

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION VS. KATRINA: WHAT  
ROLE SHOULD FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL  
GOVERNMENTS PLAY IN PRESERVING HISTORIC  
PROPERTIES AFFECTED BY THIS CATA-  
STROPHIC STORM?**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERALISM  
AND THE CENSUS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON  
GOVERNMENT REFORM

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

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ING HISTORIC PROPERTIES AFFECTED BY  
THIS CATASTROPHIC STORM?**

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**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2005**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERALISM AND THE CENSUS,  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:01 a.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Michael R. Turner (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Turner, Dent, and Foxx.

Also present: Representative Melancon.

Staff present: John Cuaderes, staff director; Jon Heroux, counsel; Peter Neville, fellow; Juliana French, clerk; Adam Bordes, minority professional staff member; and Cecelia Morton, minority office manager.

Mr. TURNER. Good morning. A quorum being present, this hearing of the Subcommittee on Federalism and the Census will come to order.

Welcome to the subcommittee's hearing entitled, "Historic Preservation vs. Katrina: What Role Should Federal, State and Local Governments Play in Historic Preservation Properties Affected by this Catastrophic Storm?"

As we all know, Hurricane Katrina slammed into the gulf coast on August 29, 2005, heavily damaging the entire region. The storm will be the costliest in U.S. history, and maybe the greatest natural disaster ever to hit our Nation. The first priority, of course, is rebuilding the lives, communities, and businesses impacted by the storm. Nonetheless, historic preservation should be part of our response, both as an economic revitalization tool and to save our historic legacy.

From a historical perspective, the gulf coast region is one that is abundant in national treasures. For example, it is the site of numerous ancient Native American mounds and structures, it is the site of many remnants of the Nation's colonial roots. It is a memory of a time when Louis XIV first determined that the French should have a stake in the new world. It is an example of the former glory of Spain, and it is rich in African American history and culture. It is the birthplace of jazz and Mississippi Delta blues. It is a place

of tradition and beauty. It is nothing less than a showcase of not only our national, but of world history.

The destruction of historic properties has been massive. The numbers are staggering because the gulf coast region has one of the Nation's highest concentrations of historic structures. Historically important properties can be found throughout the hurricane-impacted area, and thousands of them are at risk of being lost forever.

Federal, State and local governments, as well as the nongovernmental associations, need to coordinate a timely, sufficient, targeted response to this historic preservation disaster. Time is an issue. Historically important structures have already been torn down, and structures that can be saved must be stabilized before they too are lost forever. There is hope. The infrastructure needed to implement historic rehabilitation programs is already in place. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 created a strong Federal preservation program which is administered by the Department of the Interior. This program relies heavily on the State Historic Preservation Offices and their local partners.

Even though the National Historic Preservation Act has a built-in infrastructure to deal with saving our historical structures, Hurricane Katrina was so massive and widespread that we need to explore additional ways to ensure that historic preservation is a priority. A coalition of national preservation organizations, led by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the American Institute of Architects, have proposed a legislative package for preservation efforts in the disaster area. The package proposed using the existing structure to provide new grants, tax credits, and waivers as incentives to restoring historic properties damaged by the hurricane.

Today's hearing will explore the roles of the Federal, State and local governments in responding to Katrina, the legislative package proposed by the National Trust and the American Institute of Architects, and other recommendations.

To help us address these issues, we have nine distinguished witnesses on two panels. On the first panel we will begin by hearing from the Honorable Mitchell Landrieu, the Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana, who I understand is going to be late today, will share his State-level perspective, and we will recognize him when he joins us. We will then hear from Mr. H.T. Holmes, director of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, which has responsibility for Mississippi historic properties.

We will next hear from Derrick Evans, founder and director of the Turkey Creek Community Initiative in Mississippi, recognized in 2001 as 1 of Mississippi's 10 most endangered historical places. The Turkey Creek Estuary was settled after the Civil War by African-American freed men. Mr. Evans has been working to protect the historic Turkey Creek area from urban sprawl, and is now working to recover from Katrina.

We will then hear from Patricia Gay, Executive Director of the Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, Ms. Gay focused her work on revitalizing New Orleans historic neighborhoods, and now her challenge has taken a new course.

We will then hear from Mr. David Preziosi, executive director of the Mississippi Heritage Trust, where we will learn of his efforts of assessing the damage to historic properties in Mississippi.

On the second panel we have four distinguished witnesses. First we will hear from John Nau, chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, which advises the President and Congress on national historic preservation policy.

We will then hear from Dr. Janet Matthews, Associate Director for Cultural Resources at the National Park Service which administers the Federal Historic Preservation program.

Then we will hear from Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, who will address their efforts in the Katrina response in the proposed legislative package.

And finally, we will hear from Norman Koonce, executive vice president and CEO of the American Institute of Architects, who will tell us of their response efforts and the legislative package they have proposed.

I look forward to the expert testimony on our distinguished panel of leaders and what they will provide us today, and I want to thank each of you for your time and welcome you.

I will now recognize Virginia Foxx and appreciate your attendance today.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm looking forward to hearing the comments here.

My husband and I have been involved a little bit in some historic preservation, although we don't talk about it a lot, and love to see older buildings and facilities preserved and enhanced. And so I look forward to hearing the comments today and thank all these folks for being here today.

Mr. TURNER. We will now hear from the witnesses. Each witness has kindly prepared written testimony which will be included in the record of this hearing. Witnesses will notice that there is a timer light at the witness table. The green light indicates that you should begin your prepared remarks, and the red light indicates that time has expired. The yellow light will indicate that you have 1 minute left in which to conclude your remarks.

It is the policy of this committee that all witnesses be sworn in before they testify. If all witnesses would please rise and raise your right hands.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. TURNER. Let the record show that all witnesses have responded in the affirmative.

And we will begin with Mr. Holmes. If you will turn on your mic, there is a button at the bottom. And again, we will begin with 5-minute rounds of comments. So if you will summarize your written testimony, and then subsequent to the presentation of your testimony we will enter into a round of questions from the Members.

Mr Holmes.

**STATEMENTS OF H.T. HOLMES, DIRECTOR, MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY; MITCHELL J. LANDRIEU, LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, STATE OF LOUISIANA; DERRICK EVANS, FOUNDER/DIRECTOR, TURKEY CREEK COMMUNITY INITIATIVES; PATRICIA H. GAY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PRESERVATION RESOURCE CENTER OF NEW ORLEANS; AND DAVID PREZIOSI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE MISSISSIPPI HERITAGE TRUST**

**STATEMENT OF H.T. HOLMES**

Mr. HOLMES. Chairman Turner, distinguished members of the subcommittee, I am H.T. Holmes, director of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, and, as such, serve as both the State historic preservation officer and the State historical records coordinator for—

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Holmes, if I could have you pause for a moment; and for each of you, these mics are relatively directional. If you would take your mic and turn the top of it down so that it is pointed directly at you, great.

Mr. HOLMES. Hurricane Katrina dealt a deadly blow to more than 300 buildings in Mississippi that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Our current assessment count indicates that at least 1,000 properties were severely damaged, including Beauvoir, the National Historic Landmark home of Jefferson Davis. Unlike Beauvoir, many of these 1,000 properties are beyond repair and will be lost. Many of the region's public spaces, museums, libraries, archives, city halls and courthouses were hit hard.

In the days immediately following the storm, the staff of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History mobilized an all-for-salvage-and-recovery support. Teams of archivists, museum curators, and historic preservation specialists daily drove 6 to 8 hours round trip, 7 days a week, to devote 8 to 10 hours in damaged buildings assessment and to salvage artifacts and documents from flooded museums, libraries, and courthouses.

I am very proud of the Department's response effort, which continues even as we speak. And I am deeply grateful for the assistance offered by government agencies such as the National Historical Publication and Records Commission, and private organizations such as the National Trust Historic Preservation.

What we have learned is that for publicly owned historic resources, emergency recovery funds are available through FEMA and other sources, but the historical character of this region depends not just on public buildings, but also on privately owned historic properties. The destruction of hundreds of these properties has unalterably changed the area's character. Almost immediately it became clear that many of the damaged products could perhaps be restored if immediate measures were taken to stabilize them, either by the property owner or by a local government entity. Sadly, no funds have been available to assist private property owners or local governments in emergency stabilization of private historic properties.

A significant number of properties are owned by not-for-profit groups. Many of these historical buildings housed local museums and archives. For emergency relief, these nonprofits go to the Small



Business Administration for a loan. Unfortunately, most of these groups operate with an all-volunteer staff and a shoestring budget; they simply do not have the resources to repay a loan.

We must now look at what remains with the new vision. New structures that were considered of marginal historical value before Katrina may now be seen as precious because they're the only surviving evidence of earlier times and because they are survivors of Katrina, Mississippi's most recent historical watershed. An illustration is the Turkey Creek Community that we have discussed—mentioned.

The built environment there has been modified over the years as fortunes improved and residents were able to add to their homes. So according to our current interpretation of standards for listing a district in the National Register, Turkey Creek may fall short in the eyes of Federal reviewers; but in a broader sense, this indigenous community possesses tremendous historical significance. The people of Turkey Creek and other indigenous communities in this region stand ready to preserve and restore their historic properties. So do the not-for-profit groups that operate historic sites. I hope that the private property owners can gain the recognition they need to continue their preservation work.

In written testimony I submitted earlier, I supported the three major packages of points of the National Trust legislative package: establish historic preservation disaster relief grants; establish a disaster relief historic homeowner assistance tax credit; provide waivers to the existing historic preservation tax credit. These recommendations can be implemented within this Nation's existing historic preservation program.

I would like to add a fourth recommendation, one for which a ready-made program does not come to mind, but nonetheless speaks to the heart of our efforts to preserve our history and culture. To assist local museums, historical societies, and archives operated as not-for-profit organizations, please ensure that FEMA has some specific authority to provide emergency recovery assistance for the archives, records, and artifacts of which these groups serve as caretakers.

Mississippians now face a staggering task in attempting to rehabilitate the historic fabric that survived Hurricane Katrina and in recapturing the sense of place that existed in their communities before August 29, 2005. Those resources that withstood Katrina and remain today will become the symbols of stability and continuity around which our communities will rebuild. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Holmes follows:]

TESTIMONY OF H. T. HOLMES, DIRECTOR,  
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

BEFORE THE HOUSE GOVERNMENT REFORM SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
FEDERALISM AND THE CENSUS

*“Historic Preservation vs. Katrina: What Role Should Federal, State and Local Governments Play in Preservation of Historic Properties Affected by These Catastrophic Storms?”*

OCTOBER 21, 2005

Chairman Turner, Ranking Member Clay, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, I am H. T. Holmes, director of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and State Historic Preservation Officer for Mississippi. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today concerning damage to historic properties caused by Hurricane Katrina and the roles that federal, state, and local governments should play in the preservation of historic properties in the areas affected by the hurricane.

One of Mississippi’s favorite sons, William Faulkner, characterized the South’s fascination with history by the observation that, for Southerners, “The past is never dead. In fact, it’s not even past.” While Faulkner may have exaggerated a bit, it is an undisputed fact that Mississippians are very passionate about their history. Perhaps because Mississippi’s history is largely the story of peoples’ struggles against the extremes – extremes of wealth and poverty, of power and disenfranchisement, and of man and nature -- that our state has produced such a remarkably rich and varied culture. Those same struggles may also be the reason Mississippi’s sons and daughters seem to cherish their history so much. It defines who we are as a people.

The agency that I direct, the Department of Archives and History, is a good example of our state's long-standing appreciation for history. We are the second oldest such state agency in the nation and have comprehensive responsibilities for historic properties, museums, and state and local government records programs, as well as managing the state's official library and archives.

Mississippians' profound concerns for their heritage were exhibited by their immediate demand for news about the condition of various historic buildings and sites following the onslaught of Hurricane Katrina. That was especially true for Jefferson Davis's last home, known as *Beauvoir*, which is probably the state's most well-known historic house. Almost in the same breath with which they sought information about the safety of friends and loved-ones, many Mississippians also inquired about the condition of *Beauvoir*, and were greatly relieved to learn that the house had, indeed, survived, although severely damaged.

One such devoted Mississippian, Charles Gray, president of the Hancock County Historical Society, returned to Bay St. Louis, one of the Mississippi cities over which the eye of the storm passed, to find that his beautifully restored antebellum home and its magnificent collection of historical artwork and antiques were completely destroyed. Even in the face of such personal tragedy and loss, Mr. Gray turned his attentions to repairing the nineteenth-century building that houses the Historical Society and its extensive collections of documents, photographs, and artifacts. Thanks to Mr. Gray's efforts, within days the Historical Society's headquarters was restored and functioning again, and he graciously made it available to teams of architects and engineers assembled by the Department of Archives and History, the

National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Association for Preservation Technology for use as an office while they were inspecting damage to buildings in Bay St. Louis's historic districts. Mr. Gray is serving as a local point of contact and a conduit of information between the Department of Archives and History and local citizens concerned about the preservation of their damaged historic properties. There are many such stories of heroic efforts by local citizens to rescue their history.

Hurricane Katrina dealt a deadly blow to more than three hundred of Mississippi's buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Among the Mississippi Gulf Coast's well-known historic landmarks that were completely destroyed are the circa 1800 French and Spanish Creole mansions known as Elmwood Manor and the Old Spanish Custom House; the mid-nineteenth-century Greek Revival mansions Grasslawn and Tullis-Toledano Manor; the late-Victorian cottages known as the Brielmaier House, the Fisherman's Cottage, and the Pleasant Reed House; the 1890 vacation cottage of Chicago architect and "father of the skyscraper" Louis Sullivan; the early twentieth-century artist compound Shearwater Pottery, studio of the renowned Anderson family; and virtually the entire Scenic Drive Historic District in Pass Christian, often referred to as the "Newport of the South" for its once magnificent collection of vacation "cottages" of wealthy Southern families.

These great houses that lined Mississippi's Gulf Coast were works of architectural art. Seldom has there been exhibited a more harmonious and successful blending of architectural responses to practical climatic need and artistic aesthetic as was illustrated in these buildings. In many ways, the Mississippi Gulf Coast was the northern-most reach of the Caribbean

culture, and much of its architecture bore a closer resemblance to that of some Caribbean islands than to the upland South or other areas of the country. Its houses were wrapped by spacious porches (or “galleries,” as we call them) that shaded the buildings from the intense sunlight, caught the refreshing Gulf breezes, and provided comfortable places for their residents to seek respite from the region’s often oppressive heat. These galleries were for all practical purposes living rooms whose “walls” were mostly composed of columns and balustrades. We can still learn many lessons about pleasing design and energy conservation from their construction.

The region’s museums and libraries were also hard hit. For instance, only the chimney remains of the once charming Pleasant Reed House Museum, the restored 1880s cottage of Biloxi carpenter and African-American leader Pleasant Reed. Only the roof and a few scant sections of walls survive from the old Coast Guard cadet barracks that for many years housed Biloxi’s popular Maritime and Seafood Industry Museum. The museum’s staff has had great difficulty in securing heavy equipment to excavate much of the museum’s valuable collection from the building rubble. Pass Christian’s old public library, a virtual time capsule from the turn of the twentieth century, under restoration when Katrina hit, was swept away with scarcely a trace of its existence.

Because *Beauvoir* was the retirement home of former Confederate President Jefferson Davis, it has received much national and international news media attention. Even if Davis’s role in the Civil War is discounted, there would be no denying that he is among the most important figures in American history. A hero of the Mexican War, Davis served in both Houses of

Congress and as Secretary of War under President Franklin Pierce. In the latter role, Davis instituted reforms that modernized the U.S. military, and he supervised plans for the expansion of the U. S. Capitol, which resulted in the design of the building as we know it today. *Beauvoir* was designated as a National Historic Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior in 1971.

The distinctive design and sturdy construction of *Beauvoir* permitted it to withstand a tidal surge of more than twenty feet that swept through the site. Of a building type known as a “raised cottage,” which is a bit of a misnomer for a mansion-sized structure like *Beauvoir*, the house is elevated on massive twelve-foot-high brick foundation piers that form an above-ground basement. Although the house sustained extensive damage from the impact of such an enormous storm surge, it was this construction technique that allowed the main body of the building to survive in relatively sound condition, with portraits still on the walls of the interior where the Davises hung them more than a century ago. Other structures on the property, such as the Civil War museum housed in the 1920s hospital building constructed when the estate served as a Confederate veterans’ home, did not fare as well. More than 17,000 historic artifacts were scattered over the eighty-acre estate or buried under tons of building rubble. As soon as trucks and fuel could be secured following the storm, staff members of the Department of Archives and History began assisting *Beauvoir’s* staff in excavating and evacuating as many artifacts as possible. Although many important artifacts and documents stored in the vault of the Jefferson Davis Presidential Library survived safely, a systematic effort to locate and excavate many other irreplaceable items scattered about the property continues at the present. Initial estimates are that it will cost between \$10 and \$12 million to

restore *Beauvoir*, which is obviously well beyond the means of the private non-profit organization that operates this museum property to accomplish on their own. Without doubt, government assistance will be required. Failure to do so would likely result in the property's ultimate demise and would further compound a tragedy already of epic proportions.

Of course, not all of the cultural resources affected by Hurricane Katrina are as immediately recognizable or well-known as *Beauvoir*, but are also a significant part of Mississippi's historic fabric. For example, the Turkey Creek Community, located near the Gulfport-Biloxi airport, was founded by a group of former slaves shortly after the Civil War. Today, most residents are descendants of these former slaves and many still reside in their ancestral homes. Already struggling to survive as a distinct African-American community, the residents of Turkey Creek, suffered extensive flooding during the storm, but are committed to restoring and maintaining their unique sense of place. The Department of Archives and History, recently declared its determination that the community is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

We must also remember that it was not only the Gulf Coast that was hit hard by Katrina. The hurricane was still at or near category two status when it roared through central Mississippi. Historic downtowns and residential neighborhoods in cities like Hattiesburg, Columbia, and Picayune also suffered extensive damage. Mississippi's Old Capitol building, a National Historic Landmark and home of the state's historical museum, in Jackson lost much of its roof. Rain water poured through the building, destroying plaster ceilings and decorative ornaments and soaking thousands of the state's finest historical artifacts. The damage was so

extensive that the museum has been closed for the foreseeable future while efforts are underway to restore the structure and conserve damaged artifact collections.

Immediately after the hurricane, staff members of the Department's Historic Preservation Division began overlaying maps of National Register historic districts with NOAA aerial photographic imagery to produce a preliminary projection of the numbers of historic properties destroyed by the storm. Within days, the Division began fielding teams to verify the preliminary estimates and collect additional data and photographs documenting the extent of damage to historic buildings. This effort was hampered by the Historic Preservation Division's small staff and the lack of an operational base on the Gulf Coast, necessitating daily excursions from Jackson, more than 150 miles distant. Despite these difficulties, by the end of September, more than 1,200 historic properties that survived the hurricane had been documented across 100 miles of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. During this period, the executive director of the Mississippi Heritage Trust dedicated much of his time to the survey effort, functioning almost as a member of the Historic Preservation Division staff. Timely completion of the work would likely not have been possible without his assistance.

At the same time, contacts were initiated with organizations such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP), the Heritage Emergency National Task Force, the Association for Preservation Technology (APT), the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (NCSHPO), and sister State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), seeking financial and volunteer assistance to undertake more detailed analysis of the condition of several severely damaged historic buildings. Thanks to funding assistance from the NTHP and



NCSHPO and volunteer architects, engineers and preservation specialists from APT and the SHPOs, by September 18, the first technical inspection team was fielded with the following goals:

- 1) Meet with public officials and individual historic homeowners who desire a structural inspection of their damaged historic properties.
- 2) Structurally assess as many of the historic properties as possible that have been deemed unsafe for occupancy by the local building officials.

As of October 15, three teams have been fielded and detailed reports completed on a total of 125 damaged historic structures. FEMA fielded its first team of similar preservation professionals in Mississippi on October 10. One of the truly rewarding aspects of this operation has been the ability to provide property owners with accurate evaluations of the condition of their historic buildings and guidance on how or whether to proceed with rehabilitation. During disasters, rumors run rampant; many citizens fear that there will be a wholesale demolition of damaged buildings, even if they are restorable. It helps property owners to have accurate information upon which to base their decisions. Plans are to continue this process until all damaged historic properties have been assessed.

I have provided the above background on activities related to Hurricane Katrina recovery to illustrate that, while many, many Mississippians are concerned about and committed to the preservation of their communities' and our state's historic properties, the magnitude of the damage is so great that accomplishing the task will require much involvement from government at all levels. In that light, the Department of Archives and History has worked closely with other agencies, both state and federal, with local governments, and with private

relief organizations to provide much needed services. Among these partners, of course, has been the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Our experience in working with FEMA has, frankly, been a mixture of reassurance and frustration. The reassurance is found in the dedication and professionalism of the FEMA cultural resource representatives who, like our own staff, are faced with an emergency situation of catastrophic proportions. In working with our staff on temporary housing and debris removal issues, and in seeking solutions for the important tasks of stabilizing and preserving those historic structures that survived the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, we have witnessed their long hours and attention to detail. However, we have also been frustrated at the seemingly slow pace of implementing those proposed solutions on the ground. Specifically, there are ongoing concerns, often voiced by anxious citizens, that, as the removal of “debris” continues in the most devastated areas, historic structures that are still salvageable will be swept away along with the debris, completing by human hands the devastation wrought by Katrina and losing forever any hope of salvaging the historic ties Mississippians cherish on the Gulf Coast. While FEMA officials have continued to assure us that the resources we have identified as salvageable are being protected, the situation on the ground is still uncertain. To improve the situation, FEMA and other agencies involved in the relief effort must seek ways to clarify their respective roles and enhance communication. Greater on-site support personnel and funding for the gathering and dissemination of resource data are desperately needed to insure that the work is being accomplished in a way that is sensitive to the concerns of private property owners and to our priceless cultural resources.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department of Archives and History collaborated with the National Trust for Historic Preservation in preparing a proposal for a three-pronged disaster assistance package to provide the communities and individuals in the hurricane devastated areas the tools needed to rescue what remains of their heritage. Because the damage is so wide-spread and the destruction of such immense proportions, these tools will, of necessity, have to come primarily from the highest levels of government. It is only by enactment of a package similar to the one outlined below that there will be much hope of saving and restoring large numbers of historic properties in Mississippi.

### 1. **Establish Historic Preservation Disaster Relief Grants**

- Create a two-year, \$60 million grant program from the federal Historic Preservation Fund for repairing damaged historic properties.
- Funds should be used for preservation projects and planning, including the preservation, stabilization, rehabilitation, and repair of historic structures and sites listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register, and for the Mississippi Main Street Association for business and technical assistance for Main Street districts.
- Projects receiving insurance payments and other state or federal credits or grants should be eligible for Historic Preservation Disaster Relief Grants, but should clearly demonstrate that these funds would be used for projects not fully covered by insurance or other state or federal funding sources.
- Grants should be administered by the State Historic Preservation Officer in each State, with a small percentage of the total grants available for use in off-setting administrative costs and should be available to non-federal owners of National Register or National Register-eligible properties including, individuals, non-profit organizations and developers.
- A non-federal match should not be required, but a preservation easement that would protect the public investment in the historic properties should be executed by each grant recipient.

**2. Establish A Disaster Relief Historic Homeowner Assistance Tax Credit**

- Create a tax credit program of 30 percent of qualified rehabilitation expenditures made by persons who rehabilitate historic homes located in the Hurricane Katrina Disaster Area and used as a principal residence. Limit the credit to \$40,000 total.
- The credit should be refundable for lower income persons (\$30,000 in income for individuals; \$60,000 for married filing joint return), so that those with incomes too low to benefit from the credit may still use the incentive.
- The program should define "qualified rehabilitation expenditure" in a manner similar to the existing historic rehabilitation tax credit (Sec. 47 of IRC) except that it applies to capital improvements on non-depreciable property (certified rehabilitation of a qualified historic home). Not less than five percent of expenses must be for improvements to the exterior.
- The program should benefit owners of "qualified historic homes" that need to be substantially rehabilitated and the property must be owned by the taxpayer and serve as his principal residence. "Substantially rehabilitated" would mean that a minimum of \$5,000 must be spent on qualified rehabilitation expenditures.

**3. Provide Waivers to the Existing Historic Preservation Tax Credit for Commercial Properties**

- Provide a reasonable period of time to place properties back into service to avoid recapture penalties. Recapture of the credit should not apply if a property is repaired and placed back into service within a reasonable period of time, and that for properties damaged by Katrina, that period will be at least three years, or longer as circumstances warrant.
- Permit property owners to use the \$5,000 minimum threshold for hurricane-related repair work. All building owners repairing Hurricane-Katrina-related damage should be treated as having satisfied the substantial rehabilitation test if they spend in excess of \$5,000 on qualifying basis eligible expenditures, irrespective of their prior adjusted bases in the buildings.
- Waive recapture for properties destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. Hurricane Katrina caused such widespread devastation that some properties have been completely destroyed. Others have not suffered a total casualty but have irreplaceably lost their historic integrity. In either case, owners of such buildings still in the five year recapture period are subject to recapture. This rule creates a double loss for these owners and will diminish the resources that they can draw upon to help rebuild the region generally.
- Waive recapture for properties subject to default. A foreclosure, deed in lieu of foreclosure or other transfer in connection with the satisfaction of defaulted obligations to a lender triggers recapture, again creating a double loss to property

owners. Recapture should be temporarily waived with respect to buildings that are disposed of for the benefit of a lender in connection with a borrower default that occurs during the next twelve months.

