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STATE OF LOUISIANA  
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JOHNNY B. BRADBERRY  
SECRETARY

September 6, 2005

Senator Mary Landrieu  
724 Hart Senate Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator David Vitter  
516 Hart Senate Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Bobby Jindal  
1205 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative William Jefferson  
2113 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington D.C. 20515

Representative Charles Melancon  
404 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515-1807

Representative Jim McCrery  
2104 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Rodney Alexander  
316 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Richard Baker  
341 Cannon House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Charles Boustany, Jr.  
1117 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515-1807

RE: Hurricane Katrina Damage to Transportation Infrastructure

Dear Senators and Representatives:

The devastating events of the last few days require that we act quickly to obtain the funds necessary to repair and rebuild our transportation infrastructure in the southeast Louisiana region. Because of the extent of the damage, our state transportation cash balances will be depleted very quickly; therefore, an immediate infusion of money is of the utmost importance. Following are five specific issues LA DOTD would ask that you pursue in the coming days.

1. **FHWA EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND TIME LIMIT**

Upon approval of the Emergency Appropriations Bill by Congress, emergency relief (ER) funds will be made available to those states impacted by Hurricane Katrina for use in repairing federal-aid roadways and bridges. These funds must be utilized (work done and invoices paid) within 180 days of the official declaration by President Bush in order for the states to collect 100 percent. After 180 days, the states will have to provide matching funds of 10 percent for Interstates and 20 percent for other federal-aid roads and bridges.

Many of the roadways in the heavily impacted area in Orleans, St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson and other surrounding parishes will not be accessible for an extended period of time. Some may not be accessible for as much as 60 days, consequently LA DOTD would like to request that our Congressional Delegation incorporate a waiver of this 180 day time limit into the special appropriations bill so that we can have sufficient time to evaluate and repair the damage in these inaccessible areas.

2. **I-10 – New Orleans to Slidell “Twin-Span” Bridges over Lake Pontchartrain**

Hurricane Katrina severely damaged the 5.4 mile I-10 “twin-span” bridges over Lake Ponchartrain. At present, both bridges are impassable. This is a major route into the City of New Orleans for interstate commerce and suburban workers.

LA DOTD engineers met with Florida DOT engineers in Baton Rouge on September 1<sup>st</sup> to review the Florida “fast-track” method used to procure a contractor to repair the I-10 Escambia Bay Bridge, which is very similar to our I-10 “twin-span” Lake Ponchartrain Bridge. Based on this meeting, several pre-qualified, experienced contractor teams have been invited to submit bids by Friday, September 9<sup>th</sup>. We will then award the contract for a quick start and completion on the project. LA DOTD has been in constant communications with the Louisiana Division of FHWA on this approach and they have given their preliminary approval to proceed with this plan.

The following is a preliminary proposed approach for the temporary repair and re-establishment of traffic on the I-10 “twin span” bridges:

**Phase 1**

The method of repair will involve the removal of undamaged roadway panels from the more damaged bridge for use to repair the least damaged bridge. Two-way traffic will then be established on the repaired bridge (one lane, each direction). Depending upon the extent of the damage, the Phase 1 project is estimated to be completed within 30-45 days from the start of construction. The contractor will be working 24/7 to re-establish this vital link.

### **Phase 2**

The remaining bridge will then be temporarily repaired by shifting undamaged panels to complete as much of the bridge as possible starting at one end. The remainder of the bridge will then be repaired using temporary bridge span portable panels. Only one lane of traffic can be established on these portable panels. The Phase 2 repair project will run concurrently, however, it will take longer to complete due to the more extensive damage. We estimate the project will be completed by January.

Once Phase 2 is completed, two lanes will be reestablished in one direction and one lane will be reestablished in the other. There is a high probability that the existing parallel US 11 highway and bridge will be used to provide additional capacity during peak travel periods by North Shore residents.

The cost of Phases 1 and 2 is estimated to be approximately \$50 to \$60 million. More firm/confident numbers will be provided once bids are received on 9/9/05. These costs will be eligible for reimbursement from Emergency Relief funds allocated to FHWA upon passage of a special funding package from Congress.

### **3. Replacement of I-10 "Twin-Span" Bridges over Lake Ponchartrain**

FHWA is reimbursing Florida for a completely new six lane bridge constructed over Escambia Bay to replace the four lane structures that were severely damaged by Hurricane Ivan. Likewise, we recommend a permanent replacement of the I-10 "twin-span" bridges from New Orleans to Slidell be constructed and that this be a new 6-lane structure at a higher elevation, similar to what was done for the Escambia Bay Bridge.

Initial estimated completion time is 24-36 months from start of construction if LA DOTD is allowed to use the Design-Build method of project delivery. The cost of the new permanent replacement bridge is approximately \$500 - \$600 million. The cost of the 6-lane replacement should be eligible for reimbursement from emergency relief funds, however, LA DOTD will have to provide 10 percent matching funds.

**NOTE:** LA DOTD will make a request to the Louisiana Legislature for approval of Design-Build legislation for the impacted area of Southeastern Louisiana. This method of project delivery will speed up the completion of the needed repairs and replacement of the roads and bridges. The new bridge at St. Francisville is currently the only project that LA DOTD has been given approval to use the Design-Build method of delivery.

4. **Reimbursement from FEMA**

While much of the funding for infrastructure repairs will come through the Federal Highway Administration, considerable amounts will be needed from FEMA. Due to limited state transportation cash balances, it is imperative that reimbursement for damage repairs be accelerated. We must have exceptionally quick turnaround. We ask that the appropriate language be included in the appropriations bill to speed up the reimbursement from FEMA to the affected States.

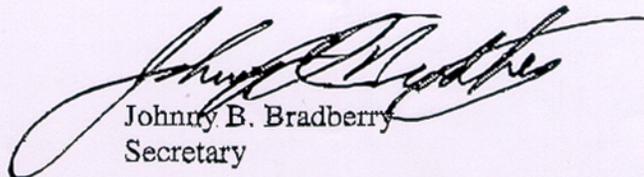
5. **Employment for Evacuees**

Current federal law precludes contractual requirements for hiring local labor. We believe the magnitude of this natural disaster merits special consideration. With so many people temporarily unemployed, it is logical to allow Louisiana and Mississippi to require contractors to use a specified percentage of displaced workers labor. Further, with so many evacuees, housing out-of-state workers may not be practicable. We ask that this provision be included in the appropriations bill.

We are continuing to diligently assess damage to our transportation infrastructure as a result of Hurricane Katrina. In addition, we are examining the traffic impacts of the sudden increase in population, particularly in Baton Rouge, but also in Lafayette and other areas of Louisiana. An estimate of what is needed to cope with the additional traffic and congestion issues in these areas will be forthcoming in the very near term.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions. Together we can raise our beloved state from this great disaster. Your leadership during these most trying times is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Johnny B. Bradberry  
Secretary

cc: Governor Kathleen Blanco  
Commissioner Jerry Luke LeBlanc  
Mr. Terry Rider, Chief Counsel  
Senate Transportation Committee Members  
House Transportation Committee Members  
Mr. Tony Sussmann, FHWA Administrator