



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

March 21, 2022

The Honorable Kamala Harris
Vice President of the United States
Washington, DC 20500

Vice President Harris:

Welcome to South Louisiana. I appreciate your coming to highlight the \$30 million investment from the U.S. Department of Commerce. The Acadiana Planning Commission (APC) has done excellent work pursuing federal grant opportunities like this one, which was made available through appropriations passed under President Trump. My office has long supported rural broadband improvements and will continue to do so.

As you visit our state, I want to highlight other priority issues for Louisiana's 3rd District. I respectfully request your attention to these matters, and I stand ready to assist in Congress.

1. **Increased Disaster Recovery Funding** - The people of Louisiana were hit by 18 months of unprecedented disasters, including Hurricanes Laura, Delta, and Ida in 2020 and 2021. Congress responded by providing \$5 billion in disaster relief through the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Of that funding, \$2 billion has been allocated, with just over \$600 million dedicated to Louisiana. This falls short of Louisiana's unmet needs from Hurricanes Laura and Delta alone. Further, it is our understanding that nearly \$3 billion of the \$5 billion set aside is sitting untouched at HUD. We request that the Biden administration take action to expedite the allocation and delivery of existing funds as well as to issue another supplemental request to Congress for disaster funding.
2. **Reestablish American Energy Independence** – The Biden administration's energy policies have resulted in massive cost increases for American families and jeopardized our nation's energy security. We request that you take immediate action to expand U.S. energy production. Louisiana has vast oil and natural gas reserves. We account for one-fifth of the nation's refining capacity, and our state is the epicenter for U.S. liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports. Louisiana's energy producers are fully prepared to lead in the restoration of American energy dominance IF your administration reverses its harmful policies. We call on you to lift the leasing moratorium on federal lands and waters, approve the Keystone XL pipeline, fast-track approval for pending LNG export projects, streamline the permitting process for new energy infrastructure, and end your regulatory assault on the oil and gas industry.
3. **Local Infrastructure Funding** – Prior to the passage of the new Infrastructure law, my office has helped deliver over \$1 billion for real infrastructure projects in Louisiana's 3rd District through regular appropriations. *This includes our 5-year effort to deliver funding for the new terminal at Lafayette Regional Airport, where you arrived.* Our state plays a critical role in the movement of agricultural and energy products for the entire nation. Critical to these efforts are

South Louisiana's ports, waterways, and interstate corridors. We request continued support for the Port of Lake Charles/Calcasieu Ship Channel, Port of Morgan City, and Port of Iberia through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers budget. We also request support for a new I-10 Calcasieu River Bridge and completion of the I-49 Connector Project as the State of Louisiana competes for federal infrastructure grant opportunities.

4. **Secure the Border** – The current border crisis is a threat to our Republic. Communities across the country, including those in South Louisiana, are feeling the impact of our wide-open southern border. Law enforcement personnel have been pulled away from their primary security mission and into processing roles. This has led to an increased number of getaways and massive quantities of illegal drugs evading law enforcement interdiction. America's communities are seeing consequences in the form of rising crime and drug overdose deaths. The fentanyl crisis and the border crisis are directly related. We must prioritize the safety and security of American citizens. We call on the Biden administration to take immediate action to secure the southern border and fully enforce our immigration laws. This includes honoring prior contracts for wall construction, strong reimplementation of the Remain in Mexico Policy, maintaining Title 42, and carrying out Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) deportations of criminal aliens.

Our nation faces significant challenges. Many of these issues directly impact South Louisiana's citizenry. I appreciate your attention to the aforementioned priorities, and I look forward to working with you to create a better future for South Louisiana and all of America.

Respectfully,



Clay Higgins
Member of Congress