- Permit property owners to treat rehabilitation costs as capital expenditures. Only rehabilitation expenses that are capital costs (i.e., not currently deductible) are eligible for the credit. This will eliminate investor uncertainty and pave the way for syndicated tax credit equity to flow into projects as a source of financing repairs.
- Permit property owners additional time to complete rehabilitation projects. In general, qualifying rehabilitation expenditures must be incurred within a 24-month period. Owners should be permitted to use the 60-month rule for rehabilitation projects that were underway prior to the hurricane or that include repair of hurricane damage.

In closing, Mississippians now face a staggering task in attempting to rehabilitate the historic buildings that survived Hurricane Katrina and in recapturing the sense of place that existed in their communities prior to August 29, 2005. The loss of so many wonderful historic structures makes those that remain all the more important to preserve and restore. They will become the symbols of stability and continuity around which the communities will rebuild.

Several staff members at the Department of Archives and History now keep a photo by their desks to constantly remind them of the Gulf Coast's amazing spirit of resilience. It's of a hand-painted sign on a piece of salvaged plywood in front of *Beauvoir*, and it reads "Half-Time Score: Katrina 1, Beauvoir 0-- BUT THE GAME IS NOT OVER YET!" In deed, the game is not yet over, but it is only with the encouragement, commitment, and cooperation at all levels of government that the game will ultimately be won!

Mr. TURNER. At this point I'd like to acknowledge Mr. Landrieu, who is the Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana, who has joined us.

Mr. Landrieu, we swear in our witnesses. And if you would please rise at this point, I will administer the oath to you and then we can recognize you for your testimony.

[Witness sworn.]

Mr. TURNER. Please let the record reflect that he has responded in the affirmative.

And Mr. Landrieu, if you are ready, you can begin your comments. You may have heard as Mr Holmes was beginning, we have your written testimony. We appreciate both your time with us today and your efforts in preparing this testimony.

We would ask that your oral presentation be 5 minutes in length, and there is a timer light on the table. And then after everyone's testimony, we will then go to a question and answer period for the Members.

#### STATEMENT OF MITCHELL J. LANDRIEU

Mr. LANDRIEU. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you.

As has been said often in the last 8 to 10 weeks, this was an American tragedy that requires an American response. It's a tragedy that had a number of different acts. The first was rescue. That was a very difficult task for all of us, but we have completed that task.

We then went through the phase of recovery, which for those of us sitting at the table was very personal and very difficult, because many of our brothers and sisters and mothers and fathers and aunts and uncles did not survive this tragedy. We are working through that phase, but we are not quite complete.

But the third part, which is what we're here to talk about today, is the rebuild phase. The hard work has yet to begin. The hard work is beginning now. Many of us said during the storm—and it has come to pass—that when the television cameras leave and the country is onto other things like Supreme Court nominations, other difficult issues during the day, it's going to be hard to stay focused on fulfilling the promise that President Bush made to the country that we're going to rebuild the gulf coast of this country, not only because it's the right thing to do but because it's essential.

And as we sift through when and how and who and what, it's important for us to understand that everybody in the Deep South knows what accountability means. And the people who are most adamant about that are actually the people who are affected. And I can assure you that the people of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama will make sure that every dollar that is sent by this Congress will be put on top of private investment insurance and the hard work and the blood, sweat, and tears of the people in the Deep South.

The other thing I think is important to remember is that as we talk about the sense of place that Mr. Holmes talked about, we not only need to talk about it in terms of past history, but what is the future. And the fact of the matter is that food, music, culture, historic preservation, are not just nice things for people to see, but they mean business. And in the State of Louisiana and Mississippi,

one of the things that we understand is that when you talk about historic preservation, you're not really talking about the past, you're talking about the future; because we have found innovative ways to restore properties, historic preservation, and to bring them into commerce and to create jobs.

And the fact of the matter is that culture means business, and it also means tourism. And in Louisiana, for example, the tourism industry is responsible for a \$9.6 billion piece of the economy that provides 126,000 jobs. If you define the cultural economy in its broader context, the food, historic preservation, architecture, and things of that sort, it provides 144,000 jobs. And so there is this wonderful convergence that's been taking place in the New South in the past 10 years as most of the people within this Nation have moved there. We find that people really like culture and they like food and they like architecture and they like historic preservation. And those great cities and great places in the world that focus on those kinds of things are finding that they, in fact, are more economically viable than places that just look like everywhere else.

In Louisiana we have developed a rebirth plan to try to find a way to regrow the cultural economy. And Dick Moe and the National Trust for Historic Properties and the American Institute of Architects has partnered with us, and we adopt the legislation they're proposing. But in the South it's important for us to acknowledge a number of things: No. 1, diversity is a strength, not a weakness. No. 2, we have to find new ways to create jobs, not just relying on one industry, but on many. The third thing we have to do is we have to begin to think regionally so that we can compete globally, because it is not parish versus parish or county versus county, it's the Deep South and the New South competing with the Northeast and the West and in fact really, and more importantly, China.

We also have to find ways to add value to our raw material, our raw data, our intellectual capital, that we have a way of just exporting from the Deep South to other places so that people can add value there and then sell it back to us. What we want to do in the New South is add value to our raw material and to our intellectual capital and sell it to the rest of world.

And finally, it's important for us to really understand that in the New South that we talk about, where we know that knowledge is the currency of the new economy, we have to understand that it's high standards that we have to set for ourselves. The Southern average is not acceptable anymore because the Southern average, by definition, it is lower than the national average.

There are those of us in the southern region of this country who think that we can compete nationally and internationally, and so what we want to do now as talk about rebuilding the South is to set international standards that we think we can hit. We are an international competitor in tourism, we're an international competitor in oil and gas, there is really no reason why we can't be an international competitor on anything that we set our mind to. And it's important for the country to recognize that people in the South are smart, they're tough, they're fast, they're people of faith, family and country, and we believe that we can compete.

And so as we move into this rebuilding phase, let's go back to the past where we can create a future. How do we invest in our culture and our history, and how do we invest in technological innovation that can actually make us more of a unique place than we have been?

I look forward to working with you and the committee and Congress to make this happen. I thank you for your time, and I thank you for the opportunity to rebuild one of America's great assets. Thank you very much.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Landrieu follows:]





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## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION VERSES KATRINA AND RITA**

Statement of Lieutenant Governor Mitchell J. Landrieu

State of Louisiana

Testimony Before:

House Government Reform Subcommittee on Federalism and the Census

United States House of Representatives

November 1, 2005

### *Historic Preservation vs. Katrina and Rita*

In the wake of the worst natural disaster to face our nation, we have seen up close and personal loss on a magnitude the likes of which we have never been seen. Communities across the south were brought to their knees by the force of Katrina and then again four weeks later by Hurricane Rita. This is a real human tragedy that has the power to transform our nation. Historians have told the story of the South as one of “opportunity lost.” It is now the challenge of the nation and the people of the South to change our story into a story of “opportunity found.”

One simple idea should drive our actions. We can create a unified New South.

The New South exemplifies a place of community where our differences, much like threads of fine fabric, unite us – where educational opportunities abound. A place that understands that knowledge is the currency of a strong economy.

In this New South, our diversity is a strength, not a weakness - where different philosophies, political views, religious beliefs and ethnicities are not only viewed as good but necessary to the formation of the tapestry of our rich and beautiful culture. In this New South, we interpret the Latin term, *E Pluribus Unum* on the seal of the country literally, “out of many, one.” This New South values strong families, cultural roots and the heritage of our ancestors / while at the same time, looks forward in a progressive way, excited about the possibility of what can be.

As Lieutenant Governor, I am charged with preserving, protecting and enhancing Louisiana’s cultural legacy. And, as we begin the discussions about rebuilding the South, they must start with the context of our history and our people. One thing that we in Louisiana know for sure is that in order to rebuild and create our future, we must preserve our incredibly rich past. In Louisiana, our history and our heritage are uniquely expressed through our art, music, food, and, of course, our historic properties, districts and places.

South Louisiana’s heritage, including New Orleans, is a gumbo of Native Americans and exiles from Acadie in Canada, French expatriates and French Creoles, Creoles of Color, Freed People of Color, and Americans. Tradition, family, food, music and *joie de vivre* are fundamentals of life in South Louisiana. Sprinkled across the South Louisiana are bayous, sugar cane and rice fields, crawfish ponds, lakes, marshes, and rivers, creating a unique landscape you can’t find

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anywhere else in the world. Now, everything about the culture that we have shared with the nation and the world for so long comes from our people and is at risk.

Tourists, historians and cultural enthusiasts have for years traveled from other parts of America and around the world to see and experience Louisiana through its architecture, buildings and neighborhoods. And, while we in Louisiana have long understood the importance of preserving these American treasures, we also appreciate and enjoy the support of Congress for our historic offerings through the National Historic Preservation Program.

In fact, over the years, this federal/state partnership has received broad bipartisan support. It is really as uncontroversial as any public policy can be. For perspective, creation of the National Historic Preservation Program came in 1966 under Lyndon Johnson, while its greatest economic engine, the federal historic preservation tax credit, came about as an initiative of Ronald Reagan.

An initial assessment of the 10 parishes (or counties) in the Katrina zone and three in the Rita zone have been so severely affected that they require substantial, sustained investment by federal, state, and local governments and the private sector. These thirteen parishes were home to one million, seven hundred sixteen thousand, nine hundred thirty-one Louisiana citizens. 81,000 businesses have been severely impacted. This number represents roughly 41% of all Louisiana's businesses, of which 90% are small businesses. Compare these stats to 9/11, where only 50,000 businesses were dislocated. It took New York four months to plan an effective recovery program. In fact, Louisiana's state department of economic developments' counterparts in New York has praised Louisiana for its progress already made drawing up its economic revitalization plan. We have so much hope for future rebuilding for this great state of ours, we will make it better and stronger than it was before.

In culture, tourism, business, manufacturing, politics and military affairs we have set the pulse of the nation before, and we will again. Today, the New South continues to emerge - in our midst - forming itself from Houston to Dallas from Charlotte to Birmingham from Atlanta to the Carolinas. When we build it back, we will build it back better than before and strive to become the leader of this New South. With this great foundation of culture and people, we can rebuild a place that can finally exceed it's potential.

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In Louisiana culture means business. That dynamic relationship relies upon the full development of our unique and irreplaceable heritage of historic districts, historic buildings, and places. I cannot overstate their importance. Current surveys reveal that 28% of tourists who visit our state come mainly to enjoy our distinctive neighborhoods, engage in urban sight seeing, and visit individual historic properties. That contrasts with 23% who come primarily to gamble. Those who study trends in tourism find that fewer and fewer of us are passive tourists, content to merely idle by the pool or on the beach. Today we see a rapidly growing segment of active tourists—eager to see and learn. Heritage tourism captures the interest of the active tourist with real places, real people, and real history.

We also know heritage tourism pays handsome dividends. Heritage travelers stay longer and spend more than typical American tourists. One recent study compared the average stay of a heritage tourist with that of other tourists: 5.2 nights for the heritage tourist versus 3.3 nights for other tourists. Given that longer length of stay for heritage tourists, it is not surprising that this study also found that heritage tourists spend more: \$688 for the heritage tourist versus only \$425 for the others.

Beyond tourism, historic buildings play a key role in the growing cultural economy by providing a distinctive architectural setting for arts districts, restaurants, music, and other cultural venues. They also provide the stimulating living and working environment increasingly prized by our growing segment of knowledge workers. The lesson is this: states and communities that preserve their heritage today will be the economic winners of tomorrow.

The number of homes, neighborhoods and lives that will have to be rebuilt is staggering, but the cornerstones of New Orleans and Louisiana survived; our rich heritage and cultural advantages will serve as our guides to the rebirth. Everyone benefits when historic properties are preserved. For those historic properties that do not serve as residences, or museums, they may also serve to house economic endeavors—if they can pay their own way. In the bottom-line world of business, you have to evaluate historic buildings like any other form of commercial real estate. The truth, very often is that they are not the most attractive investment option.

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Fortunately, Congress saw the wisdom of creating an economic incentive to make historic properties more attractive options for revenue-producing purposes. Since 1976, more than 32,000 projects across our country have taken advantage of the Federal historic preservation tax incentives. In Fiscal Year 2004 alone, the federal historic rehabilitation tax credit leverage a total investment in our nation of 3.8 billion dollars. In Louisiana, through the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, the program leveraged nearly \$50 million dollars in private investments in historic properties. As developers tell us, again and again, these incentives “make the bottom-line numbers work” for a vast number of potential historic building renovation projects. They tip the scales in favor of putting deteriorated or under-utilized landmarks back into commerce.

Historic restoration projects can be a challenging proposition in good times. When a disaster strikes, the challenge is that much greater. Most investors shrink from potentially risky real estate ventures in a disaster area. Beyond the immediate destruction of the event, there can be collateral damage. The most obvious would be the understandable, though frequently misguided, urge for mass demolition of buildings that survived the event, in the name of health and safety. But other, less obvious forms of collateral damage for historic buildings and districts exist, such as loss of business base and severe disruption of cash-flow.

Compounding the challenges faced in the aftermath of a disaster is a recent IRS ruling that property owners do not qualify for the federal historic preservation tax credit on restoration expenses funded through insurance settlements. That ruling effectively erases a potentially lucrative incentive to rebuild properly, and locally. Adding to the difficulties presented in the wake of a disaster is the potential for the loss of skilled construction artisans. Because restoration is more labor intensive than new construction, the loss of skilled labor can make restoration a less attractive option, at least in the short run.

State government must take the lead in the recovery phase, vigorously implementing the historic preservation tax credit programs. And because historic restoration tends to be so labor intensive, it will create quality jobs now. This is an excellent opportunity to bring Louisiana citizens home for good-paying jobs that will strengthen the economy and rebuild communities. The Office of Cultural Development in the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, which includes Louisiana’s Historic Preservation Office, is currently compiling best practices in cultural

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workforce development. This data will help to inform our next steps in this area. Also, because the state and federal governments are already partners under the National Historic Preservation Act, that program provides the perfect venue to coordinate aid—both in the form of tax credits and grants that may be forthcoming. The more we encourage restoration, the more quickly we will have a recovery that honors our cultural resources, and simultaneously creates economic uplift.

We can also help guide the recovery in our official partnership role with FEMA. This role is pivotal, because through Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we can help come up with alternatives to the hasty or unnecessary demolition of historic buildings. The State's role in this vital review procedure gives us standing to bring all parties to the table and ensure all levels of government coordinate the use of their resources to the maximum extent possible. Our highest priority will be that historic Louisiana comes back stronger than ever, that all aid dollars are allocated credibly, and that waste and duplication are minimized.

In addition to the daunting task of rebuilding all of the rural south below I-10 from Texas to Louisiana to Alabama and many small towns and cities in between each unique and precious in their own right, we have today, the opportunity to rebuild a great American city - New Orleans. What do we want it to look like in 50 or 100 years? In order for the greater New Orleans region to experience its own rebirth, it must recreate itself as both a cultural incubator and technological innovator. New Orleans must balance the entrepreneur and the individual artist. Through this urban creativity, New Orleans will become a center of synergy for the New South region. Why can't New Orleans be home to creators of the next digital information superhighway or the masterminds of the video gaming industry? Why not both?

If Sir Peter Hall, a noted historian of urban centers, is to be taken seriously, then New Orleans is capable of being a center of urban creativity. Great cities like Paris or Athens or Florence or Berlin were both capitalist cities as well as great trading cities fueled by their artistic and innovative networks. I, too, believe in New Orleans' potential. Music, food, culture, art, architecture, historic preservation – these are our strengths and our future.

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I know that some have questioned the wisdom of a regional hub of commerce, trade, culture, tourism, music and so much more in a place so vulnerable to natural disaster like we just experienced. I have always thought that New Orleans is strategically located to be so much greater than we have ever been in Southeast Louisiana. While celebrating our traditions, New Orleans can seek innovation that will allow Louisiana to globally compete with the best and brightest.

We can and we will challenge current paradigms and assumptions to transform New Orleans and Louisiana; tackle the divisions that poverty creates, renounce parochial attitudes, disavow the perception of corruption and impropriety. For too long we allowed the politics of the day to halt progress that was necessary to address the most critical socio-economic issues of our time.

Now, something strange has happened. We were hit by the most destructive natural disaster in the country's history. And about one million of Louisiana's sons and daughters were driven from their homes. Approximately 4,640 of our citizens are still in shelters. We have lost 40% of our businesses. 1,056 of our brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, friends and neighbors have died and every week this number increases. We come to Congress, the voice of the American people to seek help. And yet, in the media, at the office water cooler, at the family dinner table and even in the hallways of the Capitol a few blocks from here, we have been made to feel corrupt, selfish and unworthy of aid. The cries of caution never surfaced in Florida last year, never surfaced in Mississippi or Texas this year, or in New York after 9/11.

While incidents of corruption and cronyism may make for a colorful story, it blurs and distorts Louisiana's image to the rest of the country and the world. Current Governor Kathleen Blanco (D) has followed in the footsteps of former Governor Mike Foster's (R) pragmatic style of scandal free governing and above-board practices and ethics. Governor Blanco has committed to hiring one of the country's top four accounting firms to monitor transactions related to the relief efforts. Louisiana does not engage in cronyism. Through this tragedy, we have the opportunity to set an example for the nation about the power to change when we lean forward, rather than blink.

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To me, that power to make the political process work is anchored in a set of guiding principles that can set the tone for the type of region we build and position us as the leader of the New South.

We believe that we can transform ourselves from victims to victors, from followers to leaders if we follow five guiding principles:

- Consider our diversity a strength, not a weakness;
- Seek to expand and diversify our economy;
- Think regionally so that we can compete globally;
- Add value to our raw talent and raw materials; and
- Set the highest standards of excellence for all that we do.

To build the New South we envision, we must also position ourselves to move forward on an international stage.

We must foster cooperation. Cooperation between artistic, preservation and business communities, dialogue between government and private industry, regional and humanitarian organizations, non-profits, educational institutions and others who seek higher common ground and a shared vision of progress.

AND, above all we must honor our diversity: diversity of ideas, diversity of people, diversity of cultures. Diversity is our strength and is the backbone of the New South that we seek.

I believe that Louisiana has what it takes to be a leader in the southern region, nationally and internationally. I began in office by issuing a “roadmap for change,” laying out our strategic direction of a new Louisiana in a New South. We have reworked and re-issued this blueprint as the “Louisiana and New Orleans Rebirth Plan.” It may appear ambitious, but we feel that it is our time to bring our vision to fruition.

- Rebuild Louisiana to worldwide preeminence as a top tourist destination;
- Make Louisiana’s cultural economy the engine of economic and social change;
- Build better lives and livelihoods than before for all Louisiana’s people;



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- Make Louisiana's recovery the standard for high performance accountability and ethical behavior.

This is our time in the South to lead the nation, not to repeat past mistakes. We are about to embark on "opportunity found," rebuilding the south and its assets from the ground up.

Literally four days before Hurricane Katrina roared through New Orleans, we met in a summit, devoted to Louisiana's Cultural Economy, to plot out strategies to place Louisiana and New Orleans as the axis of all things American. That was then, a moment of great opportunity where many different sectors came together to launch a new day for a New South founded on our cultural assets. A few days later, a people, a culture and a place were altered unbelievably.

What we are really asking is that you help us to restore the "Soul of America." Under my leadership, we have married a vibrant Louisiana Cultural Economy with the realities of recent events and designed a Louisiana and New Orleans REBIRTH Plan. It maps our way back to restoring and preserving this "soul" with a set of strategic initiatives fueled by the spirit of hope.

As with any worthwhile effort, preservation of our past is not free or easy. For preservation to enjoy long-term success, it must be done in an evenhanded way that balances competing interests. Common sense tells us that some historic buildings are so badly damaged that they simply cannot be saved. At the same time, too much haste in pulling down historic buildings would unnecessarily deprive us of cultural assets important to us and to succeeding generations. This is the time to take a thoughtful approach, and take advantage of what has been learned from past disasters. A sensitive, yet practical-minded approach will ensure that the end product of our recovery process will both honor our past and create something better than what existed before. That kind of approach will create construction jobs during the recovery, and create tourism-related jobs after the recovery.

The Office of the Lieutenant Governor and the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism are working with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to ask Congress to consider support of Historic Preservation Disaster Assistance Packages to stimulate economic development. The Department of Culture,

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Recreation and Tourism's package is designed to provide tax credits and disaster relief for the rehabilitation of historic homes and property, provide disaster relief to repair historic properties and waive existing historic preservation tax credits for commercial properties. We believe these measures will support Louisiana's rebuilding effort and conserve an important part of the state's rich and unique heritage.

Government can play an important role in Louisiana's comeback, especially in the area of historic preservation. It can leverage private activity through tax incentives that result in a stronger cultural tourism industry in Louisiana for many years to come.

With our plan in hand for the Rebirth of Louisiana and New Orleans, we will persevere because we have prepared for this moment to shine. Like Earnest Gaines wrote, "I want to smell that Louisiana earth, feel that Louisiana sun, sit under the shade of one of those Louisiana oaks, search for persons in that Louisiana grass in one of those Louisiana yards next to one of those Louisiana bayous, not far from a Louisiana river." Now faced with the challenge to rebuild our region of the country and a great international city / America's great city / we must all lock arms, lean forward, stay focused and rebuild one of Americas strongest assets. In this time following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, this has never been more crucial to Louisiana AND to the nation. I urge this committee and all members of Congress to show strong support for historic preservation at all levels of government, and I look forward to working with you in this area.

Thank you.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Evans.

**STATEMENT OF DERRICK EVANS**

Mr. EVANS. Chairman Turner, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to appear before you today.

My name is Derrick Evans, and I am a sixth generation descendent of the men and women who settled coastal Mississippi's Turkey Creek Community in 1866, year 1 of reconstruction, following Southern slavery and Civil War. I am also the founder and executive director of Turkey Creek Community Initiatives, a local 501(c)(3) organization engaged in the comprehensive revitalization of our historic and beleaguered community.

Today I would like to share some insights relevant to our mutual concern, the historic preservation in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

First and foremost, we must broaden from this point on what we mean by American, Mississippi, and coastal heritage, and what we consider to be historic resources. In coastal Mississippi, heritage discussions and National Register listings often continue for a variety of reasons to exclude a range of traditionally overlooked communities and sites. Even the 2004 congressional legislation enabling the creation of a Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area failed to mention African Americans when listing our region's many diverse cultural influences. The same basic tendency has of course held true with respect to low- and moderate-income communities that have not traditionally been engaged in active or deliberate historic preservation. Indeed, regardless of race or class, non-proximity to the beachfront or to a downtown business district, has repeatedly served to exclude some very important resources from our regional sense of self. Nevertheless, in the aftermath of Katrina it is largely these nonlisted people and places that do still stand to reflect, in the vernacular sense, our shared local and regional character.

Since Hurricane Katrina hit, I have worked with architects and planners affiliated with the Governor's Commission on Renewal and with structural engineers and architectural historians representing FEMA, the National Trust, and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

Since long before that, I have done the same with city, county, and regional planners, observing in each of these contexts that incomplete and fragmented data has prevented some otherwise very good ideas from moving forward. While it is obvious that updating, organizing, and disseminating coastal Mississippi's heritage data remains a pressing issue, I submit that an even deeper need for newer and intensive visioning exists. Without GIS data based on additional community surveys and covering a more complete range of National Register-eligible structures and areas, the basic values and goals that have brought each of us here today will not bear fruit.

In addition to greater inclusion, we must begin to broaden what we mean by heritage preservation itself, because for the foreseeable future the most productive use of our region's historic resources may very well be housing.

Whether it is preservation standards and resources or rehab project management, homeowner education has become increasingly critical on the gulf coast. Needless to say, financial and technical support remain even more so, and herein lies the crux of the challenge that I believe we now face due to a sweeping and unparalleled disaster. Mississippi is one of the Nation's poorest States, and Hurricane Katrina has only worsened the economic prospects for her coastal residents. A very large number, like my mother, have lost everything they own, save for a solid old house, minus its sheetrock, insulation, roofing material, carpeting and so forth. Most Turkey Creek residents were never in a financial position to benefit from historic preservation tax credits, and they are even less likely to need them now.

On the other hand, grants made directly to homeowners of National Register-eligible properties will do far more to courage Federal historic preservation among low- and moderate-income people as well as among minorities in general. The same holds true for grants or loans to damaged churches and small businesses and neighborhoods where their continued existence is both vital and reflective of their community's culture.

Finally, and perhaps most important regarding the central issue of housing, a combined preservation and rehabilitation mortgage loan with low down payment and interest rate could achieve in one sweep several distinct goals that from time to time concern this subcommittee: home ownership, historic preservation, housing rehabilitation, and neighborhood revitalization.

Based on my own experience, HUD's 203(k) program would be an ideal model, as its intended purpose has always been to promote owner-occupant first-time buyers who revitalize existing distressed housing. While working with a HUD-certified fee inspector to complete the standard write-up and jointly approved draws from a rehab escrow account, I became a homeowner in 1997 while restoring a turn-of-the-century classic Boston triple-decker to its original architectural integrity. Perhaps this option, with the additional goal of National Register listing, will be made available to gulf coast residents through congressional legislation in the wake of Katrina. Whatever it is, something must be done soon, or more homes and potential heritage structures will be lost in very short order.

Thank you very much.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Evans follows:]

**TESTIMONY OF DERRICK C. EVANS****FOUNDER/DIRECTOR TURKEY CREEK COMMUNITY INITIATIVES****Before the House Government Reform Subcommittee  
on Federalism and the Census****November 1, 2005**

Chairman Turner, Ranking Member Clay and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss "Historic Preservation vs. Katrina and Rita: What role should Federal, State, and Local Governments Play in Preservation of Historic Properties Affected by These Catastrophic Storms?"

