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October 2, 2007

Mr. Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr.  
Mr. Paul G. Kirk, Jr.  
Co-Chairmen, Commission on Presidential Debates  
1200 New Hampshire Avenue NW, Box 445  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Fahrenkopf and Mr. Kirk:

We are writing on behalf of the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) to encourage the Commission on Presidential Debates to select New Orleans as a debate site in 2008 when it begins its final selection deliberations this month. As the chairman and vice chairman of the LRA, the planning and coordinating body created after hurricanes Katrina and Rita to ensure that Louisiana rebuilds safer, stronger and smarter, we have witnessed firsthand the struggles of the people of the Gulf Coast during the past two years of recovery and also the strength of the citizens here who are determined to rebuild their lives and communities during this time of great promise for our city, our state and our region.

Presidential debates are historic in their own right, a chance for the voting public to see the candidates for president square off in spirited discussion of the critical issues facing this nation. Couple this with the historic recovery – the largest rebuilding this country has seen since the Reconstruction – and there clearly is no better place than New Orleans for those vying to be the next President to lay out their plans for improving this country from coast to coast.

The hurricanes of 2005, Hurricane Katrina in particular, drew the nation's attention to questions that have remained unanswered for years – how do we repair our ailing infrastructure, fix our public schools, improve our health care system, fight crime and train our workforce for the skilled jobs of tomorrow. In New Orleans and across the Gulf Coast, we are addressing these issues head on and have been doing so for the past two years. The next President must address these issues as well, making New Orleans the perfect venue for Presidential candidates to show how their leadership on our recovery would provide a model for their approach to a slew of pressing domestic issues from housing to health care and education to economic development.

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Hosting the debates in New Orleans would also allow the Commission on Presidential Debates to contribute to the region's resurgence, bringing in much-needed revenue to this culturally rich city and signaling to the nation that New Orleans is back and open for business.

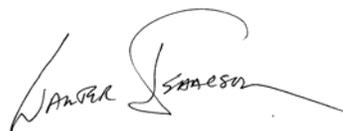
Much has been written about New Orleans' application for this great honor, including numerous opinion pieces in national and local newspapers, letters of support from candidates for president and even an appeal in TIME Magazine. We join these supporters, as we believe the application put forth by our passionate partners in recovery, the Women of the Storm, Dillard University, Loyola University, Tulane University and Xavier University, presents a unique opportunity for a dynamic debate.

Should you have any questions about Louisiana's recovery or New Orleans' application to be a host site, please do not hesitate to contact the LRA, as our board members and staff are at your disposal as you make this important decision.

Sincerely,



Norman C. Francis  
Chairman,  
Louisiana Recovery Authority



Walter Isaacson,  
Vice Chairman,  
Louisiana Recovery Authority

cc: Ann Milling, Women of the Storm  
Richard Stengel, TIME Magazine  
Louisiana Congressional delegation