Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 12, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We thank you for your visit to the Baton Rouge region on August 23rd. As you know, the State of Louisiana suffered unprecedented flooding in March and August that led to the major disaster declarations declared on March 13, 2016 (DR-4263) and on August 14, 2016 (DR-4277). The combined flood events have damaged more than 84,000 homes documented by FEMA and more than 180,000 individual disaster assistance registrations. The anomaly of two extraordinary floods occurring over a short period of time, in the same geographical region, has caused significant financial implications for the State of Louisiana and its citizens, making the combined flooding one of the worst natural disasters in our nation's history. We therefore reiterate our strong support for the State of Louisiana's request that the March Flood disaster declaration (DR-4263) also be amended to include a 90-percent cost share.

On August 23rd you stated in your public comments that you directed "the federal government to mobilize and do everything we could to help." In your September 8th letter to Governor John Bel Edwards you stated that you will "continue to be fully committed to ensuring that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other Federal agencies do everything they can to get Louisiana the assistance it needs." With respect to these remarks and commitment, we believe it is incumbent upon your Administration to submit to Congress an appropriations request covering the combined DR-4263 and DR-4277 declarations to help Louisiana families, communities and businesses recover from the catastrophic flooding that has occurred in the State of Louisiana this year. The need to provide federal assistance to help families and communities recover from these unprecedented level of flooding events is imperative.

With Congress considering appropriation bills to fund the federal government, it is crucial that a Louisiana supplemental disaster funding component be included as part of a funding bill. To facilitate and expedite consideration of a Louisiana supplemental spending package, we request you to make a supplemental appropriations request to Congress. The essential components that would need to be a part of a Presidential supplemental appropriations request includes, but is not limited to: an allocation to the Community Development Block Grant Program (for housing recovery efforts, agricultural losses and other strategic infrastructure damages), appropriate investments in projects designed to reduce the risk of flood and lower the base flood elevation to improve the resiliency of communities in the Comite and Amite river basins, funding for the U.S. Small Business Administration to support the long-term recovery of affected small businesses as authorized under Section 2010 of P.L. 114-88, and an allocation to the Social Services Block Grant program to restore funding resources the State of Louisiana has expended to address mental health, child welfare, child care programs, and services for vulnerable and low-income children and families affected by these historic floods.

Furthermore, there are a variety of other unmet needs in the State of Louisiana, which include additional flood management and mitigation resources to address damage to waterway infrastructure in the Mississippi River Valley Basin as a result of the federally declared disaster (DR-4263) designated earlier in the year.

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We urge the Administration to act expeditiously in considering our request to submit to Congress a supplemental appropriations request and appreciate your continued support on behalf of Louisiana's ongoing recovery efforts from these catastrophic floods.

Sincerely,

David Vitter
U.S. Senator

Bill Cassidy, M.D.
U.S. Senator

Charles Boustany, M.D.
U.S. House of Representatives

Steve Scalise
U.S. House of Representatives

John Fleming, M.D.
U.S. House of Representatives

Cedric Richmond
U.S. House of Representatives

Ralph Abraham, M.D.
U.S. House of Representatives

Garret Graves
U.S. House of Representatives