

Gov. Edwards Issues Statement on Two-Year Flood Anniversary

August 12, 2018

Today, Gov. John Bel Edwards released the following statement on the two-year anniversary of the August 2016 flood:

“I want to recognize the incredible resilience demonstrated by every survivor who endured the catastrophic flooding two years ago on this day,” said Gov. Edwards. “Sadly, 10 lives were lost in addition to the tremendous property loss. The August flood came on the heels of another disaster just a few months earlier in March when five lives were lost and homes and businesses were destroyed. The impact of both floods is still being felt today. All of our citizens are to be commended for their strength, resolve and compassion in the face of such natural disasters. While thousands have been helped by the state’s recovery program, we recognize there are more citizens who need help and are still recovering.

“We know that the Small Business Administration loan Duplication of Benefits (DOB) issue is preventing thousands of homeowners from receiving grant funds from the Restore Program as the result of existing federal policy. Rest assured that I along with our congressional delegation agree with you that a loan is not a grant, and it should not be considered a duplication. We will continue pressing for a resolution and are committed to seeing this process through in order to help everyone we can who was impacted.

“Earlier this year we were able to announce that federal and state resources are now in place to complete construction of the Comite River Diversion Project. It has been nearly three decades of battling red tape but finally, the gridlock has been broken. The state has committed significant resources including having the Dept. of Transportation and Development construct the much needed four commuter bridges. Once finished, the Project will help tremendously in mitigating future floods. This is the result of many meetings since 2016 between my administration, our congressional delegation and both the Obama and Trump Administrations.

“Looking forward to long-term flood prevention efforts for Louisiana, we are currently focusing on regional watershed management and investing in smarter infrastructure and flood mitigation projects. Through managing, mitigating and adapting to future flood risks, my administration will continue efforts to prioritize this work, positioning our state to be a national leader of watershed-based floodplain management. Our goal will always be to provide safer, stronger and more resilient communities for the people of Louisiana.”

Since 2016, Louisiana has made great strides through Restore Louisiana programs in helping homeowners, renters, businesses and farmers in their long-term recovery efforts. To date, the Homeowner Assistance Program has awarded over \$438 million in grant funds to more than 13,300 homeowners to repair or reconstruct their homes. Recently, at the request of Gov. Edwards, the Restore Task Force and the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development increased the reimbursement award for eligible homeowners to 100 percent. As a result, 10,000 plus homeowners will receive more than \$110 million. Nearly half of those homeowners have already received their updated reimbursement checks. Funds have been successfully made available to homeowners faster than any other similar recovery program in the nation, but work continues to improve the efficiency and speed in getting much-needed dollars in the hands of those who continue to rebuild.

Additional program details:

Restore Small Business Assistance:

\$26.1 million has been disbursed to small business owners.

Restore Public Assistance Match:

More than \$100 million is being invested in public facilities.

Restore Agriculture Assistance:

\$9.4 million disbursed to farmers.

Restore Landlord/Developer Rental Assistance:

Over \$70 million is being invested to build more than 1,000 new affordable rental units.