

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 149

BY SENATOR MORRELL

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the disaster recovery unit within the division of administration's office of community development (OCD/DRU) through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Affairs (HUD) and the governor's office of homeland security and emergency preparedness (GOHSEP) through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to seek federal remedies to certain situations which occurred as a result of certain hurricanes.

WHEREAS, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) disaster recovery funds were authorized by Congress under supplemental appropriation laws, which authorized HUD's secretary to modify various statutes and regulations that could impede the prompt implementation of disaster relief programs, and provided that on request from the states receiving disaster recovery CDBG funds, the secretary could waive certain provisions to allow immediate response; and

WHEREAS, through the Road Home Elevation Incentive award, OCD/DRU offered an eligible applicant a CDBG disaster-funded grant of up to \$30,000 in return for a binding incentive agreement to elevate and reoccupy the home the owner lived in at the time of the hurricanes and to use it as the owner's primary residence within three years of signing the grant agreement; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the CDBG disaster recovery funds for the Road Home Elevation Incentive program, the state was approved to receive supplemental funding for elevation activities through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program; and

WHEREAS, the state provided up to \$100,000 in program funds (based on actual construction costs) to eligible homeowners to elevate their homes to comply with, at a minimum, the required FEMA elevation height for the area; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana's Road Home program was designed using a CDBG compensation model rather than a housing rehabilitation model; and

WHEREAS, the compensation model provides eligible homeowners with a grant for uncompensated property losses to their damaged address rather than tying funding to a specific construction related activity; and

WHEREAS, the disaster recovery unit within the division of administration's office of community development is aware that some homeowners who have reached their three year compliance period have not elevated their homes and believes it is prudent to bring more applicants into compliance through ongoing file completion, elevation activities, and working with HUD to approve and implement Action Plan Amendments, reserving grant recovery for those applicants who cannot achieve compliance through these or other means; and

WHEREAS, HUD has issued guidelines which stipulate that the state may look at a homeowner's unmet needs or a change in circumstances when determining how to move forward with verifying the homeowner's compliance; and

WHEREAS, long-term recovery is a process; however, disaster recovery needs are calculated at points in time which can result in subsequent changes in circumstance which can affect need; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 1 of the 2014 Regular Session of the Legislature proposes two mandates which require the division of administration, office of community development to submit Action Plan Amendments requesting HUD approval for reallocation of such monies.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the disaster recovery unit within the division of administration's office of community development through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Affairs and the governor's office of homeland security and emergency preparedness through the Federal Emergency Management Agency to seek federal remedies by requesting Action Plan Amendments and administrative waivers:

(1) To re-classify awards received from elevation incentive funds which were utilized for home repairs.

(2) To re-evaluate payments which were beyond the homeowners's control.

(3) To support greater flexibility in documentation, such as notarized affidavits to

verify circumstances and work done to repair homes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the executive director of the office of community development and to the director of the governor's office of homeland security and emergency preparedness.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE