has to go to the bank that they can show enough rental income to pay off the debt service.

**Mr. Tucker:** And I don't disagree with that at all. I think there are a lot of non-profits that are good participants in something like that. But that runs exactly counter to what Pat just said about leverage of the program and getting the most out of it. If you're going to put \$150 in one unit when I only need \$50 and can do three, where does that leave you?

**Ms. Minor:** But there are some, and I respect both the for-profit and non-profit, but for the non-profit, you definitely have some strong non-profit developers who could be able to go to the bank, get that money to get the take out, because what's required, whether you're a for-profit or a non-profit, is that you got to go to the bank to get their money and then LHC, through OCD, do the takeout.

**Mr. Tucker:** Unless you are going to build them for cash.

**Dr. Richardson:** I think, the element, this seems to be that these rules were developed when all the different aspects –

**Mr. Forbes:** Over the course of several months, starting in, I don't know, December.

**Dr. Richardson:** Well, this might be a good time to review them all.

**Mr. Forbes:** This policy, just like most of the policies that we have in place, including homeowner policies, is driven by shortage of funds, and lack of data. And so we invest in the program, and set the eligibility as seems most fitting. Certainly, we're not going to leave the money sitting on the sidelines, if it's not working through the way that we've got it set up. So we've got a deadline coming. We'll know how many people are going to apply. How much per unit we're going to be spending on those and what adjustments we need to make. The same thing is true for homeowners, small business, all of them. We got people into the program, see what the costs are, see how many people apply, before we can make the next move of, okay, what's the next approach to, in this case, developing affordable rental housing.

**Ms. Minor:** And, may I say, it's an excellent product. Great application process, and it's being mostly assessable in the process and to access them has been very amendable.

**Mr. Tucker:** I too give them high marks on the website as far as the application is concerned. But, again, sometimes I have a hard time taking my public policy hat off. Somebody made the decision to prioritize non-profits over for-profits in a new construction program and that runs counter to what I think the overall goal is of developing as much affordable housing as possible as quickly as possible. The policy should be agnostic as to who is doing the development. It's how and when the development can be done, in my opinion. And I appreciate and I know there are a lot of decisions to be made but this was one that just didn't make sense.

**Dr. Richardson:** I appreciate both of you coming here and bringing it to us because, obviously, unless you tell us we don't really know.

**Mr. Forbes:** And I'll just say the focus in policy development was looking at cost per unit and cost per year of affordability. And certainly we're going to spend that much money and more on developing as many units as we can and if we don't get applicants we'll have to decide how to expand the program.

**Mr. Dartez:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate Pat's willingness to review the policy. But I just want a point of clarification. I heard the date of the 16th as a deadline. I mean, are we going to review a policy that's no longer –

**Mr. Tucker:** Yes, the deadline for submission of an application is June 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Mr. Dartez:** For a homeowner?

**Mr. Tucker:** No, for a multi-family developer to develop seven units under this program.

**Mr. Dartez:** I guess what I'm asking is, are we going to review a policy that is no longer open?

**Mr. Forbes:** In anticipation of understanding that maybe not all the funds get subscribed or that we get applications that aren't feasible. Like we said earlier, everybody's got to turn in their application with financial performers and the whole and there almost certainly will be people who apply but don't get accepted.

**Mr. Dartez:** Well, I guess I'm asking, if folks miss that deadline because they don't feel they're eligible, what can we do?

**Mr. Forbes:** Again, we are not going to leave the money sitting on the sidelines. We'll open the program again. Different eligibility criteria.

**Mr. Dartez:** And when you are reviewing that, is there a possibility of looking at something doable, process where you can do a joint effort between a profit and a non-profit? I mean, I don't know if you can do that.

**Mr. Forbes:** Certainly.

**Mr. Dartez:** I mean, to get these guys in the game. I'm like everybody else, let's get our bang for our buck, but if we can build three units at the price of one, I think we should look at that.

**Mr. Tucker:** Well and I would also say that, if there's not going to be a change in the decision today, that the deadline be hard, that the 16th be the deadline for the first round of people who are funded. So that is only fair then that the policy can be changed so that the second round people can all participate in a fair process. This has not been a fair process.

**Mr. Dartez:** I got you. I greatly appreciate both Pat, the speaker and you for being here.

**Representative Pope:** I'm sort of lost here, and I'm sort of elementary, but the whole purpose of this is to get people back into housing. Would that not be correct?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes, sir.

**Representative Pope:** And anyway that we can do that within the guidelines of whomever makes those, and obviously they're made by us, you, me, and whoever. Within those guidelines, we need to do that yesterday, not tomorrow, not next week. And what I'm going to suggest, Mr. Chairman, is that we do have a drop dead date on the 16th, I think that was the date that we don't extend it beyond that until we do have a review of these policies.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes, sir. I'll be glad to get that to you. I want to ensure the task force that the policies are designed around maximizing the number of affordable units we can get for the amount of money we have. And we'll continue to do that, I'm glad to go back and review the policies. And report back to you about what that review demonstrates and we'll go from there as to what's the best path forward.

**Mr. Durbin:** I'd like to recognize Representative Pope's request and we adopt that as a request to OCD to visit that issue after the deadline of the 16<sup>th</sup> and report back to this committee at the next task force meeting.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes, sir.

**Mr. Faulk:** With recommended policy changes, as needed.

**Mr. Durbin closed the floor for public comments.**

## **IX. OTHER BUSINESS**

**Mr. Durbin:** Alright, no more public comments. Moving on to the next agenda item and that is other business. If you all will turn to Tab 8 and 9 of your packets, excuse me, 7 and 8 of your packets. On June 15<sup>th</sup> from 4 to 8 PM there will be a long-term community recovery planning open house, held in Denham Springs at the Denham Springs Junior High. Again, June 15th, 4 to 8 PM. A flyer with more information is available in Tab 7 of your binders and also on the [restore.la.gov](http://restore.la.gov) website. On Saturday, June 24th from 9 AM to 3 PM, a disaster recovery fair, that is Tab 8 if you go to that in your packet. A disaster recovery fair has been scheduled. Information will be provided on housing resources, ownership and title issues, flood insurance, and more. A save the date flyer is available, Tab 8, okay? Members, in the front pocket of your binder is a copy of a flood proof flyer and a Protect Your Property booklet. This is what I'm referring to right here. Okay, free legal help for eligible families in East Baton Rouge Pass, Livingston, and Ascension Parishes through the Flood Proof, free legal

help for homeowners with title problems program. This program is funded through a grant from the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. Information can be found at [www.floodproofla.org](http://www.floodproofla.org). Next, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services and Acadiana Legal Services may also be able to provide free legal services for eligible families in other parishes. These services may include title clearing help as well as free legal help for other disaster-related legal problems, like contractor fraud, foreclosure prevention, FEMA appeals, and other civil legal problems. And finally, Protect Your Property, Heir Property in Louisiana educational booklet. Louisiana Appleseed has put together an educational booklet about the importance and necessity of having clear legal title, especially to donated and inherited property. This booklet is included in your packet also. Okay, do we have a location and date for our next meeting? Lori said she will be putting that together and contacting us soon about the location and date of our next task force meeting. We thank you all for coming.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Durbin:** Any final comments? There being none, meeting is adjourned.

**Meeting was adjourned at 12:16 PM.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jimmy Durbin  
Co-Chair of the Restore Louisiana Task Force

Date Approved: August 18, 2017 *LD*