My name is Derrick Christopher Evans. I am an historian and a sixth generation descendant of the African American men and women who settled coastal Mississippi's historic Turkey Creek community in 1866 – *Year One* of Black Freedom in the aftermath of Slavery and Civil War. As a child in the 1970s, I also logged many wonder-filled miles in the modified mail truck that my grandfather drove as a vendor of snack foods to black owned restaurants, stores and clubs throughout the larger gulf coast area. Raised on oral history and a proud sense of community, the universal importance of culture and heritage have continued to shape virtually every aspect of my personal and professional development, and I am exceedingly grateful. Hoping to preserve this possibility for others, I appear before you today as the Founder and Executive Director of Turkey Creek Community Initiatives (TCCI) – a local 501©3 organization engaged in the comprehensive revitalization of Gulfport, Mississippi's historic, low-income and profoundly endangered Turkey Creek community and watershed.

Founded in October 2003, TCCI's mission is to *conserve, restore and utilize for education and other socially beneficial purposes the unique cultural, historical and ecological assets* of this remarkable little community, coastal creek and urban watershed. Preserving the community's architectural heritage has, from day one, been a core component of my organization's broader push to stabilize and promote the community's residential, historical and environmental integrity. To fulfill these goals, we have partnered with teachers, churches, scholars, lawyers, conservationists, historic preservationists, government agencies, and *smart growth* advocates from across Mississippi and the United States. Today, we share with this subcommittee and others the critically important goal of saving as many historic properties as possible in the Gulf Coast region, so as to retain cultural memory, continuity of culture and a sense of place in this devastated area of our state and nation.

As some gathered here have witnessed, recent articles in the NY Times and LA Times etc. have sparked unprecedented awareness and support for Turkey Creek nationwide – and we are truly grateful. When the MS Dept of Archives and History recently revisited our community with structural engineers and architectural historians representing FEMA and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, we began to sense that a tide was turning in our long and difficult struggle for protection as an historic community. We were further encouraged when MDAAH subsequently deemed the entire community eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and when the National Trust thereafter presented \$10,000 to the neighborhood's Homeowners Association for emergency shoring of Katrina-damaged historic structures. Notwithstanding these

clear signs of progress, I remain deeply concerned about the even greater challenges that lie before us all in turning Turkey Creek's dream of restoration and recognition into a reality. In a nutshell, a host of obstacles including poverty, communication, municipal planning issues, and the traditional non-involvement of poor people and blacks in heritage preservation will continue to plague us if not thoroughly discussed and dealt with. This is true to an even greater extent in the equally marginalized city, state and regional communities that have not been quite the "squeaky wheel" that Turkey Creek has.

Across the region, the basic fact pattern is that race, class and segregation "placed" Negro homes and communities north of the beachfront as well as north of the train tracks that worked like a protective levee during not only Katrina, but Camille and other previous storms. Largely for this reason, much of what's left of our city and region's heritage resources lie in places that have long been overlooked for holding such value. For these dozens of communities that have been – for whatever reasons – excluded from decades of deliberate and proactive heritage planning, the challenge of securing financial, labor and material resources to salvage our shared resource pool is daunting to say the least. In very many cases, the task will require assisting low income owners of potential heritage structures to bring their buildings up to code while also meeting the Interior Secretary's standards for historical recognition. My earnest hope is that what was not a priority before Hurricane Katrina will become one now. Our failure in this regard will only engender a massive, avoidable and additional loss of collective American heritage in the wake of a storm that has harmed us enough already.

Frankly, we need to expand and shift at every level what we mean by coastal heritage and historic preservation. Let me offer an example. On December 8, 2004, the President signed into law the Congressional Act which designated the six coastal counties of my state the "Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area." In Section 2 of that enabling legislation, Congress found that "the area is rich with diverse cultural and historical significance, including-- (A) early Native American settlements; and (B) Spanish, French, and English settlements originating in the 1600s." NOWHERE in the legislation – or in most subsequent public discourse – was there any reference to African-Americans or to the region's more recent immigrants from Vietnam. As most of you would probably agree, the omission of African-Americans is particularly striking given that we're talking about *Mississippi* as well as an area located in a reknown cultural corridor that includes New Orleans.

One contributing factor to this egregious oversight is that the pursuit of tourist dollars has been the primary force behind heritage planning on the Mississippi coast since before Katrina and, perhaps, since then. While "cultural tourism" is indeed a well-advised supplement to the casino-centric planning and development that has earned Harrison County the nickname "Playground of the South" – it is not the most important, desirable or lasting result of preserving local heritage. It is instead LIVING – how community members work, play and learn – that is most enhanced when our environment affords us the cultural continuity and connectivity that makes a place special and worth preserving. As Gulf coast residents and survivors of Katrina, our choice should not be limited to losing our heritage on one hand versus "living in a museum" on the other.

In closing, whether discussing during good times a "Heritage Area" or during bad times a "Recovery Area" – the fact remains the same: that a far more inclusive and realistic

inventory of the cultural and historical resources of the Mississippi gulf coast is in order *now*. Any Action Plan that fails to thoroughly embed this goal will have ignored the lessons learned from our near loss of Turkey Creek and will, in the end, fail to achieve the very goals and values that have brought all of us here today. Turkey Creek's ongoing struggle for community survival is not just black, southern, or environmental - but profoundly *American* and deeply *human*. As such, it is imperative that all who care make an effort to learn from the FULL story – including the central role that oversights and omissions born of ignorance and expediency consistently play in the continuing loss of coastal Mississippi's heritage resources. Thank you.

Mr. TURNER. Ms. Gay.

**STATEMENT OF PATRICIA H. GAY**

Ms. GAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for the opportunity to present recommendations at this policy hearing today.

We greatly appreciate the concern for our unique city, and we hope that as we craft our recovery efforts, that other cities might also benefit. Ours is a story of a city of almost half a million, with tens of thousands of buildings that were flooded and remain empty today.

It is particularly appropriate that this committee address this topic, because preservation provides one of the best examples of the three levels of government working in partnership, and also of how public and private sectors can work together for the benefit of all citizens. These partnerships have been instrumental in reversing urban decline in most American cities; indeed, we wish there would be more recognition of this fact.

First and foremost, of course, our levees must be rebuilt stronger than before if our city is to recover and grow. But as we plan our recovery, we should look to past successes in our own city and in others. When we do so, we see that wherever historic architecture and neighborhoods are protected, property values increase, economies improve, and cultural heritage is enriched and perpetuated for future generations.

The reason New Orleans has generated so much love and veneration from people around the world before and after the storm is because of historic preservation. The city we know today simply would not be but for the legislative act that created the Vieux Carre Commission in the 1930's, action that has been economically effective as well, and that anchored all other older neighborhoods in New Orleans in the following decades when other cities experienced major decline.

The role preservation has played in our city's growth must be understood, and preservation must be a critical part of our recovery efforts. The disaster's flooding occurred in our 20th century neighborhoods, some of which are on the National Register or are eligible for National Register listing. We know there is hope for these areas, but not unless we do the right things. However, our older neighborhoods, which developed prior to 1900, did not suffer serious damage, all having been built on higher ground. Down river from the Vieux Carre, or French Quarter, we have Faubourg Marine, New Marine and Bywater, which suffered minimal damage. Even Holy Cross in the Lower Ninth Ward was built on higher ground, and it will regain vitality once electricity and water are restored.

Going north from the Vieux Carre toward the lake, beautiful Esplanade Ridge and Tremé are basically, as is Algiers Point, across the river. All of the neighborhoods upriver from the Vieux Carre that one would see from the St. Charles Avenue Street Car line or from the McGavin Street bus did not flood, and suffered comparatively minimal wind damage. Many avenues lined with live oak trees are still with us.



So foremost in our recommendations is that our city value this good fortune and take the opportunity to put in place planning and regulation to guide new development and protection and restoration measures for what remains.

All proposed development and recovery efforts must enhance and complement the irreplaceable economic resource of the city's historic architecture and neighborhoods. Already a 30-story building is proposed for Rampart and Canal Street in the Vieux Carre. Here in Washington such a project would not be acceptable. We can look to our capital city for inspiration in seeking solutions that would attract appropriate development and to rebuild our population.

Our next recommendation addresses the need to attract homeowners back to our city. We urge this committee to support the creation of a grants program, as advocated by the National Trust, that would be administered by the National Park Service and the State Preservation Office, and to support a one-time rehabilitation tax credit for homeowners in the disaster areas. Here in Washington you have seen how effective such initiatives can be for rebuilding populations. We truly need these Federal incentives for homeowners to return and repair their houses.

At the local level, our city must devise a plan and apply resources to encourage and assist homeowners in returning to their homes. This is a priority for my organization, working with the National Trust, but much more must be done. The State should be encouraged to take advantage of successful preservation programs to stimulate economic development, such as the expanded use of the Main Street program, and of our brand new State homeowner rehab tax credit.

Regarding HUD programs, we urge that the objective of mixed incomes and neighborhoods be a guiding principle in use of funds.

Finally, we cannot stress enough the importance of a section 106 review process of the National Preservation Act. We feel confident in this process. However, we are concerned that there may well be renewed enthusiasm for demolitions without the use of Federal funds, which triggers a review. This could be prevented by having sound planning, regulation and protection in place, as mentioned earlier.

I have submitted other recommendations in writing to you, and I thank you sincerely for this opportunity to address this topic today.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Gay follows:]

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF PATRICIA H. GAY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
PRESERVATION RESOURCE CENTER OF NEW ORLEANS

SUBMITTED TO

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERALISM AND THE CENSUS  
Congressman Mike Turner (R-Ohio), Chair

POLICY HEARING

on

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION vs. KATRINA:**  
**What Roles Should Federal, State and Local Governments Play in**  
**Preserving**  
**Historic Properties?**

October 21, 2005

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October 21, 2005

The disaster Hurricane Katrina has wrought on the City of New Orleans and its surrounding parishes is immense, with major negative economic and cultural impact on the city itself as well as on the state of Louisiana, the Gulf Coast region and the nation. I am pleased to be asked to submit to the Committee on Federalism and the Census our observations and recommendations on the role that the federal, state and local governments should play in the preservation and restoration of the historic built environment of New Orleans. I believe there are solutions. In particular, after many years of involvement in this field I feel more strongly than ever before about the economic importance of our historic neighborhoods and architecture, especially in this time of diminished economic resources.

My organization, the Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans, was established in 1974 and has had a major impact on revitalization of historic neighborhoods in New Orleans since that time. The population of New Orleans peaked in 1960 at 629,000 and while the city's current population of under 500,000 has not started to increase, prior to Hurricane Katrina we have seen residents returning to, and remaining in, almost all of the older neighborhoods in the city. No one yet knows what the city's population will be once stability returns in the aftermath of the disaster, but we feel sure that should resources be applied to promoting the livability of the city and its unique neighborhoods that the city's population will increase. Some of the areas where the PRC programs, working with other organizations, have had impact in revitalization are Lafayette Square, Warehouse District, Algiers Point, Algiers Riverview, Bywater, Holy Cross, Esplanade Ridge, Lower Garden District, Irish Channel, Faubourg Delachaise, Edgewood Park, Ponchartrain Park, Gentilly Sugar Hill and many others.

It is important to understand the issue in perspective. There is some good news – basically all of New Orleans that the typical visitor might see, did not flood. It remains to be determined, of course, what the ultimate impact of the flooding in others will be on all New Orleans neighborhoods. In the following discussion about the buildings of New

Orleans, both historic and later buildings, we of course are for the most part talking about the homes and neighborhoods of the people who live here, and that in New Orleans in most cases there is much diversity, cultural, economic and sociological.

Of the 175,000 – 200,000 buildings in New Orleans, 37,000 buildings are in National Register districts. Of these 37,000 buildings, almost 30,000 are in the oldest areas of the city that developed along higher ground along the river and on ridges of higher land. These neighborhoods, which did not experience severe flooding, stretch downriver from the Vieux Carre to Bywater and the Industrial Canal, and upriver along the St. Charles Avenue streetcar line all the way to Carrollton. Although these older neighborhoods did receive more wind damage than initially realized, and while there was some flooding, these districts and their many unique neighborhoods are basically intact. Even Holy Cross, a National Register and local historic district that is in the Lower Ninth Ward, is more or less intact, in spite of flooding. These are the neighborhoods that give New Orleans its unique visual identity, an identity that so many people around the world recognize and love.

We are also fortunate that there was very little flooding on the West Bank, which includes the Algiers Point Historic District, bringing the approximate total number of New Orleans buildings in areas that had very little or no flooding to an approximate total of 50,000. However, we must keep in mind that wind damage in the entire city is much greater than initially estimated.

The real tragedy of course is that so many areas were underwater for up to two weeks, and some areas flooded a second time from Hurricane Rita. While there are raised houses that are less damaged, and while there are stretches of higher ground that did not flood, it seems that there are around 100,000 buildings that had standing water for several days.

There are five predominantly twentieth century areas that are National Register districts, and there are other neighborhoods that we believe might be determined eligible for National Register listing, all of which flooded. The National Register districts are Gentilly Terrace, Mid-City, Parkview, Broadmoor and South Lakeview, for a total of 7,527 buildings. Holy Cross, with 857 buildings of both late nineteenth and early twentieth century also flooded. Prior to the storm, my organization was working with many other neighborhoods that flooded, some of which we believe are nationally register eligible, including Ponchartrain Park, the first suburban development built for African Americans, in 1950, and neighborhoods along Elysian Fields and Gentilly Boulevard.

Most of the buildings in New Orleans East, Lakeview and the Lower Ninth Ward were flooded, as well as other areas between I-10/Claiborne Avenue and Lake Ponchartrain. Most still do not have power or water. In the Lower Ninth Ward we are fortunate that the National Register and local district of Holy Cross is on higher ground and did not have water standing as long as the rest of that area. Residents were allowed back into Holy Cross for the first time on October 13. A small portion of Lakeview is on the National Register and many residents are working on their homes, with water service reinstated and electricity gradually becoming available.

Most of the buildings in these neighborhoods had several feet of flooding, and because citizens were not allowed to return to their homes the houses now have mold. The mold can be removed, as we have learned, and we are giving workshops and advice on how to remove wet and moldy materials and possessions. It can be done. In most cases the structural integrity of the buildings has not been impacted. Yet this is a very difficult process and homeowners need assistance. Working in partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the PRC has developed programs to assist homeowners with their damaged houses. We are encouraged that more and more people are returning each day, yet we want to see more. We believe these neighborhoods are an economic gold mine, but only if they are recognized as such and revitalization measures put in place.

We are fortunate indeed that so much of the historic built environment of our city survived Hurricane Katrina, because the devastation would otherwise be total. If our city has a future, it depends upon preservation of our historic built environment, and upon saving as much of the twentieth century neighborhoods as we possibly can, because historic districts alone do not a city make. The fate of our twentieth century neighborhoods, including later suburban development, will have a major impact on the older areas. We need people moving back into these later neighborhoods, and we need to help them with their flood-damaged homes. That is the current focus and mission of my organization, and an important part of our mission is to convince local, state and federal leaders that a plan must be developed immediately to encourage and assist residents in returning to their homes.

It should be a given, of course, that at the least New Orleans would keep in place all current protective and review procedures and commissions, not diminish them in these challenging times, but these agencies have indeed come under scrutiny and have been diminished in staff. Over the years we have found that designation of historic districts for protection and review has at the least maintained stability and in most cases stimulated revitalization. Before the storm, several neighborhoods were seeking historic district designation. We feel the Historic District Landmarks Commission should be able to accommodate any neighborhood that qualifies for designation and that seeks such designation.

The economic significance of preserving the historic built environment of the City of New Orleans cannot be overstated. It was important before the storm, and is even more important now. Collectively, historic preservation programs, including the federal tax credit for historic rehabilitation and local city preservation agencies, and organizations such as my own, have generated a major industry for the city. Because of renovations in New Orleans, the state of Louisiana ranks consistently in the top ten states attracting the most investment dollars through renovation projects. This translates into jobs, far more jobs than new construction, with the added contribution to cultural heritage and quality of life that new construction fails to contribute. Additionally, a focus on older neighborhoods has helped retain and attract residents in these neighborhoods, again with renovation dollars generating jobs and restoring vitality to older inner-city areas.

More residents and more jobs is good for business. Small businesses thrive where there is renovation activity going on – more residents mean more customers and clients. In turn, this leads to more business activity and also to a stronger cultural tourism industry.

In New Orleans, our tourism is by definition cultural tourism. Surveys have indicated time and time again that people visit New Orleans to enjoy the ambience and cultural vitality of our older neighborhoods. For example, dollars spent on promoting gambling do not get results the way dollars spent on promoting cultural attractions get results, and surveys indicate that directly or indirectly historic architecture is part of the attraction. Tourism was important before the storm, and it is more important now. Fortunately, as indicated earlier, the many parts of the city that visitors frequent are in tact - we must be sure they remain so, and in fact we can broaden the tourism experience to stimulate economic recovery in other parts of town, by creating plans and objectives to do so. This is perhaps the best part of the tourism industry – if we do it right, it can lead to other business development. Attractive and thriving older neighborhoods are very appealing to business investors, leading to more jobs and a better quality of life for all. New Orleans can stimulate its economy post-Katrina by putting such strategies in place.

There seems to be a misunderstanding among leadership at the local level about the structural integrity and the restorability of the homes that were flooded. There is a void of recognition of the remarkable energy and determination of heart and soul of residents who are willing and able to return and restore their homes. We have heard primarily talk about demolition, which is the ultimate failure and which would be an economic disaster. While we realize that there are many issues that must be resolved, such as levees, insurance and building codes, and that some buildings will be lost, we believe that a commitment to historic preservation and assisting residents in returning to their homes would greatly alleviate the disastrous economic conditions facing the city at this time. This should be a top priority in our recovery efforts.

Fortunately there is the Section 106 review requirement of the National Preservation Act, which we believe will prevent demolition using federal funds of buildings in National Register districts and eligible districts. However, we must go beyond preventing demolition - buildings must be put back into service. Plans need to be in the making for helping people restore their homes to livability. Furthermore, without priorities and plans in place, the likelihood increases that owners will not return to their homes, and that they, or new owners, will request permits to demolish their buildings, which would not be subject to Section 106 review. This is a major issue. Additionally, since those who work in historic preservation tend to see the city holistically, there is concern for the future of all neighborhoods, not just historic neighborhoods.

The City of New Orleans has endured a devastating tragedy, but all is not lost and there remains hope. The historic neighborhoods of the city remain, and can be the launching pad for economic recovery and for rebuilding our population. The federal government can and must assist in preventing needless demolition of this economic and cultural resource of national importance. There is even an opportunity to provide an example of success in

rebuilding an older city, at a time when so many cities across the country continue to experience population decline, resulting in urban problems of major dimensions.

We thank you for the opportunity to present information and to make recommendations on the role the various levels of government should play in these critical times.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

##### Recommendation I.

Require plans for homeowner assistance and neighborhood recovery. Buildings, historic or otherwise, will not be restored without residents. We submit that should the federal government be concerned about economic recovery and sustainability in New Orleans, there should be a requirement that the city have a plan in place that acknowledges the economic importance of attracting homeowners back to their homes, and a plan that provides for restoration of the livability of as many existing residences as possible. Certainly a priority would be properties in National Register districts and eligible districts, but there are many other neighborhoods that are economically as well as culturally and sociologically important which should be included in such planning. Additionally, the city should be encouraged to establish a residential development plan, with the participation of neighborhood associations.

##### Recommendation II.

Related to the above, the city should be encouraged to utilize the historic district commissions toward the end of reestablishing populations and revitalization. These agencies should be considered economic development resources. They offer tremendous opportunity for restoring vitality and growth in New Orleans.

##### Recommendation III.

We urge the federal government to take the necessary action to provide grants to all homeowners (within a particular income range) who were uninsured or underinsured who wish to restore their homes.

##### Recommendation IV.

Request that federally-funded programs for neighborhood revitalization and assistance to homeowners be implemented in such a way as to create economically mixed neighborhoods. The idea behind the Hope VI program, to create mixed-income neighborhoods, should be applied to existing neighborhoods. By confining all HUD programs to very low-income buyers and renters, for example, the need for mixed incomes is not accommodated. To put buildings back into service and to stimulate vitality in existing neighborhoods, programs must be available to middle-income buyers as well, in order to create the needed mix of incomes. Unfortunately, over the past several decades cities throughout the United States have experienced a decline in middle-income residents, a problem that must be reversed because there is no such thing as a viable, functional city without an urban middle class.

##### Recommendation V.

Establish a federal preservation grants fund for the disaster areas that would be implanted by the states affected by Hurricane Katrina. Since so many historic buildings have been destroyed, it becomes even more important to ensure that damaged historic properties are not lost. The National Trust for Historic Preservation is advocating a \$60 million fund for this purpose.

Recommendation VI.

Establish a one-time pilot homeowner rehabilitation tax credit for the disaster areas. In past years there was considerable bi-partisan support for a homeowner tax credit, but the proposal was not ever voted out of committee. Such a credit would have a major impact encouraging homeowners to return and restore their homes in disaster areas. Tax incentives work incredibly well, and are important because they attract private sector investment. There is always an impressive “ripple effect” in attracting more private sector investment as well.

Recommendation VII.

Alleviate some requirements of the federal tax credit as necessitated by conditions in the disaster areas.

Recommendation VIII.

Regarding urban disaster preparedness as well as revitalization, we believe public transit should be an important part of the planning. After the disaster, public transit could play an effective role in revitalization, for example, possibly including, as in the case of New Orleans, funding for a new streetcar line serving the downtown neighborhoods. In making plans for evacuation, mass transit should be incorporated to the degree possible.

Recommendation IX.

Encourage the State of Louisiana to recognize the economic significance of its preservation programs and to incorporate preservation measures in its recovery plan. For many years historic preservation programs, such as Main Street and tax credit projects, have had major impact on the economy of towns and cities across the state, as well as on the state’s second largest industry, tourism. With a focus on these programs the economy of the state is likely to rebound more quickly.

Recommendation X.

Some states already require municipalities to have growth and development plans in place that include protection of historic and environmental resources. Perhaps this would be a good time for Louisiana to consider such a planning requirement of municipalities.

Recommendation XI.

Last but not least, maintain the Section 106 review process through FEMA. Without a commitment to the Section 106 review process, there will be tremendous pressures to resort to “quick files” for demolition, rather than well thought out, long-term solutions. Already the FEMA-led survey teams inspecting New Orleans houses detect a tendency, as evidenced by red stickers applied to buildings by city inspectors, sometimes to label a building with even minimal damage as unsafe, and the teams fear this might be the first



step toward demolition. Wholesale teardowns will result in wasted effort and resources – time, irreplaceable materials, labor and dollars, and will undermine all efforts to build a better New Orleans. Demolition will also destabilize neighborhoods that have survived the storm. The Preservation Resource Center has found, over many years of experience, a very encouraging reality : there are people who will buy deteriorated properties and transform them from blight into beauty. An older house is an irreplaceable treasure and potential jewel. The PRC is ready to help, but protective measures must be in place.

Attachments: Preservation and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Economy, Donovan Rypkema  
Data on age of housing in New Orleans, by neighborhood  
Editorial from the Times-Picayune: Preserving the City's Character  
Editorial from the Times-Picayune: Rebuild With Character  
Welcome Home flyer

**GEORGIA PRESERVATION CONFERENCE KEYNOTE SPEECH**

Macon, Ga.

February 28, 2002

Donovan D. Rypkema  
President  
The Real Estate Services Group

**Preservation and the 21st Century Economy**

Thank you and good morning. Well, I'll tell you what would have been an easy way to make this presentation today. I could have done what I often do, and that is to tell the story of historic preservation in numbers. I could have pointed out that here in Georgia a million dollars of building rehabilitation adds fourteen more jobs than does a million dollars of production of the average manufacturing firm in Georgia. Or I could have told you how that same million dollars of building rehabilitation adds \$891,000 to the household incomes of Georgia citizens--fully \$250,000 more than a million dollars of manufacturing.

Or I could have pointed out that rehabilitation in Georgia adds two more jobs and \$56,000 more in household income than does the same amount in new construction. Or I could have cited the research that has been done here in Georgia demonstrating the disproportionate benefit of heritage tourism over other kinds of visitation, or the incredible economic success of the Georgia Main Street Program or economic development within the context of historic preservation, or the consistently positive impact that local historic districts have on property values in Georgia. I might even have mentioned the effective way the State of Georgia has used their transportation enhancement funds to preserve Georgia's heritage.

I could have done all of those things--but I'm not going to.

Instead I'm going to talk briefly about three issues that might not come instantly to mind when one says "historic preservation" but ought to. And finally take aim at ourselves as preservationists at where I see we are failing in our responsibilities.

So the first of these issues is the one Dick Moe spent much of his time talking about--Smart Growth. And on that issue I just have a couple of things to add. First--and he could hardly say this himself--it was Dick Moe who first effectively articulated the connection between historic preservation and stemming sprawl. While that link is now abundantly obvious to all of us, it was not when Dick began talking about it. And in many cases he literally dragged preservationists into the anti-sprawl battle. Today there is no movement in America that commands greater support across political boundaries, regional boundaries, city/suburb/rural boundaries than does Smart Growth. Greg was right, it is Dick Moe who personifies our enlightenment about Smart Growth.

