

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1803

July 16, 2021

The Honorable Joseph Biden
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

President Biden,

Nearly eleven months have passed since Hurricanes Laura and Delta devastated Southwest Louisiana. In that time, requests from Louisiana's Governor, congressional delegation, and local elected officials for supplemental disaster relief have gone unanswered.

While over \$1.3 billion in federal assistance has been delivered to support immediate response costs, Southwest Louisiana continues to face extreme and long-term recovery needs that are best addressed with a supplemental disaster package. Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards issued a formal request in January 2021 outlining specific recovery and mitigation needs. My office supports this request. We have stressed the importance of this matter repeatedly, in direct communications with your office and publicly on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. However, we have seen no effort from Democratic leadership to move forward with a supplemental disaster bill.

The Speaker's office recently stated in a media interview that the Democratic Congress and the Biden Administration are going to "consider the need for supplemental disaster funding" for Louisiana. Respectfully, we are beyond the time for consideration. It's been nearly a year since the devastation occurred. President Biden, you visited Lake Charles recently while on your infrastructure tour. While you were not there to specifically survey damages, they would have been impossible to miss.

The citizenry of Southwest Louisiana is still deep in the rebuilding process and facing new uncertainty as another hurricane season has already begun. We must work together to alleviate those concerns and take swift action on additional recovery assistance. I am hopeful that we can do this as a clean bill. Disaster relief should not be used as a bargaining chip or to coerce Republican votes on larger, controversial proposals.

As we approach the August work period, I respectfully urge you to allow a supplemental disaster relief plan to move forward. We must provide the thousands of severely impacted Americans in Southwest Louisiana with a proper federal response. I look forward to working with you to accomplish this mission.

Respectfully,



Clay Higgins
Member of Congress

CC: Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol Washington, DC 20515