

**RESOLUTION**

**NO. R-08-402**

**CITY HALL: July 24, 2008**

**BY: COUNCILMEMBER FIELKOW, CLARKSON, MIDURA, HEAD, CARTER,  
HEDGE-MORRELL AND WILLARD-LEWIS**

**SECONDED BY:**

**WHEREAS**, in the aftermath of the flooding and devastation caused by Hurricane Betsy in 1965, the Government of the United States promised the citizens of Southeast Louisiana Category 3 Hurricane Protection, for which the local citizenry contributed significant cost share funding; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers before Hurricane Katrina informed Louisiana that it was protected against a hurricane likely to come no more frequently than once in 200 years, and that the standard of protection was supposedly even higher in some areas; and

**WHEREAS**, improvements along the entire Mississippi River system, including its tributaries, and the construction of reservoirs for electricity production, irrigation, and flood protection in states as far away as North Dakota have deprived the Mississippi River of enormous amounts of sediment needed to sustain coastal lands in Louisiana; and

**WHEREAS**, Southeast Louisiana has played a major roll in the shipping and oil and gas industries, benefiting the quality of life and economy of the nation as a whole but, in concert with levees designed to protect Southeast Louisiana, causing great loss of Louisiana coastal lands; and

**WHEREAS**, these activities, which benefited the entire nation by providing such inland cities as Pittsburgh and Tulsa with direct access to the ocean and by protecting national security (which was the original purpose of the Gulf Intra-coastal Waterway) have caused the loss of 2,100 square miles of Louisiana's coastal lands; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers each mile of land over which a storm surge travels absorbs roughly one foot of storm surge, so that if these 2,100 square miles of lost land still existed then the populated areas of coastal Louisiana would not require the enormous investment in flood protection infrastructure that must now be made,

**WHEREAS**, on August 29, 2005 Hurricane Katrina devastated Southeast Louisiana by overtopping levees and breaching floodwalls, with high winds, torrential rains and flooding causing catastrophic damage to public and private properties in Southeast Louisiana, severely impacting the population, local economy and tax base of these parishes and reducing the funding capabilities of their respective levee districts; and

**WHEREAS**, true one hundred year protection for Southeast Louisiana must be approached from a regional perspective with a contiguous system that eliminates all gaps; and

**WHEREAS**, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, one hundred year protection for Southeast Louisiana was reevaluated by the USACE and approved by Congress; however, the current local cost share requirement for this protection is estimated to be \$1.8 billion for Southeast Louisiana, and without payment of this substantial sum, the region has been advised this much needed protection will not be constructed or will be substantially delayed jeopardizing the safety and property of the people of Southeast Louisiana; and

**WHEREAS**, the Governor of Louisiana has stated his commitment for citizens of the state to pay their proper cost share, yet since much of Southeast Louisiana is still rebuilding and attempting to bring in new development, imposing an additional tax burden on citizens there of \$1.8 billion will greatly hamper recovery and in some areas make recovery impossible; and

**WHEREAS**, it is widely recognized that the damages sustained in Katrina were the result of the USACE's negligence in the design and/or construction of the region's flood protection system; and

**WHEREAS**, the Secretary of the Army has the discretion to allow local cost share to be paid over a thirty year period, and this discretion has been applied in situations not as exigent as Louisiana's; now therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS**, that due to the negligence of the USACE in the design and/or construction of the region's flood protection system, no local cost share should be required; however to the extent such is necessitated, the executive branch is urged to exercise its discretion and allow payment of the local cost share over a thirty year period, and if the executive branch does not exercise its discretion, that the Congress of the United States enact S 3172 or other measures which mandate a thirty year period for repayment, and that the Congress is urged to appropriate necessary funds so that construction is not delayed.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Council hereby extends its most sincere best wishes to the victims of recent disasters across the nation, and urges Congress to work together to not only help restore all of our communities but to ensure we are secure from similar future events through appropriating immediate funding for disaster assistance through the passage of an emergency supplemental appropriation, reforming the Stafford Act, addressing the insurance crisis, and improving the implementation of the National Disaster Plan.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that certified copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Office of the Federal Coordinator for Gulf Coast Rebuilding, the Governor of Louisiana, the Louisiana Congressional Delegation, the Louisiana State Delegation, and the Mayor of the City of New Orleans.

**THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION WAS READ IN FULL, THE ROLL WAS CALLED ON THE ADOPTION THEREOF AND RESULTED AS FOLLOWS:**

**YEAS:**

**NAYS:**

**ABSENT:**

**AND THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**