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**Restore La. Task Force Agrees to Expand
Assistance to Homeowners with Flood Insurance and Increase Reimbursement Awards**

Thousands More Could be Eligible for Repair Awards

BATON ROUGE, La. – At its meeting on Friday, Aug. 18, the Restore Louisiana Task Force unanimously approved Gov. John Bel Edwards’ request to expand the homeowner assistance program to all homeowners who had flood insurance during the March and August 2016 floods.

In addition, the task force unanimously approved the governor’s request to increase grant award amounts to those who are already eligible for both construction work and reimbursements.

The measures, which now go to the governor and then HUD for final approval, could allow thousands more flood-impacted homeowners to apply for awards.

“I want to make certain that the Restore Louisiana program is made available to help as many homeowners as we can,” said Gov. Edwards. “While we can never be fast enough to be satisfied, I have said from the beginning that as more recovery dollars become available, my administration would work to expand the program and benefits to help more homeowners.”

Executive Director of the Governor’s Office of Community Development Pat Forbes says the limits were in place because of the state’s need to ensure the program is adequately funded. As grants have been awarded and home inspections and damage assessments have been completed, “It’s clear that there should be enough funds to meet additional unmet needs of affected households,” Forbes said.

The measures approved Friday would make several key changes in the homeowner assistance program’s eligibility requirements, including:

- Expanding eligibility to all homeowners with flood insurance who still have an unmet need after insurance proceeds
- Increasing the award amount homeowners receive for costs of flood-related repairs that have not yet been completed
- Increasing the percentage homeowners are reimbursed for repairs already completed

To date, more than \$16 million has been awarded to over 500 homeowners, and more than 40,000 homeowners have completed the flood-damage survey.

The changes approved on Friday do not require homeowners to re-take the survey if they have completed it.

Also in the meeting, Forbes told the panel that the administration has asked again that the Office of Housing and Urban Development forgive U.S. Small Business Administration loans taken out following the flood to rebuild homes. To date, HUD has said those who have been approved for an SBA loan would have that amount count as a duplication of benefit, which would reduce the amount of assistance those homeowners could receive from Restore Louisiana.

Completing the brief survey is the first step in requesting help through Restore Louisiana. All flood-impacted homeowners are strongly encouraged to complete it. The survey is available online at restore.la.gov, by telephone at (866) 735-2001 or by visiting one of the Restore Louisiana housing assistance centers in Lafayette, Hammond, Monroe and Baton Rouge.

About the Restore Louisiana Task Force

The Restore Louisiana Task Force comprises 21 individuals from throughout the state who were appointed by Gov. John Bel Edwards to oversee the rebuilding process after historic flooding in March and August 2016 impacted 51 disaster-declared parishes. The Task Force's mission is divided into six categories: community planning, economic, health and social services, housing, infrastructure and natural and cultural resources. All task force documents are available at <http://restore.la.gov/resources/>. For more information, visit restore.la.gov.