The only other thing I have to add about Smart Growth is this: historic preservation is not just one of the tools of Smart Growth--it is the indispensable crucial tool. Greenbelts around cities are nice; but you can have Smart Growth without greenbelts. Transferable development rights are a useful tool, but you can have Smart Growth without TDRs. Conservation easements can assist in reaching Smart Growth ends, but you can have Smart Growth without conservation easements. But, simply put, there can be no Smart Growth without historic preservation. Period. No exception. Any anti-sprawl strategy that does not have

historic preservation at its core is Stupid Growth. Period.

So on to the next issue.

Remember those tests you used to take in high school that would give you four words or phrases and then ask you what their connection was? Well, let me give you such a test: Amazon rain forest, endangered species, vehicle emissions, recycled paper. Every fifth grader in Georgia would hear that list and say, "Environment." And she would be right, of course. But when you think of it there really isn't much direct connection between reused paper and endangered species. And yet we all readily accept it's all about the environment.

Now if I were to say, "economic development, neighborhood stabilization, smart growth, and downtown revitalization" maybe most of you in this audience would say "historic preservation" but I dare say the vast majority of Georgians would not...and certainly not every fifth grader in the state. We as preservationists are having an amazingly wide impact, but we have yet to weave the web of awareness regarding preservation's impact among the public in general. And I want to return shortly with some specific examples.

But I don't want to leave this issue of the environment quite yet. You know we all diligently recycle our Coke cans. It's a pain in the neck, but we do it because it's good for the environment. Now even though a quarter of everything dumped at the landfill is from construction debris, we don't often think about the environment in relation to the demolition of historic buildings. But let me put it in context for you. Let's say that today we tear down one small building like this in downtown Macon. We have now wiped out the environmental benefit from the last 1,344,000 aluminum cans that were recycled. We've not only wasted an historic building, we've wasted months of diligent recycling by the good people of Macon. Now why doesn't every environmentalist have a bumper sticker saying "Recycle your aluminum cans AND your historic buildings"? Either that or let us off the hook from having to sort those Coke cans every week.

And the same time we are adversely affecting the environment with that demolition, we are also adversely affecting the quality of our city. I am going to give you an analogy and I will apologize in advance for it; I just haven't come up with a better one. When I was growing up my dad was in the cattle business. In that business when you buy a new bull for the herd, or a registered cow, you make sure that it is better than the average quality of the whole herd. Every new bull doesn't have to be the best one you own, but if you add one of a quality less than the average, it is inevitable that the quality of the entire herd will eventually decline. Conversely, if you are going to get rid of an animal, you get rid of one of lower quality, not of better quality, or the long run effect is the same.

Now translate that to buildings, especially in your downtown. Every new building that we add doesn't have to be the best building downtown; but if it is one more concrete block, Drivit covered structure, less than the average quality of the whole, the overall physical quality of downtown can do nothing but decline. Likewise when we are pondering tearing a building down. If it is of a quality greater than the average and frankly most historic buildings still standing will meet that test tearing it down reduces, does not enhance, the overall quality of downtown. Demolition of historic buildings reduces both quality and affordability.

Now why do we care about affordability? That brings me to my next issue. Over the next ten years around 20 million net new jobs are going to be created in America. And that's great. But nearly seven million of

those jobs--34 percent of the total, are going to pay less than \$20,000 per year. Now I suppose that has all kinds of political, social, and philosophical issues involved. But I have just one question ☺ Where are those people going to live? We've got some choices here. We could build houses way out in the country where land might be cheap--but we will exacerbate all of those problems that Dick mentioned. I suppose we could build a whole bunch of public housing. But I don't know where the constituency is for that. Many have concluded that public housing is a noble 70-year effort that has failed. Or we can start paying attention to and reinvesting in our older and historic neighborhoods.

Now certainly not every building over 50 years old is or ought to be considered "historic". But for the moment let's take a look at the housing in this country built before 1950. And let's for the sake of discussion consider older and historic neighborhoods without distinction. You all know about the census of population every ten years, but not everyone knows that there is also a periodic census of housing. What I want to do is to share with you some of what has been learned about these older neighborhoods.

Think about those \$20,000-a-year jobs. What can they afford for rent? No more than around \$500 a month. Well, 48% of the housing built before 1950 that is tenant-occupied rents for less than \$500 a month.

There's a basic principle in real estate that you can't build new and rent cheap. And to demonstrate that, 84% of housing built in the last five years rents for more than \$500 a month. In other words, out of the price range of those six million workers.

32% of all households living below the poverty line live in older and historic housing

Oh, and by the way, 35% of Black homeowners live in older and historic houses and 38% of Black households with incomes less than \$20,000 annually live in those houses as well.

Of the people below the poverty line but still owning their own homes, 30% of those houses were built before 1950.

Now you can say, "well, but those poor people have housing subsidies to take care of the affordability issue." 70% of households with incomes less than \$20,000 receive no housing subsidy of any kind. I'll bet many of you have someone in your city hall ☺ a building inspector or a police chief or a member of the city council who will say, "Yeah, but those old houses are about to fall down." Well, as it happens this housing survey also looks at the condition of housing and identifies units that suffer from severe physical problems ☺ arguably the properties that ought to be torn down. You know how many pre-1950 houses are identified as having severe physical problems? Three percent! Another 8% are identified as having moderate physical problems. Meaning 89% of older and historic housing isn't on the physical problem list.

Oh, but then someone will say, "Yeah, but a whole bunch of those old houses are sitting there vacant." Well, the rental vacancy rate for pre-1950 housing is 7.1%. You know what the rental vacancy rate is for all housing? 7.3% -- a statistically insignificant difference from older housing.

So when you see a house being torn down in an older neighborhood in your community, don't just weep for the architectural character or cultural significance or historic importance that is being lost forever. Also say to yourself, "Well, there's one more unit of affordable housing that we've thrown away."

Now you may have a hot shot economic director back home who says, "Well, I understand how other

places are going to have to worry about this affordable housing for workers business, but our town is going to be part of the new economy, the high tech economy, the cutting edge economy. And those are all high paid jobs so we don't have to worry about the affordable housing issue."

Well, Mr. "we're the new economy" economic development director, let me splain you something. In the next ten years for every new job for a computer programmer we'll need 7 clerical workers; for every chemist we'll need 43 cashiers; for every operations research analyst we'll need 73 janitors.

Furthermore the so-called new economy workers are driven by quality-of-life issues on where they want to live. Quality of life means good childcare, and childcare workers make less than \$11,000 a year. Quality of life means nice restaurants, and waiters and waitresses--and we'll need 300,000 more of them over the next ten years--make \$12,730. Quality of life means clean and safe buildings, which require janitors and guards and they make less than \$16,000 a year. So high tech, high pay, new economy cities--good for you, but you're going to have to have a whole bunch of workers who don't get paid like you do. Those workers are going to need a place to live. So you better be insisting that older neighborhoods be protected and enhanced if for no other reason than to make sure your kid's nanny has a place she can afford to live.

Now I'll apologize for being such a numbers geek giving you all what are essentially economic development statistics. But after all I'm not in the business of historic preservation, I'm in the business of economic development. And when I go into communities--of whatever size--I often ask the Mayor or the Chamber of Commerce executive or the Economic Development Director "Why are you involved in economic development at all?" And their first answer will be, "Well, to increase the tax base, to attract new business, to provide more jobs, to increase loan demand and property values." Answers like that. But when I continue to ask the question, especially one-on-one, it isn't about those things at all. The real reason that they're involved in economic development is this: "I want my kid to be able to come back here and find a job if that's what she wants to do." But the question is, why would anyone want to come back if their town is indistinguishable from any other town? A columnist in California, Steve Weigand, wrote this: "And from the Brave New World of the Internet comes the following new term. Generic: fast food joints, strip malls and subdivisions, as in 'we were so lost in Generic, I didn't know what city it was.'"

We often think young people don't get this, but we're wrong. Let me tell you about the small town of Rushville, Ill. There is this school there built in 1919 with an addition built in 1925. The addition was the gymnasium on the lower level and an auditorium space on the upper level. The school board decided the structure no longer worked so they built new schools, added to others, and a year ago the junior high kids who were the most recent users of the school were moved out. But the school board decided that not only didn't the building work as a school--it was unusable for anything and they intended to demolish it. When I toured the building I went into one of those little dressing rooms that are usually found behind the stage in high school auditoriums. There written in graffiti on the wall--clearly by a 14 or 15 year old was this: "Those who want to tear this building down have never seen this place as Wonderland." That kid clearly understood what the school superintendent did not--that the evolution of the community was represented in that building and it was a far too precious commodity to be lost. The school board didn't understand that and the building was torn down.

But if the Rushville School Board didn't understand that, others do. In his book *The Good Society* sociologist Robert Bellah observes, "Communities, in the sense in which we are using the term, have a history-- in an important sense they are constituted by their past--and for this reason we can speak of a

real community as a 'community of memory,' one that does not forget its past."

Earlier I mentioned the US Census taken every ten years. Over the next several months that data will be released on the neighborhood level, called Census Tracts. Here's what I would ask every one of you to do. Find someone in your community who will take that Census Tract information and compare the characteristics of your historic districts with the other neighborhoods in your community. Here's what you're going to find-- it will be in the historic districts--and only the historic districts--where there are people of all incomes, all races, all educational levels living side by side. Other neighborhoods will be all Black or all white; all rich or all poor. Lots of Presidents have said, "I want my cabinet to look like America." Well, virtually the only neighborhoods that look like your entire community are your historic districts. And I haven't looked at a single piece of data from Georgia, but I've looked in Philadelphia, and Indianapolis, and Des Moines and a dozen other places. And even though those are northern cities, they are largely segregated by income or race or both. But the historic districts are mirrors of the entire wonderful diversity of the city. Just see if that isn't also true in your community.

So here we have all these attributes of historic preservation--smart growth, environment, job creation, tourism attraction, downtown revitalization, neighborhood stabilization, affordable housing, economic development--what a great story.

And yet, I have to tell you I'm a bit angry today. Or maybe I've confused anger and disappointment. Let me tell you why. We have failed to adequately tell this broader story of preservation to our friends and neighbors. I'll give you four quick examples:

Ten days ago the communications director of the Congress of New Urbanism, in an extraordinary combination of arrogance and ignorance, wrote that until the Charter for the New Urbanism came along historic cities were still declining. Well, please correct me if I'm wrong, but I don't think the ladies of Savannah, or Marguerite Williams in Thomasville or Maryel Battin here in Macon, or Liz Lyon or the leadership of the 40 some Georgia Main Street communities somehow found a press release in 1996 mentioning the newly adopted Charter of the Congress for New Urbanism and become instantly enlightened about historic preservation. Oh, and by the way, the number of times "historic preservation" is mentioned in the Charter of the Congress for New Urbanism? Exactly zero.

Example two: I was in someone's office not long ago and spotted this publication *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research*. It seems that HUD hired some academics to look around America and try to determine if there were such a thing as a neighborhood that maintained economic and racial diversity over several years. And they found several such neighborhoods, in fact, and wrote case studies about them. Well, when I was reading the case studies I thought, "These certainly sound familiar." So I checked--nearly all of them are historic districts. Did these researchers recognize that? No! The fact that the common denominator of these diverse neighborhoods was that they were historic eluded these august scholars.

Example three: Here's a book that was released a couple of years ago--*Comeback Cities: A Blueprint for Urban Neighborhood Revival*. The front cover of the book, in fact, is the before and after photographs of a restored historic building. How many times is historic preservation mentioned in the book? Historic preservation doesn't even show up in the index.

Example four: the National Governors Association last year released this publication--*New Community*

*Design to the Rescue: Fulfilling Another American Dream.* Well other than its rather presumptuous title, it's a good publication that identifies good design principles for towns and cities, and even mentions older neighborhoods. But how often is historic preservation mentioned? Exactly twice, in footnotes citing a publication of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. If "Historic Preservation" weren't part of the National Trust's name, historic preservation wouldn't have been mentioned at all.

One of the pages in this publication is entitled "Benefits of New Community Design" and here they are:

Synergistic effect of mixed use, in which residential and commercial uses support each other and contribute to long-term vitality

Community interaction and civic life supported by design

Transportation choice and walkability

Narrower, connected streets with tree-lined sidewalks

Planned open space designed for gathering places and diverse recreational activities

Efficient use of infrastructure

Houses closer to street, with porches

Diverse housing for different incomes

Efficient use of land; high housing density

Supports regional environmental goals & reduced land consumption, improved air and water quality

Linked to adjacent communities

Enhances and complements neighboring or surrounding community

Pedestrian-friendly design, mixed uses, and nearby green spaces promote health

Great list, and I agree with every item. But every one of those characteristics is true of your historic district in your community. We don't need some "New Community Design" to rescue us. We've just got to make sure we rescue our historic districts.

I guess I'm not really angry at HUD or the National Governors Association or the Congress for CUTE Urbanism. If they don't get it, that's our fault, not theirs. And telling the historic preservation story isn't Dick Moe's job, or Greg Paxton's or Ray Luce's. It's my responsibility and yours. If our mayor and our banker and our legislator and our economic development director don't learn about the wide-ranging impact of historic preservation from us, where are they going to learn it? We--each of us--need to do a much better job of telling our great story. And the story is this.

If we are to have an effective environmental policy historic preservation is important.

If we are to have an effective transportation policy historic preservation is important.

If we are to have vibrant downtowns historic preservation is important.

If we want Smart Growth historic preservation is not only important but irreplaceable.

If a local official wants to claim the treasured mantle of fiscal responsibility historic preservation is imperative.

If we want to avoid Generica historic preservation it is essential to establish differentiation.

If new businesses, start-up businesses, innovative businesses, creative businesses are going to be fostered and encouraged a community will need historic buildings for that to take place.

If the essential workers of this century are going to be able to afford a place to live, we'll need older and historic buildings to house them

Let me close with a word about those advocates of downtown revitalization and historic preservation--most of you. I have a hard time separating those two, by the way, for one simple reason--I cannot identify a single sustained success story in downtown revitalization in a city of any size anywhere in the country where historic preservation was not a key element in the process.

Regardless of the size of the community, those of you working for downtown revitalization and historic preservation represent the Real Urbanism.

They aren't the cute urbanism with a pleasing pattern of pastel porches; they are the challenging urbanism of complexity, conflict, and compromise.

They aren't the squeaky clean urbanism; they're the dirty, gritty, gum-on-the-sidewalk, graffiti-on-the wall urbanism.


They aren't the idealized urbanism conjured up by experts from elsewhere; they are the urbanism created daily by the barber, the crotchety building owner, the clueless merchant, and the ineffectual public official.

They aren't the new buildings that respect their context; they are the context.

Sometimes they call themselves the Downtown Partnership or the Preservation Association or the Main Street program. But I'll tell you what I think you are. I think you are the local chapter of the Congress for Real Urbanism. And I consider myself privileged to work with you and your colleagues around the world. I thank you for that, and thank you for allowing me to be here with you today.

Thank you very much.



 Greater New Orleans Community Data Center

Housing age (2000)	Total housing units (sample count)	Built 1999 to March 2000	Built 1995 to 1998	Built 1990 to 1994	Built 1980 to 1989	Built 1970 to 1979	Built 1960 to 1959	Built 1950 to 1959	Built 1949 or earlier
<b>Orleans Parish</b>	215,091	0.4%	1.3%	1.3%	8.2%	13.6%	15.1%	16.9%	43.2%
Louisiana	1,847,181	2.2%	6.7%	5.7%	18.4%	22.4%	16.3%	12.8%	15.5%
United States	115,904,641	2.4%	7.3%	7.3%	15.8%	18.5%	13.7%	12.7%	22.3%
<b>Housing age (2000)</b>	<b>Total housing units (sample count)</b>	<b>Built 1999 to March 2000</b>	<b>Built 1995 to 1998</b>	<b>Built 1990 to 1994</b>	<b>Built 1980 to 1989</b>	<b>Built 1970 to 1979</b>	<b>Built 1960 to 1969</b>	<b>Built 1950 to 1959</b>	<b>Built 1949 or earlier</b>
Algiers Point	1,407	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	2.4%	2.4%	5.0%	4.2%	84.9%
Audubon	6,164	0.4%	0.6%	0.6%	3.8%	3.1%	6.0%	6.9%	78.6%
B.W. Cooper Apts	1,747	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	2.2%	19.6%	28.2%	48.3%
Bayou St. John	2,427	0.0%	0.2%	0.3%	0.5%	5.2%	9.6%	13.3%	70.9%
Behrman	4,183	0.7%	1.2%	1.6%	18.7%	27.8%	22.9%	11.9%	15.2%
Black Pearl	1,136	2.5%	7.7%	0.0%	3.7%	7.6%	6.9%	12.0%	59.6%
Broadmoor	3,234	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	9.1%	11.4%	19.0%	58.9%
Bywater	2,725	0.3%	0.0%	0.8%	4.4%	10.7%	10.1%	9.1%	64.6%
Central Business District	1,235	2.4%	18.6%	6.4%	6.3%	2.7%	5.7%	2.4%	55.3%
Central City	10,242	0.7%	0.9%	1.6%	4.4%	7.1%	16.5%	17.0%	51.8%
City Park	1,697	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.9%	1.0%	6.8%	11.9%	78.3%
Desire Area	1,610	0.6%	2.1%	0.0%	12.4%	24.8%	25.4%	16.6%	18.1%
Desire Development	455	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.9%	5.9%	78.7%	7.5%
Dillard	2,775	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	9.4%	6.5%	16.4%	33.9%	33.0%
Dixon	727	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%	4.5%	12.4%	20.4%	57.9%
East Carrollton	2,383	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	1.5%	3.9%	8.2%	12.4%	73.2%
East Riverside	1,631	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	4.6%	3.2%	13.1%	9.3%	69.5%
Fairgrounds	3,240	0.0%	0.3%	0.6%	2.5%	10.4%	9.0%	18.4%	58.8%
Filmore	2,822	0.8%	3.4%	1.3%	11.2%	6.8%	21.6%	42.7%	12.2%
Fischer Development	683	0.0%	1.5%	6.1%	1.8%	0.6%	60.7%	15.4%	13.9%
Florida Area	1,442	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	5.8%	22.0%	30.7%	37.4%

Florida Development	564	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.3%	43.2%	11.5%	37.1%
French Quarter	4,646	0.0%	0.6%	1.7%	1.8%	1.7%	1.8%	1.8%	5.0%	3.7%	86.3%
Fretet	1,087	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	1.2%	1.2%	7.2%	6.8%	18.5%	64.1%
Garden District	1,257	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	4.5%	7.6%	10.8%	10.9%	10.9%	65.8%
Gentilly Terrace	4,515	0.4%	0.5%	1.1%	1.1%	2.2%	5.6%	13.4%	20.9%	20.9%	55.9%
Gentilly Woods	1,596	0.0%	0.6%	1.2%	1.2%	3.0%	7.4%	23.8%	50.3%	50.3%	13.7%
Gert Town	1,867	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	6.5%	12.4%	19.9%	19.9%	10.2%	10.2%	50.6%
Hollygrove	2,981	0.4%	0.2%	1.2%	1.0%	5.2%	14.5%	29.5%	14.5%	29.5%	48.8%
Holy Cross	2,340	0.0%	0.6%	1.2%	6.5%	15.9%	17.4%	24.1%	24.1%	24.1%	34.3%
Iberville Development	920	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	4.5%	8.8%	8.8%	86.2%
Irish Channel	2,036	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	2.8%	5.8%	6.1%	12.2%	6.1%	12.2%	72.7%
Lake Catherine	1,308	3.1%	3.1%	5.0%	17.7%	20.2%	29.0%	29.0%	11.7%	11.7%	10.2%
Lake Terrace/ Lake Oaks	679	0.0%	1.2%	1.9%	5.7%	16.9%	34.1%	34.1%	28.7%	28.7%	11.5%
Lakeshore/ Lake Vista	1,676	0.8%	1.8%	0.3%	4.5%	6.4%	18.9%	47.6%	19.7%	19.7%	19.7%
Lakeview	4,749	0.8%	1.5%	1.1%	2.6%	4.8%	13.0%	34.4%	34.4%	34.4%	41.8%
Lakewood	769	0.0%	3.0%	1.7%	0.0%	16.0%	40.7%	10.4%	28.2%	28.2%	10.4%
Leonidas	4,129	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	2.0%	2.8%	7.7%	14.5%	7.7%	14.5%	72.3%
Little Woods	16,402	0.3%	1.3%	3.1%	31.7%	41.6%	15.5%	4.2%	2.3%	2.3%	76.0%
Lower Garden District	4,071	0.0%	0.2%	0.9%	1.5%	5.7%	10.5%	5.2%	5.2%	5.2%	30.5%
Lower Ninth Ward	5,601	0.6%	1.3%	1.0%	5.6%	8.2%	21.0%	31.8%	21.0%	31.8%	30.5%
Marigny	2,391	0.0%	0.5%	0.3%	1.0%	3.9%	4.0%	11.7%	4.0%	11.7%	78.6%
Maryville/ Fontainebleau	3,050	0.2%	1.1%	2.0%	4.3%	8.7%	5.9%	10.3%	5.9%	10.3%	67.5%
McDonogh	1,411	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	1.8%	7.3%	8.7%	14.0%	14.0%	14.0%	67.8%
Mid-City	6,752	0.0%	2.2%	0.4%	2.6%	5.8%	10.9%	15.2%	10.9%	15.2%	62.9%
Milani	3,811	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	1.9%	4.9%	12.1%	17.3%	17.3%	17.3%	63.3%
Milleneburg	2,362	0.3%	1.2%	0.3%	3.9%	5.0%	14.6%	39.1%	39.1%	39.1%	35.6%
Navarre	1,540	0.3%	0.5%	0.4%	2.3%	4.0%	10.1%	22.3%	22.3%	22.3%	60.1%
New Aurora/ English Turn	1,828	5.3%	10.7%	4.5%	5.4%	37.1%	18.3%	12.1%	18.3%	12.1%	6.6%
Old Aurora	6,409	0.3%	1.8%	1.4%	5.7%	25.1%	41.1%	18.5%	41.1%	18.5%	6.1%
Pinus Village	1,804	0.0%	0.8%	0.7%	11.1%	15.5%	30.5%	30.5%	30.5%	30.5%	11.0%
Plum Orchard	2,692	0.3%	1.3%	1.9%	10.7%	17.4%	32.7%	20.5%	32.7%	20.5%	15.2%
Pontchartrain Park	1,046	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	8.0%	24.3%	59.7%	6.7%	24.3%	59.7%	6.7%
Read Blvd East	2,939	2.5%	7.1%	4.3%	26.8%	19.5%	23.8%	12.4%	23.8%	12.4%	3.6%

Read Blvd West	2,048	0.0%	0.3%	1.5%	12.6%	15.6%	37.0%	25.3%	7.7%
Seventh Ward	7,745	0.2%	1.0%	0.8%	1.8%	5.7%	13.2%	18.6%	58.7%
St. Anthony	2,613	0.0%	0.5%	1.1%	1.4%	3.6%	15.3%	40.1%	38.0%
St. Bernard Area	2,249	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	2.4%	2.3%	12.1%	18.3%	64.2%
St. Claude	4,982	0.3%	0.5%	1.0%	1.8%	6.2%	12.3%	29.2%	48.7%
St. Roch	5,200	0.4%	0.3%	1.3%	4.0%	10.1%	13.0%	20.5%	50.4%
St. Thomas Development	1,450	0.0%	1.1%	1.2%	0.0%	0.6%	11.8%	9.2%	76.1%
Tall Timbers/Brechtel	5,548	1.2%	2.2%	4.2%	25.5%	46.4%	16.0%	2.0%	2.5%
Touro	1,884	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	3.3%	6.5%	7.5%	79.8%
Treme/Lafitte	4,245	0.0%	0.2%	0.6%	2.7%	3.1%	10.1%	14.3%	69.0%
Tulane/Gravier	1,924	0.0%	1.1%	0.9%	1.9%	12.1%	14.2%	16.5%	53.3%
U.S. Naval Support Area	992	2.4%	0.0%	2.6%	8.5%	10.8%	19.7%	35.6%	20.4%
Uptown	3,600	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%	1.5%	2.6%	7.9%	7.1%	80.1%
Viavant/Venetian Isles	705	2.4%	3.4%	3.3%	16.5%	36.4%	11.5%	13.6%	12.9%
Village de l'Est	3,952	0.9%	1.3%	4.7%	28.0%	42.4%	14.8%	3.3%	4.6%
West End	2,755	2.3%	3.5%	2.3%	9.7%	22.7%	27.0%	22.3%	10.2%
West Lake Forest	3,986	0.3%	2.0%	2.6%	35.8%	51.2%	5.7%	1.6%	0.8%
West Riverside	2,964	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	2.9%	7.3%	4.9%	9.0%	75.6%
Whitney	1,056	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	4.5%	8.0%	15.7%	24.7%	46.4%

## The Times-Picayune

### Preserving the city's character

Monday, October 17, 2005

New Orleans is steeped in history, and its buildings tell the story of almost 300 years of life along the lower Mississippi River.

Greek revival mansions, Creole cottages, high-ceilinged shotguns and Arts and Crafts bungalows all evoke a particular time and style. This place has more architecturally and historically significant houses than almost any U.S. city.

As New Orleanians move into the reconstruction phase of life after Katrina, it is crucial to salvage as many of those historically valuable buildings as possible. In that light, the proclamation issued by Mayor Ray Nagin to suspend the authority of city agencies that are supposed to sign off on demolitions of historic buildings is disturbing.

