

LOUISIANA RECOVERY AUTHORITY

INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

April 21, 2008

OVERVIEW: A resolution by the Louisiana Recovery Authority Board requesting that the staff of the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) and the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the next thirty days to assess the viability of using Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds (HMGP) to prevent future storm related losses through investments in the best technology, equipment, and systems for communications interoperability for first responders to respond to future local, regional, state, and national emergencies and disasters in the hurricane-affected areas and determine if HMGP funds can be used to fund the creation of an urban search and rescue resource in Louisiana.

Whereas, the LRA Executive Director, as the Governor's Authorized Representative (GAR) to FEMA, continues to work with GOHSEP on issues affecting recovery and mitigating against the impact of future storms;

Whereas, the GOHSEP Executive Director believes that the existence of appropriate equipment and technology for first responders is of critical importance to the State of Louisiana to prevent future loss of structures and lives and to be prepared for future hurricanes;

Whereas, FEMA has the responsibility of assisting the state to fund projects related to the Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs that create safeguards for dollars invested in public infrastructure and private dwellings from natural or man made emergencies;

Whereas, GOHSEP recognizes that first responders must have communication and technology systems in Louisiana that comply with National Incident Management System (NIMS) standards;

Whereas, the Louisiana Professional Fire Fighters Association and the Louisiana Fire Chiefs Association stated that the most critical need of their members in order to prevent loss of life and infrastructure during emergencies is the appropriate interoperable communications resources and equipment; and

Whereas, the Louisiana Recovery Authority Executive Director, is the Governor's Assigned Representative to FEMA and that individual may request that FEMA examine federal rules that would allow for technology and equipment purchases and cost reimbursements for interoperable communications systems.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Louisiana Recovery Authority Board does hereby request that the staff of Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the next thirty days to assess the viability of using Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds to prevent future losses through investments in the best technology, equipment, and systems for communications interoperability for first responders to respond to future local, regional, state, and national emergencies and disasters in the hurricane-affected areas and determine if Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds can be used to fund the creation of an urban search and rescue resource in Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Louisiana Recovery Authority Board does hereby request that the staff of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness assess the recommended systems from other state interoperability task forces to determine the best practices for Louisiana's first responders.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Louisiana Recovery Authority Board does hereby request that the staff of the Louisiana Recovery Authority and the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness propose to the LRA Board, the Governor, and the Louisiana Legislature the amounts necessary to fund interoperable communications systems in the hurricane affected parishes and statewide and to fund the creation of an urban search and rescue resource and, if the funds needed exceed available Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds, request additional state, federal, or other sources of funds for this purpose.