Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 8th, 2005

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Hurricane Katrina stands to be one of the worst natural disasters our country has ever endured. With millions of Americans displaced, an untold number of fatalities, and massive areas in need of clean up, Congress is poised to help in anyway we can. The United States always comes together in times of crisis and this will be no exception; the Gulf States will receive the full support of our nation. Congress has approved, and you have signed into law, the first emergency supplemental that demonstrates the government's commitment to meeting these needs. But we must do more.

As you consider additional emergency supplemental funding in response to this disaster, we urge you to give serious thought to the wider effects this catastrophe will have beyond the shores of the Gulf. Even prior to Katrina, our nation was feeling the squeeze of record high energy prices; with the massive disruption of this Hurricane, prices will continue to rise rapidly and create a looming crisis for our cold weather states. As a result, we urge you to include $900 million in emergency Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds in the upcoming relief package. In the face of soaring energy costs, this additional funding will help maintain the program's 2004 purchasing power this winter. This funding is critical to stymie further fallout of Katrina's destruction and reduce the anxiety of a home heating crisis this winter.

Oil and natural gas prices were already at record levels prior to the damage Katrina inflicted on this critical energy region. As a result, we can expect to face the most expensive winter heating season in history across the country. On Thursday, September 7th, the U.S. Energy Information Administration projected that residential per-household expenditures on natural gas could be up as much as 71 percent over last year and home heating oil could increase by as much as 31 percent. These increases are on top of double digit increases in 2004.

The newly enacted Energy Policy Act recognized the vastly reduced purchasing power of recent LIHEAP funding levels and increased the authorization from $2 billion to $5.1 billion. This modest request for $900 million in the emergency supplemental will at least keep the program level with the purchasing power of 2004.

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Congress stands firm in our commitment to rebuild the Gulf communities destroyed by the storm. It is also our responsibility to address the wider ramifications of this natural disaster and avert another crisis down the road by providing additional LIHEAP emergency funds. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Charles F. Bass

Marty Meehan

[illegible]

Louise M Slaughter

Todd R. Platts

[illegible]

Melissa A. Hart

Tom Allen

John W Olver

John B. Larson

Mike Doyle

Melissa L Bean

Jim McGovern

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Tim Ryan

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Jac Schwarz

Jim Langevin

Patrick J. Kennedy

Jeb Bradley

Mike Castle

Tinty [illegible]

Vit Fall

Rahm Emanuel

Ron Kind

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Robert E. [illegible]

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Bobby L. Rush

Nancy L. Johnson

Gary L. Ackerman

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1. Ackerman, Gary
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55. Slaughter, Louise
56. Stupak, Bart
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58. Walsh, James