The mayor apparently has not signed the proclamation to bypass the Historic District Landmarks Commission, its Central Business counterpart and the Housing Conservation District Review Committee, and he shouldn't. Such a move would be bad policy, and there is no reason to take such a drastic step.

The city has the power to tear down buildings that are in imminent danger of collapse without going through a review process. Inspectors can determine which buildings are about to fall down and are therefore a hazard to the public. If a historic building is not in danger of crashing in on itself, it shouldn't be demolished without going through a review process.

There may well be ways to streamline that process, and the HDLC seems to be trying to do just that in the aftermath of Katrina. It ought to be a fairly simple matter to tell which buildings are barely standing and which are banged up but salvageable.

With the city making deep cuts in staffing, the HDLC, Vieux Carre Commission and other oversight agencies may find it more difficult to do their jobs, and the city should make every effort to ensure that inspectors and other essential staff are available.

Greg Meffert, the Nagin aide who oversees the City Planning Commission and the Historic District Landmarks Commission, promised last week that the HDLC will have "an active, vibrant role" in what the city does in historic neighborhoods.

Mr. Meffert's assurances aren't sufficient, though. He had no background in planning or historic preservation when he was put in charge of those departments, and the administration did not make preservation a high priority before the hurricane.

Fortunately, many of the city's older buildings survived the storm in decent shape, a testament to the strength of their design and craftsmanship. Even in areas of the city that took a beating from Katrina, many historic buildings can and should be restored. New Orleans had a dearth of affordable housing before the storm. As people return to a city with so many houses in shambles, finding a place to live will be a challenge.

Some houses -- maybe many houses -- will have to be bulldozed in the coming months. Where historic buildings can be saved, though, there should be every effort to do so.

If we knock them down willy-nilly, New Orleans won't look like New Orleans anymore.

## The Times-Picayune

### OUR OPINIONS: Rebuild with character

Monday, September 19, 2005

The new New Orleans deserves neighborhoods that look like the ones Hurricane Katrina flooded. Without the federal government, the city could not rebuild. But that help should include a promise to rebuild this architecturally unique place in a way that's authentic. Once the rebuilding is done, New Orleans must look like New Orleans.

At no point in its nearly 300-year history has New Orleans been mistakable for other cities. One could never have parachuted into New Orleans and confused it with Little Rock, Ark., Des Moines, Iowa, or Cape Girardeau, Mo. No, if you were in New Orleans, you knew it. If you couldn't tell where you were from the sounds of jazz, the taste of the étouffée or the sight of Carnival parades, then you could look at the carefully crafted houses and know for sure.

There are bound to be some people who will say New Orleanians are asking for too much and that we ought to be satisfied with whatever we get, as long as it's safe and functional.

They will be wrong. Although it's true we are concerned about how the future New Orleans will look, we are even more concerned about how it will feel. It will not feel like home unless it feels strangely foreign to everybody else.

There are organizations in the city, the Preservation Resource Center chief among them, that exist to protect the architectural integrity of New Orleans' neighborhoods. The preservationists who work for those organizations have consistently raised their voices to prevent homes in Holy Cross from being made to look like homes in Gentilly, and to prevent homes in the Irish Channel from looking like those in Broadmoor.

That should give outsiders a clue to the kind of city New Orleans was and is. Two houses on opposite sides of town can look drastically different but equally well-crafted. There's an internal diversity in the housing stock. As we go forward, it's important that such diversity remains intact.

That's why the city's preservationists need to be consulted as New Orleans rebuilds. Officials at the PRC have demonstrated time and again that making houses that are architecturally interesting doesn't mean only the rich can afford them. Preservationists have built and renovated homes in low- to moderate-income neighborhoods for the people who live there. Their efforts should now be duplicated on a large scale for the benefit of the people who called those destroyed neighborhoods home.

## WELCOME HOME!

The Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans is so happy you have returned to our city! The PRC is dedicated to assist New Orleans area residents with their damaged homes. We fully realize the challenges you face. Please do not despair - the PRC is here to help!

In partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the PRC has an extensive list of services. *Visit our headquarters for:*

- **Weekly workshops pertaining to the restoration of storm-damaged homes (call PRC for dates and times)**
- **Free 5 gallon buckets filled with cleaning supplies**
- **Free tarps**
- **Free professional advice (architects, contractors, etc.)**
- **PRC website: [www.preserveneworleans.com](http://www.preserveneworleans.com)  
(e-mail forum available online)**

The PRC and the National Trust for Historic Preservation are advocating to obtain grants and tax incentives for homeowners with hurricane damage. For additional information, please visit [www.preserveneworleans.com](http://www.preserveneworleans.com) and [www.nthp.org](http://www.nthp.org).



Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans



**NATIONAL TRUST**  
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION\*

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Hours: Monday- Friday (9 a.m. – 5 p.m.)

***PRC – Investing in New Orleans since 1974***

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Preziosi.

**STATEMENT OF DAVID PREZIOSI**

Mr. PREZIOSI. Chairman Turner and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

Mississippi was forever changed on August 29th when Katrina ripped through the State. Not only did she take lives, but she also took the very heart and fabric of many of Mississippi's historic communities. Katrina's path left unimagined devastation, destroying complete blocks of historic houses, and left others in shambles. Many important historic landmarks are gone all along the coast, including the 1856 Tullis-Toledano Manor, which was crushed by a casino barge that was dropped on top of it by the storm surge.

While the damage extended well inland in the State, the three coastal counties of Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson were the hardest hit. In those three counties, there are 15 National Register historic districts and 114 individually listed National Registry properties, as well as two National Historic Landmarks. Approximately 22 individually listed buildings and 300 buildings in historic districts were lost, with at least 1,000 more sustaining varying degrees of damage.

My first trip to the coast involved a visit to Beauvoir, one of two National Historic Landmarks on the coast. I was astounded to find the destruction to the main house and the site was massive, with several historic outbuildings completely gone, and the wrap-around gallery torn off the main house. Traveling further down the coast I witnessed massive destruction to both historic and nonhistoric buildings alike, but was surprised to see that many historic buildings survived, but with varying degrees of damage.

After that trip, the State Historic Preservation Office staff and I began to do damage assessment in each of the coastal communities. To date, we have surveyed over 1,200 historic structures and have assessed along the coastline. We encountered numerous historic buildings with extensive storm-surge damage or structures that were pushed completely off of their foundation, such as the charming houses in Ocean Springs attributed to Frank Lloyd Wright. Along the coast were also extensive roof damage from wind, tornadoes, and fallen trees, such as in Bay St. Louis.

The Federal role in the preservation of historic properties damaged by Katrina should begin with additional technical support for FEMA in the field. More structural engineers and architects familiar with historic structures are needed to help evaluate the condition of damaged properties listed on the National Register. Currently in Mississippi, FEMA has only contracted with one structural engineer, three preservation consultants, and an architectural historian. All of them have to cover 72 miles of coastline and 12 municipalities in three counties, not including the other noncoastal counties also affected by Katrina. Structural engineers are key in helping property owners and local building officials evaluate the structures to determine if they are salvageable.

Another major role of the Federal Government would be to help provide disaster relief assistance for historic properties through programs like the historic homeowners assistance tax credit and \$60 million historic preservation disaster relief plans proposed by

the National Trust. This grant money could help stabilize damage to historic properties, provide owners time to figure out what can be done to save their properties, and be used for gap funding where insurance does not cover the full repair to historic structures, or where lower-income historic property owners may not have adequate insurance. In many cases, people that suffered flood damage outside of the FEMA flood zones did not have flood insurance, and that damage was not covered by regular insurance, only covering wind and rain damage.

The State role in the preservation of historic properties should be to provide additional technical assistance and services to historic property owners and cities with damaged National Register properties within their boundaries. The other role is for the State emergency agency, MEMA in Mississippi, to work more closely with the State Historic Preservation Office and FEMA. We have little support from MEMA regarding cultural resources, which has hampered efforts of the FEMA staff which must be asked in reviewing by the State. There needs to be a mechanism to override this requirement if necessary.

The local role is to work with the Federal and State agencies to better protect local historic resources. Local governments need to give the historic property owners the chance to evaluate their structures to see if they can be salvaged before they are tagged for removal in the cleanup process. They also need to keep their local preservation controls and ordinances in place to help protect the remaining historic character of the community. It has been absolutely heartbreaking to see so many of our beloved historic structures in ruins or severely damaged.

Much work lies ahead if we are to save the remaining historic places that are important to the historic character of Mississippi, which is crucial to the historic tourism market in the States. All levels of government—Federal, State, and local—must work together and form partnerships that strive to give every effort and assistance possible to those who own properties important enough to be listed on the National Register.

We must not let Katrina take any more historic structures through a lack of effort or coordination on the part of the different levels of government. When you have pieces of your historic fabric ripped from you so violently and quickly, it is important that we do all that we can to save the remaining historic structures that now define the historic character of the coast. Thank you.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Preziosi follows:]



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**Testimony of**

**David Preziosi  
Executive Director  
Mississippi Heritage Trust**

On behalf of

**The Mississippi Heritage Trust**

Before the

**House Government Reform Subcommittee on  
Federalism and the Census**

On

**Historic Preservation vs. Katrina: What Role Should  
Federal, State and Local Governments Play in  
Preserving Historic Properties Affected by this  
Catastrophic Storm?**

November 1, 2005

**Testimony of David Preziosi,  
Executive Director – Mississippi Heritage Trust**

**Before the House Government Reform Subcommittee  
on Federalism and the Census**

**November 1, 2005**

Chairman Turner, Ranking Member Clay and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss what the federal, state, and local roles should be in the preservation of historic properties affected by Hurricane Katrina. I appreciate having the opportunity to speak on such an important topic and one that is central to my profession and my passion. My name is David Preziosi. I am the Executive Director of the Mississippi Heritage Trust (MHT).

The Mississippi Heritage Trust was founded in 1992 as the only statewide non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the prehistoric and historic cultural resources of Mississippi. MHT has over 600 members in Mississippi and around the country. Our membership includes individuals, families, businesses, corporations, foundations, governmental entities, and non-profits. We work to achieve our mission through education and advocacy, as well as with hands on preservation work. MHT has assisted communities of all sizes with preservation issues, and is known for such key programs as Mississippi's 10 Most Endangered Historic Places list and the Mississippi Heritage Awards. We are also involved in education, holding preservation conferences

each year which focus on different themes. In addition we produce special workshops when needed on such topics as the use of historic tax credits for rehabilitation projects and cemetery preservation.

Mississippi was forever changed on August 29<sup>th</sup> when Katrina ripped through the state, destroying numerous historic resources and damaging countless others. In addition to those loses many museums and historical collections were also destroyed or severely damaged. Indeed it is not an overstatement to say that this is the greatest cultural catastrophe the state has ever faced. While the damage extended well inland, the three coastal counties of Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson were the hardest hit and for the purposes of this hearing I will focus on these coastal communities. In those three counties there are 15 National Register Historic Districts, and 114 individually listed properties and sites on the National Register. Two National Historic Landmarks also stand on the coast, one being Beauvoir – Jefferson Davis’s last home - and the other the Rocket Propulsion Complex at the Stennis Space Center. Each one of the historic districts has suffered some form of loss or damage and approximately 22 individually listed buildings were lost with another 78 sustaining varying degrees of damage. Newly restored Beauvoir suffered extensive damage to the main house, and significant outbuildings on the grounds were washed away by the storm surge. The storm surge ripped through the first floor of the Jefferson Davis Presidential Library, carrying away priceless artifacts and historic treasures.

Both MHT and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) responded immediately to the storm. Our first priority was to attempt to determine the welfare of our friends and colleagues in the areas affected by Katrina. The status of the communications systems made it difficult to get through to people. After we found out the status about most of the people we knew we went to work checking on the status of our beloved historic landmarks which was also a difficult task. Communication systems again made it difficult to get through and we heard numerous rumors about different places, some of which were just that, and others that turned out to be true. On Friday September 2<sup>nd</sup> I and a member of the MDAH staff traveled to the coast with a reporter and photographer from the New York Times who were doing a story on the damage to historic properties. It was an eye-opening experience for all of us. Our first stop was to see Beauvoir of which we heard various stories of its level of damage and in some cases destruction. It was a surreal experience to drive down to the coast and see the damage to buildings and trees multiply as we got closer to the Gulf. As we reached Beauvoir we were astounded to find that the destruction to the main house and site was massive. Several historic outbuildings were completely gone and the wrap around gallery of the main house was torn off, causing gaping holes in the roof. There wasn't a trace of the gallery on the site, even the piers which used to support the porch deck. Live oak trees, many over 100 years old, were ripped from the ground and toppled over, and even the grounds looked like a barren wasteland. After investigating the damage to Beauvoir, we cautiously traveled further down the coast and saw more massive destruction to both historic and non-historic buildings alike. The 1850s Dantzler House was completely gone, with only a brick walkway and rubble to mark its former location. Other buildings

in Biloxi along the coast survived but were heavily damaged, the first floors being gouged by the storm surge pulling away front walls, columns, and porches. Porch roofs were floating above the ground with no supports, some second floors were being held up by no more than two exterior walls and some interior walls, while other houses were piles of ruins. After that trip it was determined that damage assessment was the priority to determine the extent of the damage across the Coast.

Four members of MHT's board of trustees live on the coast. While on the coast with the New York Times reporter I was able to confirm that three of them were safe and listened to their harrowing stories of surviving the storm. In Biloxi I had to climb a 10-foot pile of debris blocking the street to get to one board member who lives less than a block from the Gulf. I was very pleased to see her alive and her house still standing but damaged. Another board member from Biloxi had the first floor of his house flooded but he survived. I visited a third board member at her house in Turkey Creek - a historic African American neighborhood in North Gulfport. She told me how her house began flooding and by the time it got up to her shoulders she decided to swim out of the house and "up the street" to higher ground and relative safety on a neighbor's porch. Two weeks later I finally heard from the fourth board member living on the coast that she had lost her house while she was out of town during the storm.

Shortly after the first visit to the coast the SHPO staff and I began traveling down to the coast to do basic assessments in each of the coastal communities and to determine which properties needed further inspection. To date, 1200 structures have been assessed by a

staff of six plus me working long and grueling days traveling back and forth from Jackson each day due to the lack of lodging operational on the coast. The drive from Jackson to the Coast takes three hours each way. We covered the majority of the coast line, all of the National Register Historic Districts, and the majority of the individually listed structures. After those basic assessments we decided that the next step was to investigate the structural integrity of the properties most severely damaged to determine if and how the buildings could be stabilized and protected from further damage. Not having a structural engineer on the SHPO staff has slowed down this second phase of our response. We have been able to get some engineering assistance from volunteers coming in from outside of the state and from the only structural engineer working as a contractor for FEMA. But we don't know how long these volunteers will be willing to come help and the coordination of the volunteer teams has become burdensome in itself and has taken the attention of key staff members.

#### **Federal Role**

The federal role in the preservation of historic properties damaged by Katrina should begin with additional technical support for FEMA in the field. We need more structural engineers and architects to help evaluate the condition of damaged properties listed on the National Register. Currently FEMA in Mississippi has only contracted with one structural engineer, a preservation consultant, and an architectural historian to be in the field. The three of them have to cover 72 miles of coast line, and 12 municipalities in three counties. This does not include the additional seven counties in the state also affected by Katrina but not on the coast. If we are to save as many of the damaged

historic structures as possible we need more structural engineers and architects to meet with property owners and local building officials. Those professionals can help evaluate the structures to determine if they are salvageable and to educate owners about how to temporarily stabilize their buildings.

Another federal role could be direct monies to help stabilize structures that have been damaged by Katrina. This can be contracted through the SHPO or other preservation organizations as they know the properties that are in need better than FEMA. This money could go to stabilizing the structures to give the owners more time to figure what can be done to save their properties and to work with insurance companies and local building officials. Many people are so overwhelmed with the damage to their buildings that having some resources to help buy them some time will hopefully prevent hasty decisions of demolishing properties that don't need to be demolished.

Due to the sheer size of the destruction caused by Katrina the federal government should also extend the 60 day limit on FEMA reimbursable debris removal. The time periods of only 60 days is not scaled to the level of the disaster creating an unnecessary rush to demolish historic structures.

Another thing needed at the federal level is to streamline FEMA regulations and make them simpler to understand and simpler for state and local agencies working with FEMA to get answers on the work they are doing. Reimbursable expenses have become a big

problem and it is not very clear what items can and can not be reimbursed. Different FEMA staff give different answers to the same reimbursement questions.

People in the areas affected by Katrina also need further clarification from FEMA about what FEMA will or will not be doing. Rumors are running rampant that FEMA will be knocking down any damaged houses even if the damage is not severe or even if it is missing a roof. Some of that misinformation is coming from FEMA contractors talking to the local people. However there needs to be a better public relations push to get correct information out to people and stop the rumors. While it seems a good idea to disseminate such information on the FEMA web site, directing people who do not have electricity or internet access or even a house to visit the web site only causes more frustration. To solve this problem, more information needs to be published in the local papers, and regular public meetings need to be held with FEMA representation to answer questions.

#### **State Role**

The state role in the preservation of historic properties should be to provide additional technical assistance and services to historic property owners and municipalities with National Register properties in their boundaries. The Mississippi Department of Archives and History has already done a tremendous amount of work to do preliminary damage assessments to determine what areas are in critical need of further help. This was done without FEMA help as they were not ready to assist with assessments and determined that in Mississippi it was the role of the SHPO to provide this service whereas



in Louisiana they are hiring 20 to 30 architectural historians and architects to do this type of damage assessment.

For the more in-depth surveys that are needed to determine structural integrity of historic structures this is where we could use federal assistance to bring in structural engineers and architects, as mentioned earlier. These professionals could actually be hired on a temporary basis to work with the SHPO office from federally designated funds.

Another role is for the state Emergency Management Agency (MEMA in Mississippi) to work more closely with the SHPO and FEMA. We have had little support from MEMA regarding cultural resources and this lack of cooperation has hampered efforts of the FEMA staff. In many cases FEMA must wait for MEMA to ask for assistance before FEMA can proceed on certain items. If the state emergency agency is too busy to respond to cultural resources there needs to be a mechanism to override the requirement for FEMA to have to be asked by the state emergency management agency to get involved. The SHPO, as a state level governmental agency, should be able to ask for FEMA assistance in times of an emergency.

#### **Local Role**

The local role is to work with the state and federal agencies to better protect local historic resources. Local governments need to give historic property owners the chance to evaluate their structures to see if they can be salvaged before they are tagged for removal in the clean-up process. Again, this is where structural engineers and architects, funded

by the federal government, could work with local building officials and local property owners to determine if historic structures can be repaired or if they really are too far gone to be salvaged and need to be taken down.

Local governments also need to keep their local preservation controls and ordinances in place and not change them until after the clean up is complete and it is determined what the entire community wants. It is crucial that the remaining historic structures are protected from alterations that will change their historic character which could affect already fragile National Register district status.

The local government, in partnership with the state, will also have to look at the changes that may need to be made to historic district boundaries due to the amount of historic properties that are gone and lack of historic resources to keep a National Register district with its current boundaries.

#### **MHT's Role**

Our role at MHT has changed greatly due to Katrina and has put us in the forefront of trying to save the historic resources in the state damaged by Katrina. MHT is a staff of one and we have very limited resources so we can't do as much as we would like. We have changed from an advocacy and educational organization to one that is on ground trying to save as many historic buildings as possible. I have offered what services I can provide to assist MDAH's efforts. I have helped them with the damage assessment on the coast, and was present in meetings and on conference calls with them regarding

historic preservation. We have provided a united front in the effort to save our state's historic resources.

MHT has also been a source of information for the preservation world outside of Mississippi, for its membership, and for those just wanting to know about the status of historic properties in the area affected by Katrina. I have kept our web site up to date with information and pictures from visits to the coast and have answered numerous inquiries about the status of various buildings. The visits to our web site more than doubled from August to September. MHT has also become a source of information for the media and we have provided pictures and information to use in their publications and news reports.

We have also been working closely with our national partner the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) to take advantage of the resources they have to help Mississippi. They have been helpful in coordinating volunteers to come to our state and providing needed financial resources. We have now begun to hold public hearings on the coast in conjunction with MDAH and NTHP to help historic property owners deal with the damage to their properties. MHT and NTHP have also begun a Stabilization Pilot Program to begin the stabilization of up to 20 homes with a small pot of money. This is only a drop in the bucket of the number of properties in need of stabilization but at least it is a start and hopefully will generate more money from outside sources one we can prove what the money can do. MHT will work to save as many historic buildings as possible

damaged by Katrina for ever how long we have the resources to help and hopefully for as long as it takes.

### **Lessons Learned**

We would be remiss if we didn't look at the experience of Katrina as a learning experience for future disasters. The scope of this disaster was overwhelming for everyone and was no doubt what led to so many problems; however we discovered many things that could be handled better in the future or could be implemented to give people a better chance to save their historic resources. Some of those ideas include:

1. Develop better records on historic districts, or make sure they are up to date to help in the assessment of damaged properties. The records regarding historic properties and districts kept at the local level were in many cases destroyed or are missing so multiple copies should be made and stored in a central safe location that the SHPO can access. Do more investigation into potentially eligible national Register Districts and properties. During damage assessments we found many potentially eligible district areas, many in lower-income areas.
2. Reevaluate FEMA flood maps as pre-storm FEMA maps misled property owners to think they did not need flood insurance. Now that the majority of the damage is being determined to have been flood-related people who have insurance are not being covered for the damage if they didn't have flood insurance.

3. Develop a comprehensive coastal heritage recovery plan in case of future disasters. This plan should include clearly defined roles of the federal, state, and local entities in protecting and saving historic resources.
4. Identify sources of immediate money for stabilization of privately owned buildings - grants and tax credits are too slow to provide crucial stabilization to prevent the buildings from deteriorating further or completely collapsing before money can get there. This may be in the form of an emergency recovery fund that is already set up and can be accessed when a disaster happens.
5. Prepare federal, state, and local agencies for similar levels of structural damage, as agencies were unprepared for this aspect of the disaster. No previous disaster, except for the hurricane that struck Galveston in 1900, has had this level of structural damage.
6. Make sure that areas that are not in the media spotlight get the proper federal and private resources necessary. The focus on New Orleans has drawn public and private funds away from Mississippi, which was much harder hit. Our buildings are barely standing and structurally damaged whereas most of the buildings flooded by Katrina in New Orleans are at least still standing. Even though we were much harder hit in Mississippi, Louisiana received FEMA Cultural Resource staff members more quickly and more of them than in Mississippi. We have a much larger geographic area damaged by Katrina to cover and much more severe structural damage to assess yet we only have a handful of FEMA Cultural Resource staff.

7. The number, size, and intensity of major Gulf hurricanes in the last 18 months points to the need for a federal program to improve survivability of structures on the Gulf Coast, including mitigation approaches that will encourage retention and strengthening of historic buildings. Such a program could begin with pre-storm mapping and documentation of National Register districts and National Register - eligible structures so that mitigation work can be prioritized, and so that in future disasters, recovery efforts can be streamlined.

It has been absolutely heartbreaking to see so many of our beloved historic landmarks on the coast gone or in ruins. Whole sections of historic districts are missing and numerous historic structures are barely hanging on with severe damage compromising their future. Much work lies ahead if we are to save those historic places that are important to the fabric and character of Mississippi. All levels of government - federal, state, and local - must work together and form partnerships that strive to give every effort and assistance possible to those who own properties listed on the National Register. These National Register properties which are important enough to be recognized by the federal government as having local, state, or national significance should be worthy of some additional assistance to save them. We must not let Katrina take any more historic structures through a lack of effort or coordination on the part of the different levels of government than she has already destroyed. When you have pieces of your historic fabric ripped from you so violently and quickly it is important that we do all that we can to save the remaining historic structures that survived the wrath of Katrina to retain a small portion of the historic character of the coast.

Mr. TURNER. I again appreciate each of you and the time that you have spent on this issue and bringing attention to it. We all know, and it's acknowledged in your comments, that this issue certainly is subordinate to the issues of safety and personal needs of communities.

But as is evident in each of your comments, with the issue of historic preservation, so many times it's an issue of decisions that are being made where we are not aware of them, we're not preparing for them, we're not planning, and so through that we might lose some national treasures.

It is my honor now to recognize Mr. Melancon, who is from Louisiana, from the Third District, who has joined us for his opening comments and questions.

Mr. MELANCON. I didn't really have any prepared comments. I came today because of my concern for Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and of course the preservation of historic property structures and whatever throughout the area.

With my work with the Lieutenant Governor and other people housed in the State legislature, historic preservation in New Orleans was always one of the forefronts of things that we concern ourselves with, and this storm has not made that easy.

As I look at what is happening and hear that there is a 50 percent threshold on demolition of structures in New Orleans—and I don't know if that is actually the fact, I wonder—and one of the questions I would like to put forth is what exactly do we know what FEMA and the Corps of Engineers' marching orders are toward demolition of property; and in particular, how do we know how they are going to treat historic properties? That's kind of why I came, to hopefully see if anybody knows what's going on. And I appreciate the opportunity of being allowed to sit in with the committee. Thank you, sir.

Mr. TURNER. From a practical standpoint, we have two panels that includes from the first panel, individuals from the affected communities who can speak to their experience and what they're seeing on the ground. And then also in the second panel, we have individuals from the national perspective who will be talking about the obligations and coordination efforts. In response to that, if any of you would like to speak as to how that coordination is occurring. Throughout most of your written testimony you talk about ways in which this effort can be improved with FEMA and its coordination.

Lieutenant Governor, would you like to begin?

Mr. LANDRIEU. I'll take a crack at that, Mr. Chairman. Congressman, it is nice to see you. Thank you for coming this morning.

Mr. Chairman, just in response to some of the comments you made briefly, there is no question that the priorities in the gulf coast are levees, and then of course wetland restoration, because those are the things that will protect whatever it is that we build back. However, it would seem to beg the question that once you build the levees and the wetlands to protect something, the question is what are you trying to protect? And what we're trying to protect will be a result of choices that we make. And the choices that we make will be guided by the principles that we think are important. And if we believe that historic preservation is economic development, which many of us in the Deep South believe—and we

have seen many examples of that in recent years—and it is important for the tax policy to reflect principles that are going to allow us to make those choices that will then yield the consequences that we intend.

And I think that's why many of us are here today. Not just to say let's restore what was there, but to talk about how you can build jobs with historic preservation and economic development.

Congressman Melancon, the answer to your question is: I don't know right now. I think that the mayor of the city of New Orleans and the Governor and their two commissions are working with FEMA to design a process that will address what needs to be torn down and what can be preserved. What we're trying to do is to inform them, through the advocacy groups that we have, about how important is to have embedded in their assessment teams individuals from the American Institute of Architects or folks from the Historic Trust, so that when those decisions are made they're not just made without regard to the consequence of the decisions that they make.

I know that in a couple of weeks there is going to be a summit that's being held by both the Governor and the mayor and the American Institute of Architects to actually talk about this 50-percent-plus-1 rule, because there is some confusion about what it really means. And of course it may change from neighborhood to neighborhood. I think that's an unsettled issue as of now. You won't be surprised to know that sometimes there are mixed signals coming out of FEMA on this issue. I think they are trying to figure out exactly what it means. And it may mean something different in Mississippi than it does in Louisiana. But I agree we have to find the right approach, the right rule, and then we have to make sure the assessment teams are in the place.

As Mr. Preziosi said, there are not a lot of feet on the ground; actually, we need more feet on the ground, and assessment. There are people that have offered to do that for us, and hopefully the Governor and the mayor will take advantage of that. And I'm sure in Mississippi the same will be true as well. Thank you.

Ms. GAY. The 50 percent rule is a very subjective thing, and I think it's going to be subjective geographically as well. It is something that concerns me. We see people cleaning out their buildings and preparing them for livability that were perhaps more than 50 percent damaged. Yet we see many streets where nobody is coming back yet, and we're very concerned about these properties. People are afraid of the mold. We are giving mold workshops. The mold can be removed. There is a lot of hysteria about it. It's a lot of hard work to get rid of, but it can be eliminated. Houses can be restored to livability. And our focus, of course, is the historic properties, the National Register, and eligible areas.

But think of it this way: A city is a living organism. I think, OK, my head is very important, but I'm not going to worry about my arms and legs. The whole city is very important to us, and whatever happens to one half of our city certainly will affect the remaining historic properties.

So we do try to look at the city holistically, at the same time focusing our efforts on the National Register areas or eligible areas. And we are pleased that the FEMA team is agreeing with us. We



have a member of our staff who has been out on several of the team's inspections, and we are in agreement about the properties. So we feel good about that part of FEMA. But as the Lieutenant Governor said, we do not know what is happening in the other areas, we do not know what is planned for the newer parts of our city.

Mr. TURNER. Does anyone else wish to comment on this issue? If not, I will recognize Mr. Dent from Pennsylvania.

Mr. DENT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing to investigate the effects of Hurricane Katrina on the historic culture and infrastructure of the gulf coast region.

Much has been said—I'll submit my statement for the record—but I am excited to be here to discuss this important subject.

My question, though, really is going to be directed, I guess, to Ms. Gay from New Orleans. How effective do you believe these historic preservation tax credits will be as opposed to, say, a direct grant program, particularly for the low/moderate income folks?

Ms. GAY. Well, I think we have to have in the tax credit, grants provision so that a low-income homeowner could utilize it fully, either through a rebate or certificate or something. I think that the success of the tax credit program is outstanding. I mean, it is remarkable, the effectiveness of it. It goes through the State Preservation Offices, as you know. And our office does a really good job. It is one of the most outstanding in the country. So it gives credibility there and I think confidence in the grants that the Federal Government might see fit to give.

Mr. DENT. I have observed it's a good program as well. My main concern is, you know the circumstances of the folks down there better than I do right now. And I just wonder if a direct grant approach would be more effective at this particular moment than a tax credit program. If anyone else would like to comment on that, feel free.

Mr. LANDRIEU. I would like to comment on that if I could. First of all—and Congressman Melancon will understand this—for the record, all of southern Louisiana, almost all of it got hit from Lake Charles to Cameron to Vermilion, some structures in Baton Rouge, even in Lafayette, and then in the home of Thibodaux, Terrebonne, New Orleans, Washington, St. Tammany, we had 13 parishes. And so all of the comments that we're making relating to historic preservation applies equally to those, maybe in a different context, but they've been decimated as well.

And Congressman, I would say this to that request. Both of them are necessary and both of them are important for the same reason. One of the principles that we're trying to really push is that diversity is a strength, not a weakness. Having mixed-use neighborhoods is really critically important.

The historic tax credit that Patty Gay told you about has been just a great tool to revitalize historic neighborhoods. The Warehouse District, which basically blossomed after a failed World's Fair, was a result of historic tax credits; a tax abatement program where people actually went in and took old warehouses for furniture and have turned them into to the Renaissance Arts Hotel which has used the historic tax credit to renovate an old building and made a hotel and created jobs. There is a museum in it, and

a wonderful restaurant by a world-class chef. That is the cultural economy. And that happened because of the historic tax credit.

When you're looking at other neighborhoods, I'm not talking about renovating big buildings into condos under the historic tax credit, but when you're talking about specific structures in mixed-use neighborhoods, having grants are important, but also having tax credits that can be taken advantage of by lower-income individuals are critical to that very basic principle.

So I would rather not have to choose between the two and really promote both of them, because at the end of the day, again, we need the levees and the wetlands. The question is what are you going to protect? And that has to be worthwhile as well, which is why on this housing strategy, that needs to be the goal we're trying to achieve. And we find the different kinds of tools that can get us there.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Evans, do you have a comment on that?

Mr. EVANS. Well, I would agree that you don't want to have it reduced to a choice between the two; it's all needed. But I live in a community that is a low-income census tract in the city of Gulfport that was annexed about 10 years ago. Many of the houses that—the older homes that would be National Register-eligible, don't just have storm damage, don't just have a need to meet the Secretary of the Interior's standards, particularly on the outside of the home to, you know, to get this listing or to qualify for some of these credits and so forth.

They also have, as a result of poverty, some deferred maintenance issues. And some of these homes have never met the Gulfport code because they were built 70 years before we were part of Gulfport. So the people I'm talking about, they don't have the start-up capital to wait for a tax credit or a rebate to kick in later. In fact, even though we have been celebrating with great glee the very timely decision by the Department of Archives and History to make the recommendation that the entire community be considered by the Interior Department for registry listing, the fact remains that even though in one sense it seems like we're off to the races, well, in another sense, we don't have a horse yet.

Mr. DENT. Understood. And my observation in my own district is that these historic preservation tax credits have been enormously effective in my area over the years. At the State level we have done some interesting work on that issue.

But one more question. And Governor Landrieu, last time I saw you we were at a hearing, Transportation Infrastructure Committee, and I raised a question to Mayor Nagin about what appeared to be, hopefully, a proposal that has gone by the wayside that would essentially create a Las Vegas life in New Orleans. I'm told—is it true that proposal is now off the table? I hope it is.

Mr. LANDRIEU. Yes.

Mr. DENT. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Charles W. Dent follows:]

Congressman Charles W. Dent  
Pennsylvania – 15<sup>th</sup> District  
Government Reform Committee  
Subcommittee on Federalism and the Census  
Tuesday, November 1, 2005  
Opening Statement: *“Historic Preservation vs. Katrina: What Role Should Federal, State, and Local Governments Play in Preserving Historic Properties Affected by this Catastrophic Storm?”*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this important hearing in order to investigate the effects of Hurricane Katrina on the historic culture and infrastructure of the Gulf Coast region. Massive damage resulted in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in the areas of New Orleans and Mississippi. As the storm flooded the city of New Orleans, much of the infrastructure that defines this area’s unique blend of culture, heritage, and historic charm, was also damaged. It is important to encourage reinvestment in these areas in order to stimulate economic recovery. We need to cultivate a better-coordinated response effort, (involving the federal, state, and local government, in addition to the efforts of non-governmental organizations), to respond quickly to stabilize minimally damaged structures, in order to perhaps salvage them in the long-term. We must be certain that damaged historic buildings are carefully evaluated in order to decide if they may ultimately be saved, while at the same time, maintaining a maximum standard of public safety. It is critical that this hearing evaluates the most effective means to preserve the historic buildings, neighborhoods and communities in the Gulf Coast region ravaged by Hurricane Katrina. Again, I thank Mr. Turner for holding this hearing, and I look forward to hearing the testimony of our witnesses.

Mr. MELANCON. One of the dilemmas—and this is an observation for the members of the committee, because many of the areas were in nonFEMA-designated flood zones—no mortgage required any flood coverage. What has happened with the flooded area is that the insurance companies are denying claims other than if it's roof damage or it's something that can be proved that it's wind damage. Then on the other hand those people—and Gene Taylor and I authored a bill about flood insurance—but those people that were in nonflood-prone areas in some of these historic preservation homes didn't have to buy flood insurance, and so they've got no coverage whatsoever, even though they bought what policies they thought they needed to take care of a situation like this. So we've got a lot of structures. And if you're looking into low-income areas, first of all, the insurance factor; the second thing is affordability. And if you're going to preserve any of these things, you're going to have to have some grants coupled with tax incentives, because otherwise some of these will never get back up.

Mr. EVANS. That's right.

Mr. TURNER. Ms. Foxx.

Ms. FOXX. I'm fine, thank you.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Evans, in talking about the efforts that you have undertaken in both preserving your community and redeveloping your community, you have the issue of the preservation of heritage, and you have the added issue, as you have indicated, of the issues of poverty, which has become a significant issue as we look to the evacuation processes and individuals who were not given the assistance that they needed, both during evacuation and postevacuation.

You raised an important issue, and that is home ownership and the opportunity to look at both the grant structures and the programs that we provide for assistance in the area to provide an opportunity for home ownership. And you mentioned, of course, your own experience with HUD's program and how it might be able to apply in your community. And I want to give you an opportunity to speak some more on the issue of the importance of opportunities for home ownership through grant programs.

As we look to each of these funding opportunities for reconstruction, redevelopment, I think one of the things that you have raised in the issue of home ownership is that we will also have an opportunity to couple that with having an impact on people's lives. And if you would speak on that, I would appreciate it.

Mr. EVANS. Yes. I think at the end of the day what we all want as much as possible is people owning homes, living in those homes, those homes being insurable, those homes being mortgageable, and those people taking a responsibility, the personal responsibility to maintain that home. And it's almost like making lemonade out of lemons, you know, in the aftermath of Katrina, that where you see now that so much of what is left of our architectural heritage in my part of the coast are some of the more humble, scalewise, structures, coastal bungalows, even some shotgun homes. But there are plenty of people in the city of Gulfport now, evacuees who would relish an opportunity to call one of those places home, and who would speak with pride about the additional benefit or even con-

tribution to society of having that home being a reflection to all of our shared coastal and southern and American heritage.

I think we have an opportunity here, by joining together, marrying together some of these normally disunited or disobjectives, literally—no pun intended—under one roof. I think we ought to jump on that. I mean, it's just something I think is as clear as water.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you.

Many times in the testimony that we have been provided the 106 review process is identified and discussed both in its importance and in the issue of the need to provide additional resources to the area so that the 106 review process can be utilized effectively. There are, as you know, many critics of the 106 review process. And these critics, in looking at the issue, many times believe that the process inhibits redevelopment, growth, or development potential.

I think the theme in the testimony that we have before us is so important to focus on, and that is the issue of the importance of 106 review process—what it gives us, what it accomplishes—and also the issue that has an impediment. The issue of resources is really where we need to focus, and it can make the process more effective.

I would like it if each of you would comment on that, and we'll begin with the Lieutenant Governor.

Mr. LANDRIEU. The 106 review process is implemented in State government under the auspices of the Department of Parks and Recreation and Tourism, which is the department that I help run. It's a very important process.

It's not the process itself that is the problem, and as Patty said earlier, so much of this is subjective, it's what the principles are that guide the review process. And so as we think through this, if we get the principles right and we have the resources, then it seems to me that the consequences will be good ones rather than bad ones. There is always almost a zero-sum game that goes on between developers and those that are interested in historic preservation. It doesn't have to be a zero-sum game.

There is a tremendous amount of consensus that can come to the floor when you're talking about development and the preservation of historic properties, especially if you accept the principle that historic preservation is economic development. And there have been many wonderful examples, as Ms. Gay said earlier, especially in Louisiana and many in Mississippi as well, where we have really kind of led the Nation in showing people that you can actually do both.

You also now know from Mr. Evans how critical it is if you're trying to create a mixed-use neighborhood, how you can do that with grants and historic tax credits for low-income folks.

So again, I don't think it's the process that's the problem. I think it's really how it's been used and maybe how it's been abused; how it's been perceived by both. But this has given us a new opportunity, because as many people have seen, the things that we have taken for granted are the things that the country seems to miss the most already. And when we talk about rebuilding the soul of America, one of the things we're talking about is our history and our

sense of place and our sense of music. And all those cultural things that we think just happened by accident, unfortunately they're not going to be there by accident anymore. And so we have to go back in and look at the process, make sure that it's used appropriately, and perhaps most importantly, make sure we have the resources to actually do the job.

There is going to be some philanthropic fatigue that sets in. The American Institute of Architects will only do things for free for us for so long. Folks will only come in for a short period of time. But if you don't have the people on the ground and the resources to get the job done and have somebody from the SHPO offices embedded in each one of those FEMA teams over the long haul—because make no mistake about it, there are no easy fixes, as Mr. Dent said about the mayor's casino proposal. There is no quick start to economic revitalization. This is a long haul.

This is a long haul. It's going to take a long time, and if we're committed to it, we have to have the resources to get it done. Then if we do, I think we'll do a good job.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Holmes.

Mr. HOLMES. Unfortunately, it is very seldom a win-win situation between the preservationists and the developers. On the Mississippi gulf coast, because of some of the good work that we have done with the historic preservation work, the staff of the Department and with the Mississippi Heritage Trust, we have any numbers of people calling us begging us to come in as soon as possible to do assessments. They were very protective of their neighborhoods. This was pretty much across the spectrum down there.

We were in fear that there might be some hurry-up activity down there from a city engineer or Corps of Engineers to get started with destruction, but overall it has been a good situation in the sense that the public recognition of this review process is there, and there was a very strong desire that the communities be preserved. So in this case we're able to go down and work with the communities, with the local governments that for the most part have been very supportive of this process. Of course, they're in the process now of fusing the new coast, and we hope to have very much a strong role in playing, in suggesting a large part of our heritage needs to be preserved in that.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Evans.

Ms. Gay.

Ms. GAY. I have a slightly different perspective. I think the preservation program, as I said earlier, is an exemplary example of Federal, State, local agencies working together, public and private, and section 106's review process is a critical part of the program. There are many other aspects of the program. We need all of them. And I was just talking to Ed McMahan of Urban Land Institute a few days ago, and he was pointing out that the cities with rules and regulations are the cities that are doing the best economically. Developers will not leave when you have rules and regulations; in fact, that's a sign that you know what you're doing, your city has its act together. And so it attracts development.

So section 106 is a way to deal with the fact that you have Federal moneys and programs that are often hard for local and State governments to say no to, and yet we can't say, oh, we have to save

those buildings in the face of all this money that might be coming. That's why we put it in place. And it has worked very well, and I guess perhaps we're lucky that we have such a good preservation office in the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

But I would also like to say that some States even have the equivalent of a section 106 process, and I wish we had it in Louisiana, and I think it's good for the Federal Government to do it; why shouldn't the city do it? Why shouldn't a city say, well, how would our funding this project affect our historic resources? I think it's a good example that the Federal Government has set, and I hope that we see more of a review rather than less. Thank you.

Mr. PREZIOSI. I think section 106 process is really crucial to saving our historic properties. One thing that we found being on the coast and holding public meetings with the local people there, they're terrified their houses are going to be torn down without their approval. A lot is rumors and things floating around, but section 106 at least slows down that process and gives owners and cities a chance to look at the buildings and determine whether or not they are salvageable. I realize many of them won't be salvageable and will be taken down, but at least the 106 process gives it that time to review it and to make sure that every effort is taken to save it.

I had one property owner on the gulf coast who was afraid—it was going to cost him \$45,000 to tear down his house. He wanted to save his house, but he didn't want to pass up the time limit for the demolition removal by FEMA, which now has been extended to the end of November. But he was scared if he tried to find somebody to look at his house and investigate whether or not it could be saved, that he would pass that period, and he would have to spend the \$45,000 to demolish his house. So I think by having the 106 process, at least it slows it down a little and gives people a little bit more time to investigate, and I think that's the biggest benefit of having it in place.

Mr. TURNER. In looking at the testimony and focusing on the issue of gap needs, where we're already having significant discussion and where we are not, one of the things that I think was very helpful was the discussion of the need for dollars with respect to stabilization of structures in an attempt to save them for the future, and/or, as you were saying, Mr. Preziosi, to do additional evaluation prior to demolition.

I appreciate in all of your recommendations there are some great information here on what we need to do with the existing Historic Preservation Tax Credits as we look to rehabilitation and the economic development for the area, historic home ownership assistance tax credits and others grants. If you would take a moment to speak of the need for stabilization moneys as we look to try to both evaluate and preserve these for the future.

Lieutenant Governor.

Mr. LANDRIEU. It's critical. It goes back to Mr. Dent's question about whether grants or tax credits. The truth is you need both.

The same thing is true with the gap as well. You have a problem, and it's called cash-flow, and some people have it, and most people don't. And so you have to find a way to make that happen in order to stabilize these structures.

A lot of this is a timing issue as well. If you can envision, for example, the whole neighborhoods in the New Orleans area, also some in Cameron Parish, that are just gone.

So it's not an issue whether you maintain historic properties or not. Some neighbors have some historic properties, some don't. As the city tries to figure out what they're going to do with FEMA, folks actually are sitting there waiting. Some people have resources, some people don't. So just the stabilization of these particular structures is of critical importance to us as we look to what's going to happen a year from now, 2, 3 years. It's not as though people are there and somebody is going to flip a switch and start working tomorrow. Just the mundane stuff of getting building permits out of the city of New Orleans that as recently as 2 weeks ago laid off 3,000 people as you can see is not as easy as folks seem to think it is.

So anything that we can do to stabilize what is there now is going to be very helpful. If you don't, you will get to the point, as Mr. Evans said earlier, by attrition destroying things that the storm actually did not destroy.

Mr. HOLMES. Over the last three decades we have responded to various hurricanes on the coast. Katrina has rewritten so many rules because this hurricane was so different from anything that we've ever had, and one of the big differences was in its widespread catastrophic devastation. In previous hurricanes the damage was fairly localized so that the support services along the coast were still there. Very quickly people could come in and help owners of private homes to do stabilization. The devastation was so widespread here. No support services existed for several, several days; that if we in Jackson had some grant funds to work with immediately to be able to provide minimal stabilization of some of these structures, it's quite possible that they could have been saved, again with a minimum of taxpayer money spent, but it just takes a little sometimes to be able to help.

These folks were trying to get their lives back together in ways that they never had to try before, and we were there to provide assistance, but also step back to be there for the future as people began to rebuild and provide resources for the long term.

This occurs with all sorts of historic resources there, but as I said earlier, it was probably the biggest need early on was to have little funds to be able to provide immediate assistance to these owners.

Mr. EVANS. Well, Turkey Creek is in a unique and ironic position right now. The fact is that for years before Katrina, we had been the squeakiest wheel, not necessarily the most historic black community on the gulf coast. But in the aftermath of Katrina, as Mr. Holmes and I were talking before this hearing, he indicated that the storm made it crucially, patently clear to his department how special and worth the extra effort a place like Turkey Creek actually was because of how much was lost.

I think, however, that the flow of information to other neighborhoods and communities, not just African American communities, communities where this potential for not losing potentially habitable heritage structures that can provide home ownership opportunities for people, they're not as ramped up as well as the Turkey



Creek community is about the resources that are available as far as immediate assessments from structural engineers and so forth.

I mean, I have watched these structural engineers and the architectural historians walk through several times in the city of Gulfport, and they're very responsive to calls from people that are curious to know, but I just think that they're overstaffed—they're understaffed, I assume underfunded, time is of the essence, and in varying degrees the squeaky wheel gets the grease. And I have thought and talked over dinner with several of the folks on these assessment teams about things like how do you prioritize. Should they go hunting, if you will, for areas where, say, for instance, you might get 10 or 20 of these type of potential heritage new home ownership opportunities compared to something that maybe the mayor of a particular coastal community told them to go spend some time assessing like, you know, a grand antebellum something down on the beach front or a public building that is of more immediate concern to the local leadership because of their understanding of heritage priorities at this point.

I don't think—so I think a lot of people are on a learning curve right now, and some folks are not in the same place. I think we in Turkey Creek know about as much going on because of what we've been involved with these departments for quite a while, and I think it's one of the unwritten tragedies of Katrina that may very well spell a tremendous amount of more loss of things that the storm didn't take out, and that has to do with the understanding and the flow of information and the dialog and process. These folks are doing their job.

Ms. GAY. I'd like to say I'm sure we all want to leverage any dollars public or private, but we're talking about public here, as much as possible. There's one thing that we need to think a little differently about, and that is the energy and the heart and soul, the dedication of the individual homeowner. There are thousands of New Orleanians who haven't come back. They haven't come back to Gentilly Terrace, Broadmoor, to South Lakeview, to Mid-City and Parkview. Some of them are just waiting, they're just waiting. Some brave souls are coming and said, I'm going to do my house no matter what. This is energy, when one person comes back, then another one comes back, then another one comes back.

We have to think of how can we make this happen in a bigger way, not just the National Register districts, but in other districts; how can we leverage this incredible strength and energy of the individual homeowner. I was reading in the Washington Post this morning about a homeowner who'd gotten evacuated and is in Washington and finally gotten a job, but sounds like he's crying every day that he's not back home in New Orleans. It didn't say where his house was. There is that.

So what can we do, how can you help us? I think the symbolism of the grants and tax incentives is as important as the actual dollars, because it shows we want you to come back. I have seen that in preservation grants time and time again. The main street grants, they're small. They really in the end don't make the difference financially in a project sometimes, but it is the symbolism of it, the commitment to the whole main street, the fact that they're not going to be the only one doing it. It's a government pro-

gram, and it's a good government program. Let's not overlook that. Thank you.

Mr. PREZIOSI. I think stabilization is crucial at this point. I think with a little effort with stabilization at the beginning, we can save a lot more buildings. For instance, there's a house in Pass Christian that the storm surge washed out the first floor, and the second floor was being held up by its interior wall studs and chimney, and I was there on September 16th and photographed that house, and almost 2 weeks later, on September 28th, the house had completely fallen. So if there was some way to stabilize that at that point, we could have saved that house.

At the Mississippi Heritage Trust we're doing a stabilization pilot program with some money that we received from the National Trust and from Johnson & Johnson to actually go out in the community and do stabilization of about 10 to 20 homes. We're working on selecting those homes right now to prove that with a little bit of money, we can stop these houses from deteriorating any further. Give the owners some time to help to figure out, work with insurance, work with other agencies to get the money to eventually restore the house and save the house.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Dent.

Mr. DENT. I just wanted to clarify, in my district we've had some great success with historic preservation using various incentives, I don't recall if we used tax credit or not, and I know that under normal circumstances restoring historic properties is very difficult, and it's a lot of hard work, and, as Ms. Gay has suggested, the people who do this see things that a lot of the rest of us just don't. We can drive by an old property, and it's a cruddy old property, and somebody else sees a beautiful historic property in a vision.

I guess my question is you're not operating under normal circumstances by any means down there, and so the question is you have to restore basic service and rebuild infrastructure and stabilize all these damaged properties and buildings and other facilities. And we all believe in historic preservation. Where does that fit into the grand scheme of things? Maybe the question should be addressed to the Lieutenant Governor. As you're trying to do all these things simultaneously, how do you set priorities? Where does historic preservation fit into that grand scheme?

Mr. LANDRIEU. Well, I think it's a very high priority for a number of different reasons. Obviously, the first priority is to protect yourself from the next storm. That's levees, and that's wetlands. Those are both really big ticket items for the American people, but they're necessary. You can't afford not to do them unless you're willing to write off the gulf coast of the country, and I don't think anybody in this country is proposing that seriously. I know some people are proposing it, but I don't think they're serious about it.

But again, the next question then gets to be what do you do next; police, fire, all of those essential services. The point that is you really have to do them all, and there are many of us working on many different fronts that have responsibilities for particular areas, and our responsibility at this table is historic preservation, but, again, not just for the point of preserving it. It gets you payback that I think many people have underestimated.

In Louisiana we're really trying to get people to understand what the words "cultural economy" mean so that when you are renovating a historic property, not only are you putting that property back in commerce, not only are you maybe creating a homeowner, but also putting an artisan back to work, bricklayer or brick mason. You have an architect that's working in a way they don't really get to work when they're working on modern buildings. You have a whole scale of employment that responds to that, that in Louisiana provides 144,000 jobs. That's a big deal. And so if people are going back to work and making money, they can then afford to do what they're going to do in their own homes and neighborhoods. So it's a critical piece of it.

I guess maybe another way to answer is if we didn't pay attention to it and didn't care and wasn't a priority, then what would happen? What would happen is the consequence would be that you would have an area that doesn't look anything like it looks now, and you would lose a very important piece of American history and American culture.

So I think it's a dangerous trap to get into, and I got into this trap, when you're running for office, somebody says, what do you like better, police and fire, or the arts, as though that's a good choice. Well, if you ask them, well, let's talk about funding the arts, and let's talk about what it means.

Mr. DENT. I understand we have to find ways to preserve this history, these properties; the question is when. You have so many things on your plate, the question is, I understand it's a priority, but I guess timing.

Mr. LANDRIEU. You have to do it all simultaneously, and you have to find a way to make that right. The people that are working on levees are not talking about historic preservation, but the people talking about the housing strategy as opposed to building a level at Cat 5 or building a wetlands in a particular way, there's a whole other group of individuals that have focus on housing and what housing means. When you start talking about that, I would argue strenuously you can't speak about housing without talking about historic preservation and architecture and having the kinds of folks we talked about embedded in that process so that when it's designed from the beginning, you have a pretty good idea of what the consequences are that you want to yield. So, unfortunately, we're compelled to do a lot of things at once, and we better get it right, because we're not going to have the chance to do it again.

Mr. DENT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TURNER. I want to thank everyone on this panel for participating, both your preparation for coming here, the time that you have spent here, but also the things that you're doing in your community to make certain recovery continues and that historic preservation is an issue that is addressed in the process. So on behalf of all the members of the committee, we want to thank you, and I certainly encourage you to look to ways we might be able to assist your successful efforts. Thank you.

At this time then we'll turn to panel two, which includes John Nau, chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation; Dr. Janet Matthews, Associate Director for Cultural Resources, National Park Service; Richard Moe, president of the National Trust

for Historic Preservation; Norman Koonce, executive vice president and CEO of American Institute of Architects.

We'll take a 3-minute break while the next panel joins us.

We begin now with our second panel, and as you may recall from the instruction that we gave to the first panel, there is a timing light on the table in front of you. We have the written testimony that you provided to us, and we appreciate the work that has gone into the preparation of that testimony. We would ask that you provide us a 5-minute oral summary of your testimony. The lights on the table will give you a yellow cautionary and then a 5-minute red light.

It is the policy of this committee that all of our witnesses are sworn in, so if you would please rise to receive the oath.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. TURNER. Please let the record show that the witnesses have responded in the affirmative.

We'll begin this panel with Mr. John Nau, chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

**STATEMENTS OF JOHN L. NAU III, CHAIRMAN, ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION; JANET MATTHEWS, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE; RICHARD MOE, PRESIDENT, THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION; AND NORMAN L. KOONCE, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND CEO, THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS**

**STATEMENT OF JOHN L. NAU III**

Mr. NAU. Chairman Turner and members of the committee, thank you for providing this important forum to consider how best to treat historic properties in the devastating wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and, as importantly, plan for future catastrophic events.

Now, since submitting my written testimony, I was able to visit New Orleans last Friday and tour many of the areas of destruction within the city; meet with FEMA, State and city officials. I left New Orleans with a sense of profound sadness, seeing firsthand the massive extent of destruction and the immense emotional and physical trauma suffered by the city, its historic neighborhoods and, of course, its residents. But I also left with a sense of confidence that New Orleans will heal, and it will recover. And that the city's rich heritage will play a key role in this recovery.

The gulf coast region's heritage assets are extremely important not only as significant components of the Nation's diverse architectural, cultural and historic record, but also as an economic asset making essential contributions to these communities and to our Nation. In New Orleans alone there are 18 historic districts included in the National Register of Historic Places. Heritage tourism is a key industry that significantly impacts the economic well-being of many of the communities affected by these storms.

As the Federal Government moves to support the recovery of the region, Federal decisions will significantly affect the future of these heritage assets. The National Historic Preservation Act and its section 106 process, which the ACHP oversees, assures that historic

preservation values are considered by Federal agencies in carrying out their activities. Thus, I fully expect that the ACHP and section 106 will have a critical role to play as the Federal agencies decide how best to reflect historic preservation values as they carry out their duties.

It is essential that the Federal Government promote the preservation and rehabilitation of important historic assets in this region. Through our work with FEMA during the past 16 years on a variety of disasters, the ACHP has come to appreciate FEMA's grasp of historic preservation issues and its growing sophistication in meeting its section 106 responsibility. FEMA has a record of which it can be proud in responding to historic preservation issues in the wake of previous natural disasters, but FEMA now recognizes that the immense scope of Katrina and Rita's impacts to heritage assets pose unimagined challenges. The ACHP will be detailing staff members to the region to work with FEMA and other Federal agencies involved in the recovery effort. Our goal is to make section 106 reviews a valuable tool to foster informed and efficient decision-making by Federal agencies.

Mr. Chairman, I point out that there are 12, at least 12, Federal agencies plus FEMA in 4 States, with many local stakeholders. It's a scale that the National Historic Preservation Act has never previously faced. From my visit it is clear to me that we will confront some very difficult decisions with many historic structures damaged beyond repair.

The scope of the disaster threatens to overwhelm the capability of the State's historic preservation officers and the ACHP staff to meet their responsibilities under the NHPA. To meet these challenges for both the immediate crisis and future disasters, I think we must learn from Katrina and Rita. I offer the following recommendations for a national disaster program for historic properties.

First, the Federal Government should provide adequate direct assistance to State Historic Preservation Offices for human resources, housing, transportation and other response needs to facilitate recovery efforts and the delivery of Federal assistance. The experience and the knowledge of the SHPO is vital to any recovery effort.

Second, the Federal Government, through section 106 reviews, should ensure historic properties and their values are adequately considered both as irreplaceable links to the past and a valuable economic asset for the future in any disaster recovery decisions.

Third, Congress should provide direct funding through the Historic Preservation Fund for repair and rehabilitation of damaged historic properties. Congress should also expand the current Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits to include owner-occupied residential buildings as well as commercial historic properties.

Fourth, Congress should provide adequate funding to support the programs and staffs of the SHPO offices through the Historic Preservation Fund. I can't overemphasize how important this is. Such funding should support the digitization of historic building inventory records for use by FEMA and its other Federal partners. In the wake of a disaster, an effective GIS data base would provide critical information about the location and significance of historic properties.

Historic properties are a valuable asset to our national identity, and they are a means for a community to recover from the devastation brought by a major disaster. By ensuring that these properties have a future, citizens will be able to maintain an essential connection with their community's heritage. Again, we appreciate the subcommittee's interest in these issues. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Nau follows:]

**TESTIMONY FOR THE RECORD**

**SUBMITTED BY JOHN L. NAU, III  
CHAIRMAN, ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

**TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERALISM AND THE CENSUS,  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM,  
THE HONORABLE MICHAEL R. TURNER, CHAIRMAN**

**OVERSIGHT HEARING ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND HURRICANE  
KATRINA**

**NOVEMBER 1, 2005**

**SUMMARY STATEMENT**

The Gulf Coast region's historic properties are extremely important, not only as a significant representation of the Nation's architectural and historical heritage, but also as key economic assets that make substantial contributions to the quality of life in these communities as well as to the local, state, and national economy as major attractions for visitors through heritage tourism.

While Federal agencies and offices are the ultimate decision-makers in regard to their undertakings, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) is responsible for ensuring that Federal or federally-assisted actions taken in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita adequately consider the effect of those actions on properties that represent our nation's history and are listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Congress should routinely and as a national priority ensure adequate funding and support for both immediate and long-term efforts in disaster recovery as well as disaster preparedness by adequately supporting the programs and staff of the State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs), as provided in the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), through the Historic Preservation Fund. Better preparation for exigencies like these hurricanes will result, and damage assessment and recovery efforts in future disasters will benefit historic resources and the public far more effectively than having to respond in a crisis situation. Better pre-disaster support will vastly improve governmental response when these unpredictable but unavoidable situations occur. Sufficient capacity for SHPOs and local preservation agencies is essential for efficient recovery and reconstruction.

## BACKGROUND

Title II of the NHPA established the ACHP, which is an independent Federal agency. NHPA charges the ACHP with advising the President and the Congress on historic preservation matters and entrusts the ACHP with the unique mission of advancing historic preservation within the Federal Government and the national historic preservation program. The ACHP's authority and responsibilities are principally derived from NHPA. General duties of the ACHP are detailed in Section 202 (*16 U.S.C. 470j*) and include:

- Advising the President and Congress on matters relating to historic preservation;
- Encouraging public interest and participation in historic preservation;
- Recommending policy and tax studies as they affect historic preservation;
- Advising State and local governments on historic preservation legislation;
- Encouraging training and education in historic preservation;
- Reviewing Federal policies and programs and recommending improvements; and
- Informing and educating others about the ACHP's activities.

Under Section 106 of NHPA (*16 U.S.C. 470f*), the ACHP reviews Federal actions affecting historic properties to ensure that historic preservation needs are considered and balanced with Federal project requirements. It achieves this balance through the "Section 106 review process," which applies whenever a Federal action has the potential to impact historic properties. As administered by the ACHP, the process guarantees that State and local governments, Indian tribes, businesses and organizations, and private citizens will have an effective opportunity to participate in Federal project planning affecting important historic properties. Through its administration of Section 106, the ACHP works with Federal agencies, States, tribes, local governments, applicants for Federal assistance, and other affected parties to ensure that their interests are considered in the process. It helps parties reach agreement on measures to avoid or resolve conflicts that may arise between development needs and preservation objectives, including mitigation of harmful impacts. Section 106 is also a primary means for individuals, local organizations, the private sector, and local, community, Tribal, State, and regional entities to ensure that their historic preservation concerns regarding Federal undertakings are given proper consideration.

Under Section 211 of NHPA (*16 U.S.C. 470s*) the ACHP is granted rulemaking authority for Section 106. The ACHP also has consultative and other responsibilities under Sections 101, 110, 111, 203, and 214 of NHPA, and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (*42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.*) is considered an agency with "special expertise" to comment on environmental impacts involving historic properties and other cultural resources.

The ACHP also plays a key role in shaping historic preservation policy and programs at the highest levels of the Administration. It promotes consistency in Federal preservation efforts and assists Federal agencies in meeting their preservation responsibilities. The ACHP plays a pivotal role in the national historic preservation program. Founded as a unique partnership among Federal, State, and local governments, Indian tribes, and the public to advance the preservation of America's heritage while recognizing contemporary needs, the partnership has matured and expanded over time.



A staff of 35 carries out the day-to-day work of the ACHP and provides all support services for Council member programs.

### **NATIONAL GOALS AND LOCAL PUBLIC INTEREST IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN THE WAKE OF HURRICANES KATRINA AND RITA**

**National interest.** It is in the interest of the citizens in the Gulf Coast, and indeed the Nation's collective interest, to ensure that the national patrimony reflected in the extensive historic districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita throughout the region be carefully considered and incorporated into recovery planning and rebuilding efforts.

While much national attention has been focused on New Orleans and its historic character, there has been widespread destruction and extensive damage to historic properties in surrounding parishes in Louisiana as well as in the states of Mississippi, Alabama, and Texas. Portions of coastal Mississippi, Louisiana, and southeast Texas have sustained major losses, and a number of smaller historic communities have had many of their historic resources significantly damaged or destroyed. State historic preservation offices, and national, statewide and local preservation organizations are just now beginning to comprehend the breadth and scope of destruction from the storms and the further destruction that may result from recovery operations. The need to treat the thousands of flood-damaged structures in New Orleans, as well as wind and water-damaged properties elsewhere, remains acute, and poses one of the most critical historic preservation challenge ever faced. For example, it is estimated that over 200,000 structures in the city of New Orleans were damaged. The city of New Orleans has underway initial condition assessments of these structures and has already "red-tagged" hundreds for potential removal. Many of this growing list of "red-tagged" structures will include contributing structures within established historic districts or structures that will meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places either individually or as part of eligible historic districts.

**Past involvement with FEMA.** Through the consultation that it has had with FEMA during the past 16 years on a variety of declared natural and man-made disasters, the ACHP has come to appreciate FEMA's increasing understanding of historic preservation issues and developing sophistication in meeting its Section 106 responsibilities. The ACHP has worked closely with FEMA since the fall of 1989 when *Hurricane Hugo* and the *Loma Prieta* earthquake focused national attention on the damage these natural events caused to hundreds of historic properties. Although FEMA had from time to time conducted Section 106 reviews prior to these disasters, the magnitude of the damage and its effects on historic properties raised unexpected challenges for FEMA, which at that time had no staff with historic preservation expertise. In the years that followed, ACHP worked with FEMA and local stakeholders on an array of natural disasters. Although the nature of FEMA's mission did not always allow adequate time for normal Section 106 review, and operated under special emergency provisions of the ACHP's implementing regulations, the SHPOs and the ACHP worked with FEMA to develop tailored approaches to these situations. These strategies provide for the identification of historic properties, public outreach efforts, and the consideration of the potential effects of FEMA's undertakings during disaster recovery.

By the time *Hurricane Iniki* (1993) caused extensive damage on the island of Kauai, FEMA had a historic preservation program in place that was able to respond to the devastating *Midwest Floods* (1993), which affected historic neighborhoods and districts along the Missouri and Mississippi

Rivers. FEMA, working with the ACHP and the SHPOs in affected states, developed a comprehensive programmatic agreement for how these resources would be considered during recovery. A similar programmatic approach was used by FEMA for the *Northridge Earthquake* (1994) and even more streamlined agreements were put in place for the *Nisqually Earthquake* and *World Trade Center* site in 2001. In each of these events, FEMA and its historic preservation partners capably dealt with how best to balance the needs of recovery with the goals of historic preservation.

Building on these efforts, and based on the growing capability of FEMA's historic preservation program, the ACHP worked with FEMA to develop a state-based programmatic agreement designed to minimize the time it takes to review routine projects; encourage earlier and closer coordination among FEMA, SHPO, and State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) staff; and provide FEMA with the opportunity to educate sub-grantees about FEMA preservation responsibilities. Thirty-five such state agreements are now in effect, with the Louisiana agreement completed one year ago. While the statewide agreement provides a good roadmap, the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita represents a challenge to FEMA and its historic preservation partners that is unprecedented. The scope of the disaster will overwhelm the terms of the statewide agreement and the capability of SHPO and ACHP staff to meet their responsibilities under the agreement. FEMA and the ACHP anticipate that a more tailored and systematic approach will be needed. This is particularly true for New Orleans where massive demolition of properties is being contemplated to address widespread flooding damage.

**Federal role.** Humanitarian relief and basic necessities for the citizens of the region have obviously taken precedence in the recovery effort. However, to date staff from the ACHP have met with officials from the FEMA and the affected SHPOs regarding Gulf Coast recovery efforts. We discussed recovery plans and how best to structure Section 106 review and consultation, given the scale of destruction and damage to historic properties and the trauma experienced by the region.

ACHP staff has also been participating in national coordination of assistance efforts through membership and participation in the Heritage Emergency National Task Force. Sponsored by the nonprofit Heritage Preservation and (FEMA, the Task Force is a partnership of 39 Federal agencies and national service organizations. Together its members constitute a nationwide resource of information, expertise, and assistance. The Task Force was formed in 1995 to help libraries and archives, museums, historical societies, and historic sites better protect their collections and buildings from natural disasters and other emergencies. The Task Force promotes preparedness and mitigation and provides expert information on response and salvage to institutions and the public, and is serving as a clearinghouse of technical assistance and information on funding support for preservation activities.

In all of these discussions to date the following points were noted:

1. The region's historic properties are extremely important, not only as a significant representation of the Nation's architectural and historical heritage, but also as key economic assets that make substantial contributions to the quality of life in these communities as well as to the local, state, and national economy as major attractions for visitors through heritage tourism.
2. It is very important that Section 106 be a part of the solution since so much of the recovery work will be carried out or funded by the Federal Government and thus subject to review under section 106. Section 106, and its reliance on stakeholder participation

and negotiated solutions, can provide a critically needed community forum for resolving competing plans for treatment to historic properties.

3. In addition to general support to address structural damage, targeted funding is needed for repair and restoration work on some of the most significant historic properties that have been seriously damaged.
4. The scope of damage to historic properties is likely to overwhelm the ability of the affected SHPOs to respond and carry out their essential role under Section 106. Critically under-funded, at least some of these state offices now confront the likelihood of serious budget cuts due to storm-related state revenue losses. These cuts are likely to directly affect the SHPO's ability to adequately respond to the overwhelming needs, including having sufficient staff for Section 106 considerations.
5. Section 106 and leadership from the ACHP are needed to help reconcile differences about recovery strategies and priorities that may arise among historic preservation interests and with the affected local government entities and residents.

**Recommendations.** The role and ability of local historic preservation and landmarks organizations to actively participate in assessments, decisions, and future planning needs to be clarified. Many of these organizations have the local knowledge and expertise, but are lacking funding and other resources, and currently have insufficient personnel. These organizations need to be supported so they can play a significant role in working with Federal and State officials for historic preservation review and consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. FEMA needs to provide assistance to help underwrite this essential work. Likewise, funding is needed for the ACHP and affected SHPOs so that Section 106 can help ensure that historic preservation values are fully considered as recovery efforts move forward. In summary:

- The Federal government should take an active role in supporting and assisting local damage assessment efforts for affected historic properties; ensuring that affected historic properties are adequately considered in local, state, and Federal planning and decision-making; and facilitating technical assistance and resources for supporting these efforts at the state and local levels. Effective identification of historic property impacts and issues will facilitate recovery efforts.
- The Federal government should provide direct assistance to ensure that State Historic Preservation Offices and local landmarks organizations have sufficient human resources, housing, transportation, and other support to address their respective responsibilities. This includes facilitating community and neighborhood consultation, and ensuring that the interests of underprivileged citizens in historic preservation-related decisions are fully and effectively represented. Sufficient capacity for SHPOs and local preservation agencies is essential for efficient recovery and reconstruction.
- Congress should provide targeted funding through the Historic Preservation Fund program for repair and restoration work on key nationally significant historic properties.
- Congress should routinely and as a national priority ensure adequate funding and support for both immediate and long-term efforts in disaster recovery as well as disaster preparedness by adequately supporting the programs and staff of the State Historic Preservation Officers, as provided in NHPA, through the Historic Preservation Fund. Better preparation for exigencies like these hurricanes will result, and damage

assessment and recovery efforts in future disasters will benefit historic resources and the public far more effectively than having to respond in a crisis situation. Better pre-disaster support will vastly improve governmental response when these unpredictable but unavoidable situations occur.

- The Federal government should offer technical and other assistance to facilitate ongoing communication, coordination, and public information in support of these efforts.

We appreciate the Subcommittee's interest in these issues, and thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to present our views.

Mr. TURNER. Dr. Matthews.

**STATEMENT OF JANET MATTHEWS**

Dr. MATTHEWS. Mr. Chairman and members of your subcommittee, thank you for your thoughtful, detailed consideration and for the opportunity to present information on the role of the National Park Service in working with Federal, State and local governments.

As you indicated in your remarks, Mr. Chairman, the gulf coast has long been recognized for its centuries-old nationally significant Native American, French Creole, Anglo American, and African American cultures. These influences created some of the most diversely, intensely concentrated architecture in North America. It will be months before the full extent of the damage is fully known. Already it's abundantly clear the storm took a heavy toll on that heritage and the historic fabric.

Our National Center for Preservation Technology and Training worked with FEMA, the affected States and other preservation partners to design rapid and detailed building and site condition and assessment forms, related tools and guidance. National Park Service provided maps of impacted historic districts to the States.

As you mentioned earlier, the center in the ongoing work we do through the Federal operations results in such things as the center meeting once a week and now every other week with all parties who were interested and able to attend to help make informed decisions about preservation and performed selective demolition only where necessary.

The National Park Service posted technical information on the recovery of wet objects to assist museums and private citizens in preserving damaged objects, documents and photographs. We provided cooperative workshops regarding water-damaged collections to over 110 museum and library professionals throughout Mississippi alone. The National Park Service Incident Management Team fielded questions to provide technical assistance to sites and private citizens, and the National Park Service is the lead Federal agency in historic preservation coordinating programs, such as the National Register of Historic Places, as you have heard repeatedly from your testifiers.

States, Federal, and including the State Historic Preservation Offices, provided documentation and technical information and assistance services as defined, as you mentioned, by the Conventional Wisdom, Inc., in the establishment of the State Historic Preservation Offices and the National Register of Historic Places in 1966, 40 years ago. In Louisiana alone we know that we have identified 1,286 NR listings. Those include 84 NHLs, some 52,000 significant historical properties; in New Orleans alone, 138 listings, including 26 National Historic Landmarks, 40,800 significant historic properties. In all of Mississippi there are 1,290 listings, including 38 National Historic Landmarks, 15,000 significant historic properties. In the 22 affected counties in Alabama, 15,892 significant historical properties within 619 listings include 17 National Historic Landmarks.

As you have heard today repeatedly, these lie within public and private ownership, proud and humble places, rural and urban set-

tings. The context of all the environment, significant or not, extends and emanates from the Native American to the recent past periods.

Throughout the disaster areas, National Park Service teams assisted parks. Over 78 National Park Service units, employees, have volunteered their services and stand ready to respond to FEMA requests for assistance.

Under the National Response Plan, the Department of the Interior is the lead agency for the national cultural/ resource historic properties protection part of emergency support function No. 11. The National Park Service coordinates the cultural resources components within this hurricane season. As cooperatively agreed, the Departments of Interior and Agriculture supply cultural resource volunteers in response to FEMA's requests. NPS employees have been assigned to FEMA headquarters, the National Response Coordination Center, the Louisiana Mississippi joint field offices.

To date, the Park Service has fulfilled FEMA requests for professionals in various fields required. The National Park Service prepositioned incident management teams for rapid response. Once the areas were secure, the Park Service deployed historic preservation specialists and museum specialists to the affected sites. Teams assessed damage in historic structures, evacuated threatened and flooded museum collections, stabilized historic structures, provided archaeological assessment and salvage. These teams have completed their work, and park unit staffs are managing the long-term recovery.

The Park Service is proud of the rapid response of employees to this emergency in all areas of need, including historic preservation. We stand ready to provide further response as called upon by FEMA under the National Response Plan.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. Thank you again.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Dr. Matthews. The slide show that you brought with us certainly provided some dramatic examples of issues that you were raising.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Matthews follows:]

**STATEMENT OF JANET SNYDER MATTHEWS, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERALISM AND THE CENSUS, HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM ON "HISTORIC PRESERVATION VS. KATRINA: WHAT ROLE SHOULD FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS PLAY IN PRESERVING HISTORIC PROPERTIES AFFECTED BY THIS CATASTROPHIC STORM?"**

November 1, 2005

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Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present information on the role of the National Park Service (NPS) in working with other Federal, State and local governments to preserve historic properties affected by Hurricane Katrina.

The National Park Service is the lead Federal agency in historic preservation for the Federal Government, coordinating several programs documenting and preserving our Nation's cultural heritage. In 1966, the National Register of Historic Places was established to document districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects, with national, state, and local significance.

Approximately 3 percent of the sites on the National Register have been designated National Historic Landmarks.

Since 1933, the Historic American Buildings Survey has documented historic buildings in the United States; since 1969, the Historic American Engineering Record has recorded significant engineering and industrial sites; and since 2000, the Historic American Landscapes Survey has documented landscapes (HABS/HAER/HALS). Since 1992, the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT) in Natchitoches, Louisiana, has been advancing the use of science and technology in historic preservation through training, grants, education,

research, technology transfer, and partnerships. Following Hurricane Katrina, these offices responded by providing documentation and information readily accessible to State governments in the affected areas.

From southeastern Louisiana to Mobile Bay, Hurricane Katrina damaged and destroyed historic buildings and sites associated with over 300 years of American history. The Gulf Coast has long been recognized for its unique blend of French Creole, Anglo-American, and African American cultures. The Creole influences that predominated during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries played a central role in creating some of the most distinctive architecture in North America. It will be months before the full extent of the damage is known, but already it is clear that the storm took a heavy toll on the heritage and historic fabric of the Gulf Coast.

Damage was severe along the coast of Mississippi. The town of Biloxi, which became a popular coastal resort in the mid-nineteenth century and emerged in the early twentieth century as a leading seafood canning center, suffered immeasurable losses. The towns of Ocean Springs and Pass Christian were especially hard hit.

In New Orleans, a remarkable number of the city's landmarks made it through the storm with only minor damage. The famed French Quarter, the original portion of the city that today represents the largest concentration of urban Creole architecture in the United States, escaped largely unscathed as did the Garden District, the residential neighborhood known for its grand mansions and tree-lined boulevards. Katrina wreaked havoc on many other historic properties in



the city, however. The sweeping destruction of vernacular architecture, for which New Orleans is internationally known, represents a loss of incalculable proportions.

In Alabama, the communities of Bayou La Batre and Coden, both of which trace their origins to the French colonial era, suffered extensive losses and damage. In Mobile, flooding damaged several prominent historic buildings and affected two historic vessels permanently moored in Mobile Bay.

Following Hurricane Katrina, the cultural resources programs staff of the NPS has responded with guidance on recovery and stabilization of sites, structures, and objects in the impacted areas. NPS has provided extensive site documentation, technical information, and training; developed new tools specifically to meet the needs of the states; and provided limited on-site assistance. Many NPS cultural resources specialists stand ready to respond and some have been called to assist in the affected areas. NPS has provided these services in collaboration with other Federal and non-Federal partners, such as FEMA and the Heritage Emergency National Task Force. This task force is a coalition of Federal and State agencies and non-governmental organizations that is sponsored by the nonprofit Heritage Preservation and FEMA.

I would like to share with you some examples of the NPS response to Hurricane Katrina.

Under the National Response Plan, the Department of the Interior (DOI) is the initial lead agency for the Natural and Cultural Resources and Historic Properties Protection (NCH) component of Emergency Support Function #11 (ESF #11), Agricultural and Natural Resources. Other

agencies with leading roles under the NCH part of ESF #11 are the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). NPS is serving as the coordinator for the cultural resources component of the NCH response during the current hurricane season. The procedure we have followed is that FEMA requests assistance from the NCH part of ESF #11, and the participating agencies collaborate to respond. Bureaus that have volunteered staff in response to FEMA requests for cultural resources expertise include, at DOI, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service and, at USDA, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Farm Services Administration. The lead agencies for the NCH part of ESF #11 may, as necessary, call upon other Federal agencies to assist in a response. In response to FEMA requests, NPS has provided staff assistance for FEMA headquarters, the National Response Coordination Center, and the Louisiana and Mississippi Joint Field Offices (JFO).

The National Park Service established a list of 120 NPS employees who volunteered with a wide range of natural and cultural resources expertise who are available immediately to serve. The list includes 78 with cultural resources expertise, and 66 experienced with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Section 106. The cultural resources skills identified as needed by FEMA included historical architects, historic preservation specialists, architectural historians, archeologists, historic preservation trainers, collections management specialists, historic building technology experts, and historic preservation generalists. To date, NPS has provided one NHPA specialist, three archeologists, one historic preservation generalist, two historical architects, and two collections management specialists. Additional FEMA requests are expected.

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, the NPS pre-positioned incident management teams for rapid response to NPS sites and to assist communities and other agencies in the impacted area. Once the areas were secured, NPS deployed historic preservation specialists and museum specialists, including the National Capital Region's Museum Emergency Response Team, to the affected sites. These teams assessed damage to historic structures at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, Gulf Islands National Seashore, and Dry Tortugas National Park; evacuated threatened and flooded park museum collections at Jean Lafitte and Gulf Islands; stabilized museum collections damaged by flooding, storm surge, and/or wind at Chalmette Battlefield, Gulf Islands, and Dry Tortugas National Park; and provided archeological salvage for human remains unearthed by fallen trees at Chalmette National Cemetery. These teams have completed their assessment and stabilization actions, and the park staffs are now managing the long-term recovery effort.

The National Park Service is proud of the rapid and overwhelming response of its employees to this emergency in all areas of need, including historic preservation. NPS stands ready to provide further response as called upon by FEMA under the National Response Plan.

Also, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) and other participants on the Heritage Emergency National Task Force, NPS has initiated several actions to provide technical assistance, primarily via the web.

The National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT) added hurricane technical assistance to its home page, [www.ncptt.gov](http://www.ncptt.gov), and provided links to NPS sites and other information. The NCPTT web site is a primary national information resource. NPS provides

direct links to this page at <http://www.nps.gov/katrina/>, where NPS posts all information on hurricane response and recovery. NCPTT worked with FEMA, the affected States, and other preservation partners to design a Rapid Building and Site Condition Assessment form and a Detailed Building and Site Condition Assessment form, an instruction guide, a glossary, and related tools and guidance. NCPTT developed companion databases for related data collection also accessible at [www.ncptt.gov](http://www.ncptt.gov). NCPTT is preparing a guidance document stating the best practices and concerns inherent in the survey of impacted cultural resources.

The NPS Cultural Resources Geographic Information Systems Facility (CRGIS) provided maps of National Register Historic districts in the impacted areas to the Mississippi and Louisiana SHPOs for use by FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers to help protect the districts from demolition. CRGIS is working on similar maps for Alabama. CRGIS arranged to have Geographic Information Systems licenses installed for the Mississippi and Louisiana SHPOs to assist in this work.

The National Register of Historic Places compiled information on National Register listings in the Gulf Coast areas impacted by Katrina and Rita for posting on the NCPTT web site. HABS/HAER/HALS provided data on existing documentation for sites in the impacted areas for posting on the NCPTT web site.

The National Park Service's Harpers Ferry Center (HFC) and the Cultural Resources Program in the Washington Office have compiled technical information on recovery of wet objects. This information is available on the HFC and NCPTT web sites to assist museums and private citizens

in preserving their damaged objects, documents and photographs. In cooperation with the Historic Natchez Foundation and the Southeastern Library Network (SOLINET), the HFC and Natchez National Historical Park provided a workshop in Mississippi on recovering water-damaged collections. Over 60 attended the workshop, which was held on September 15. It was repeated, in cooperation with SOLINET and the University of Southern Mississippi, a week later in Hattiesburg, where an additional 50 attended.

NPS incident management teams with cultural resources components have answered questions and provided technical assistance to non-NPS sites and private citizens in the impacted areas near NPS sites. For example, the NPS interdisciplinary Museum Emergency Response Team helped the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, University of Southern Mississippi, salvage an important herbarium collection. NPS is working with Louisiana Public Broadcasting to develop and broadcast a public service announcement on preservation and recovery tips for cultural resources.

In summary, the National Park Service has worked actively with our Federal, State, local government and private-sector partners to respond to the effects of Hurricane Katrina on our Nation's cultural resources and historic properties. Through our partnerships and collaborative decision-making, we are striving to preserve the rich cultural heritage of the Gulf Coast.

Mr. Chairman, this completes my testimony. I would be glad to respond to any questions you or the committee may have.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Moe.

**STATEMENT OF RICHARD MOE**

Mr. MOE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much, members of the subcommittee, for holding this hearing, and thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the great leadership that you and Congressman Miller are giving to the Historic Preservation Caucus. It's an important vehicle that we all appreciate.

This hearing is important primarily because it gives due recognition, I think, to a very unique threat to historical and cultural resources in this country as we've never experienced before. If we don't get this right in the next few months and years to come, this will not only be remembered as a great human tragedy, but it could very well go down in history as the greatest cultural tragedy to affect this country because of the loss of significant historic resources.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, the National Trust was chartered by this Congress in 1949 to be the Nation's leading private preservation organization. We do a lot of different things, but among them is dealing with disasters, and we've had a lot of disaster experience in the last several decades. I'm very pleased to say we have a working relationship now with the organizations and offices represented by both panels that you have called here today.

I have had a chance to visit both New Orleans and the Mississippi gulf coast in recent weeks, and as has been said, this is unbelievable damage. Both places look like war zones. They're totally devastated in their own ways. I have submitted some photographs for your record, which I'd appreciate being included in the record if it's possible, Mr. Chairman.

Let me just say in New Orleans you have heard some descriptions, there are 20 National Register historic districts in New Orleans. They comprise half of the area of the city, and they contain over 37,000 historic buildings. There is not a concentration of historic structures like that in any city in America. New Orleans, as we all know, is a very special place, but it's been estimated that two-thirds of these structures, the historic structures, have been damaged by wind or water or both, so there's an enormous need. If this city is to retain its character and to come back, there's an enormous need to address that. In Mississippi the need is somewhat different due to the surge and the wind, but we've already lost 300 historic properties; 12,000 remain. Most of those are damaged.

The National Trust has set up the National Hurricane Recovery Fund in order to help send in survey teams to work with local officials. We've opened offices in both communities. We're offering technical assistance on mold and other issues, and we're already giving stabilization grants in Mississippi and will very soon be undertaking demonstration projects with our partners in New Orleans to show how these houses, middle and low-income houses, can be saved and brought back. And, of course, we're partnering with all of these organizations.

The vast majority of the historic properties in both Mississippi and New Orleans are privately owned, and there are not, unfortunately, existing programs to really help these private property own-

ers to bring back their properties. FEMA money, as you know, cannot be used for the restoration of private property. So we have proposed together, and I think it's fair to say this is a consensus program, Mr. Chairman, that we have put together as preservation communities as a whole, to urge the Congress to respond quickly and creatively to give us some tools that we need in a very targeted way to help property owners and community leaders to bring back their communities.

First and by far the most urgent is the need for grants. We've proposed a \$60 million grant program that would be administered through the State Historic Preservation Offices that have real experience. Mississippi and Louisiana have two of the best State Historic Preservation Offices. They would have ideally a lot of discretion in how to give out these grants to fill out the gap in the financing needed for these recovery efforts, but there's a real urgent need for that.

We would hope also that somewhere between \$2 and \$5 million of that money could be earmarked for main street revitalization. The National Trust is very proud to have had a main street program for the last 25 years to help business communities revitalize the downtowns and commercial areas, and there are a number of wonderful main street communities in this area.

We also propose some changes to the historic tax credit that have been discussed: One, to extend it to include the owners of historic homes, and also to provide for some waivers and new provisions, most of which are fairly technical in nature, but which would make it easier to use the tax credit.

I would just say that in answer to Mr. Dent's question earlier, the credits and the grants really are complementary to each other. In a sense they serve different constituencies, but they are really complementary in that the owners of low-income homes who find it very difficult to access the tax credit, but they could use the grants more easily, where as you go up the income scale, it's more useful to use the tax credits. In any case, this is a variety of tools, Mr. Chairman, we propose that we ask your serious consideration for. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Moe follows:]



**The National Trust for Historic Preservation**

**Statement of  
Richard Moe, President**

***“Historic Preservation vs. Katrina: What Role Should Federal, State  
and Local Governments Play in Preservation of Historic Properties  
Affected by these Catastrophic Storms?”***

**United States House of Representatives  
Committee on Government Reform  
Subcommittee on Federalism and the Census**

**November 1, 2005**

**2154 Rayburn House Office Building  
10:00 AM**

**The National Trust for Historic Preservation  
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 588-6000**

**[www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org)**



**Introduction:**

Chairman Turner and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the role the federal government can and should play in saving historic properties affected by catastrophic storms. In addition to your excellent work on behalf of this panel, I am very grateful to you and Congressman Brad Miller for your leadership in the Historic Preservation Caucus. As you know, in addition to fostering the stewardship of our nation's heritage, historic preservation is a powerful economic revitalization tool. No where should we focus its full potential more than in the areas devastated by Katrina on August 29th. As attention shifts from rescue to reconstruction in New Orleans and the Gulf Region, we must answer the question of how, and in what form, the rebuilding will happen. If we get the response wrong, Katrina could turn out to be among the greatest cultural disasters the nation has ever experienced. The role of government at every level is critical to prevent this dreadful superlative from becoming a reality.

For more than 50 years, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has been helping to protect the nation's historic resources. The National Trust is a private, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to protecting the irreplaceable. Recipient of the National Humanities Medal, the Trust provides leadership, education and advocacy to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize communities. Its Washington, DC headquarters staff, six regional offices and 26 historic sites work with the Trust's quarter-million members and thousands of local community groups in all 50 states. As a private nonprofit organization with more than a quarter million members, the National Trust is the leader of a vigorous preservation movement that is saving the best of our past for the future. Its mission has expanded since its founding in 1949 just as the need for historic preservation has grown. When historic buildings and neighborhoods are torn down or allowed to deteriorate, we not only lose a part of our past forever, we also lose a chance to revitalize our communities.

**Saving Our Heritage:**

In dealing with the Mississippi River floods of 1993, the Northridge earthquake of 1994, and numerous other natural disasters, the National Trust has learned that almost always, the first impulse of local officials is to tear down almost every damaged building in the name of public safety. We have also learned that this first impulse is almost always wrong. Obviously, some historic buildings – perhaps many of them – will necessarily be lost, but we should not lose more than we have to. The federal and state government's role is pivotal in alleviating this urge to demolish and time is running out in places ravaged by Katrina. For example, building inspectors in New Orleans are already at work and preliminary estimates place the total number of homes that must be torn down at 50,000. Some unfortunate demolitions have already taken place, including the hasty razing of the Naval Brigade Hall, a significant landmark in the history of New Orleans jazz. This 102-year old Warehouse District building, which the city had declared uninhabitable, was a site on the National Park Service's jazz tour. It was torn down on Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> without permits or permission from the city or owner.

That's why the National Trust along with the American Institute of Architects (AIA) is asking Congress to pass a package of tax incentives and grants to restore and rehabilitate historic

structures affected by Katrina. I will provide you with details on our proposals, but let me describe the magnitude of the situation first.

**Background and Overview:**

I just returned from Mississippi to inspect first-hand the damage Katrina inflicted on that state's historic resources. I also visited New Orleans for the same purpose earlier this month. With your permission, I will provide for the Subcommittee record some photographs that document the conditions affecting historic resources in those states. The damage and loss to buildings is catastrophic, affecting federally, state, and locally designated historic treasures. In New Orleans alone the National Trust estimates that Katrina's devastating winds, rain, and subsequent flooding has in some way affected more than 38,000 designated structures across the city's 29 districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places or locally designated. Along Mississippi's 90-mile coastline, approximately 300 historic properties have been completely lost and another 1,200 remain that are mostly damaged. This includes entire historic districts in places like Bay St. Louis and Pass Christian. It is estimated that 15 National Register historic districts lost at least two-thirds of their buildings. Icons of our country's heritage sustained major damage such as Beauvoir, the 1850s Biloxi retirement home of Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Many historic buildings were also damaged or destroyed as far as 150 miles inland, including the Old Capitol State Historical Museum in Jackson, which lost part of its roof and suffered water damage.

The scope of the crisis is so great because the Gulf Coast Region itself has one of the nation's largest collections of historic buildings. Since the French crown established settlements to make a permanent presence close to the Mississippi starting with Biloxi Bay in 1699, the area has been home to a blend of cultures, traditions, buildings, and landscapes unlike those found anywhere else in the United States. So much of its architectural uniqueness was influenced by the convergence of a rich antebellum planter society and a powerful commercial economy driven by river, port, and Gulf. Nowhere is this more apparent than New Orleans, once the largest city west of the Appalachians and the nation's third largest by 1830. The city contains 20 National Register historic districts encompassing half of its total area, the largest concentration of historic districts in the United States. Recovery efforts must acknowledge the special character of this entire region. Failure to do so would compound the devastation that has already occurred. Unquestionably, the complex network of existing federal, state, and local, laws protecting historic structures cannot be ignored in rebuilding the disaster area, and every level of government has a responsibility to protect these vital elements of our heritage.

What is needed first are conscientious, comprehensive surveys conducted by experts in construction, architecture, engineering and preservation – people who can examine an older building's condition, evaluate its historic and architectural significance, and determine the feasibility or advisability of saving it. With generous funding assistance from the Getty Foundation, American Express Foundation, and other sources, the National Trust has already sent survey teams into Mississippi and New Orleans. The final decision on what buildings can – and should – be saved will be made by property owners, city officials and FEMA, but the work of the survey teams will give them the facts they need to make informed decisions and rational recovery plans.

On my recent visit to New Orleans, for example, I saw first-hand that the French Quarter and the Garden District are largely intact. That's good news, certainly, because these areas, with their imposing white columns and lacy cast-iron galleries, constitute the world-renowned public face of New Orleans. But the down-home heart of the city beats in lesser-known neighborhoods such as Holy Cross, Tremé, Broadmoor, and Mid-City, where officially designated historic districts showcase the modest Creole cottages, corner stores, and shotgun houses (long, narrow houses, usually only one room wide with no hallway) that are essential ingredients in the rich architectural mix that is New Orleans. These are the buildings that we saw in those haunting images of battered rooftops dotting a toxic sea, and they are the buildings most at risk. Saving as many of them as possible is essential. I came away convinced that the vast majority of them can be saved and this conclusion is being confirmed by our survey teams as well.

Many times in recent years, when communities were devastated by earthquakes, floods, tornadoes or hurricanes, we at the National Trust have worked with local officials and our preservation partners to determine the communities' needs and figure out how we could help most effectively – whether by providing funds or technical assistance. But the unprecedented ferocity of this hurricane season has confronted us with a disaster like none we have experienced before, and it calls for solutions like none we have developed before.

**Disaster Assistance Package for Historic Preservation:**

To make saving historic buildings a reality, I urge Congress to provide targeted sources of federal and state funding for the preservation of storm-damaged structures. A coalition of national preservation organizations led by the National Trust and the AIA are supporting a legislative package to direct federal and state resources for preservation efforts in the disaster area. The immediate goal is to stabilize and repair damaged but salvageable buildings before weather and the elements lead to further erosion of the historic fabric. The first and most urgent part of these legislative measures would provide immediate federal preservation grant assistance to historic property owners and supplement any funds from insurance companies, FEMA, and other sources. We have asked Congress for a two-year \$60 million “Historic Preservation Disaster Relief Grants Program” from the federal Historic Preservation Fund to be administered by the states with no federal match. Applicants would agree to rehabilitate their properties in accordance with agreed-upon preservation standards and principles. The National Trust is hoping to use a small portion of these grants – \$2 to \$5 million – to target key designated “Main Street” organizations with funds for preservation planning, technical, and business assistance. So much of this region’s recovery will depend on making local, neighborhood-serving, commercial districts – many of which are already designated “Main Street” communities – viable once again.

Second, the existing tax credit for rehabilitating historic commercial structures should be streamlined and adjusted to work vigorously as a targeted incentive for restoring damaged historic buildings, especially those that house critical neighborhood-serving retail in “main street” business communities. We have developed a list of recommendations that would accomplish this goal. While the existing tax credit program is commendable for its success in fostering the restoration of countless historic buildings across America, there are also a number of structural elements surrounding the program that Congress should address to make it more

effective in the disaster area. National Park Service data show that last year, for example, federal historic tax incentives for commercial properties leveraged over \$3.8 billion in private capital into the national economy. Louisiana ranked sixth in approved “part two” projects and Mississippi ranked 17<sup>th</sup> in this activity along with Alabama.

Lastly, taking its cue from the existing tax credit program for income-producing, commercial properties, Congress should provide a new credit for homeowners of historic owner-occupied residential buildings, which are currently ineligible for any restoration incentives. Our “Disaster Relief Historic Homeowner Assistance Tax Credit” proposal would provide a credit of 30 percent of qualified rehabilitation expenditures made by persons who substantially rehabilitate historic homes located in the Hurricane Disaster Area and used as a principal residence. It would be limited to \$40,000 total per household.

These longer-term tax incentives to rebuild would infuse private sector dollars in a region desperate for reinvestment and encourage property owners to return to these devastated places.

For all these proposed grants and tax incentives, the framework and infrastructure created by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the partnerships it establishes between the federal and state governments, and its reliance on close cooperation with local preservation organizations, can be an excellent mechanism to deliver our historic preservation assistance package that the region needs. What Congress must support, however, are these additional resources, adjustments, and innovations to make it work most effectively in responding to the disaster. The good news is that the NHPA has already created the core of any response to saving historic resources in the Gulf Coast Region. What began back in 1966 in response to a grassroots movement to protect America’s architectural and cultural legacy, has become a strong federal preservation program administered by the Department of the Interior. Its implementation relies on a strong link between the agency and the State Historic Preservation Officers in every state and the territories. Congress should utilize it as a tool.

**Conclusion:**

The economic role of historic preservation and the federal, state, and local resources it bears are tantamount to revitalizing the commercial stability of the region. Rising out of its past, the Gulf Coast remains one of the nation’s most important centers of economic activity and so many historic buildings are where its people actually live and conduct daily business, commerce, and tourism. The goal of recovery efforts should be to allow displaced people to come home to communities that are healthy, vibrant, familiar places to live and work and federal, state, and local governments in the region – provided with adequate resources – should make every effort to save those buildings where possible. From the fishing and shrimping industries, to the Port of South Louisiana, to the heart of the country’s petrochemical industry, restoring historic structures is essential to restoring the well-being of so many communities in the states affected by Katrina. Mr. Chairman, ultimately the question of how the Gulf Coast region should be rebuilt is one that its residents must answer. Let us hope they get the chance to do so before their region’s future is decided for them. Government’s role at every level is critical to influencing that decision.

**STATEMENT OF NORMAN L. KOONCE**

Mr. KOONCE. Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, good morning to you. My name is Norman Koonce. I'm the executive vice president and CEO of the American Institute of Architects. We greatly value the opportunity to appear before you here this morning for this very important subcommittee deliberation on significant historic preservation issues in the wake of these hurricanes.

The American Institute of Architects represents 76,000-plus members, representing a large majority of the Nation's architects, with their collective staff, their firms professionally dedicated to creating and preserving environments that elevate and enrich the human experience, exceed a third of a million people. Their interest as well as that of the public everywhere is focused on what is happening and what will happen in New Orleans and the Mississippi gulf coast and south Louisiana.

Something has come up since we presented our paper to you in writing that I think we should report on, and that is at the request of Lieutenant—excuse me, Louisiana Governor Blanco and with the encouragement by Lieutenant Governor Landrieu as well, the AIA is organizing and managing the Louisiana Recovery and Rebuilding Conference that will be convened November 10th–12th in New Orleans. We'll be joined by a very strong group of sponsors including the American Planning Association, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the American Society of Civil Engineers and others who can address the issues that will be facing those who design the solutions in the near future.

The purpose of the conference is to develop appropriate principles for use by each political jurisdiction to use in designing, planning and implementing redevelopment efforts. One major emphasis will be the appropriate stewardship of our architectural heritage in all of those areas, as it should be, and as that pertains to the discussion here this morning.

I'd like to mention that we would be pleased to respond further to the issue of this conference in a Q-and-A period that follows in the event that you have additional interest in that.

Concerning the why of preserving our historic past, I would say that the largest, most dense concentration of historic structures in America exists in New Orleans, characterized by scholar Pearce Lewis as the inevitable city on an impossible site. What a contradiction, but we all recognize that. It's a city that developed under many flags, ruled at least once by Spain, France, Great Britain and, of course, the United States. It was considered inevitable because of its strategic location that just can't be abandoned, obviously. But there's nothing else like it.

Consider, too, that each of the other areas that have been treated so severely by the hurricanes convey their own cultural identities which are very important to them and to all of us. In fact, anthropologists tell us today that nothing better expresses a culture of a civilization than its architecture. It speaks to how people lived and, even more importantly, what values were important to them. It is those values that we must preserve and we must recognize in the process.

We believe, along with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, that the Federal Government should provide those property

owners who have been so crucially affected with a package of grants and tax incentives to leverage local dollars and attract outside investments that will enable the healthy and respectful building efforts that are required. We believe it is both affordable and greatly needed.

Details are involved or included in the written testimony that we provided earlier. We'd be glad to discuss those more if necessary, but I think that Mr. Moe has done a good job in presenting those details.

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, as a native of Louisiana, and an architect with the Committee for Historic Preservation, and one with the responsibility to represent the interests of all of our architects, we all thank you for focusing on this vital national issue.

I'd like to close with a more personal note, sharing an example of the influence that historic architecture has had on each one of us in this room, whether we know it or not. Dr. Jonas Salk, the developer of the vaccine for polio, became a personal friend. He shared his experience with me that as he was discovering or attempting to discover the vaccine in the mid-1950's, he encountered one big problem after another, so he decided to take a respite from that work and to go to the 13th-century village, the place where the people train to become ministers in the 13th-century village in Assisi. He was distancing himself from the frustration he felt.

He shared this very important finding. He said the spirituality of the architecture in that setting was of such great inspiration to him, he was able to do intuitive thinking far beyond any he had ever done before. Under that influence, he said, I was able to intuitively design the research that resulted in the polio vaccine. He was indeed correct. We owe a debt of gratitude to the architecture in Assisi for that inspiration provided to him.

He also provided a favorite admonition to us often; he said, we must all seek to become good ancestors for future generations. You have and we all have an opportunity to become good ancestors today by properly addressing the problem that relates to our historic past and our future. Thank you.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Koonce follows:]



**THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS**

**STATEMENT OF**  
**NORMAN L. KOONCE, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT**  
**AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

*“Historic Preservation vs. Katrina: What Role Should Federal,  
State and Local Governments Play in Preserving Historic  
Properties Affected by this Catastrophic Storm?”*

**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERALISM AND THE CENSUS**

**NOVEMBER 1, 2005**

**2154 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING**  
**10:00 AM**

**The American Institute of Architects**  
**1735 New York Avenue, NW**  
**Washington, DC 20006**  
**(202) 626-7361**  
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**Introduction**

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee – Good Morning.

I am Norman Koonce, Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer of The American Institute of Architects. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today as the Subcommittee deliberates historic preservation issues in the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The American Institute of Architects represents 76,000 members. Our members employ 281,000 others. The AIA believes the long-term hurricane recovery effort needs to be executed correctly from the start if taxpayer dollars are to be wisely invested. To accomplish this goal, federal rebuilding efforts need to be based on *sound planning and design principles* at every step. These principles demand protection of the historic buildings, structures and landscapes that make the neighborhoods of New Orleans, South Louisiana and the Mississippi Gulf Coast such national treasures.

Our hearts and the hearts of the American people are in this effort. We need your commitment as well. Much too often, in the wake of natural disasters, historic structures are needlessly lost or damaged through hasty procedures. America cannot afford to lose the heritage that New Orleans embodies. Returning citizens need shelter, but ill thought out bulldozing can lead to the devastation of historic communities. Bulldozers must not be allowed to rob America of its history.



A critical legislative priority must be to extend the historic rehabilitation tax program - which has a long and successful record in preserving commercial property - to residential property. Residential housing is vital to community life and health. It's vital to economic development. It's vital to historic preservation. It's vital to hurricane disaster recovery. Preservation of historic residences must be a part of our Nation's planning for the future, for New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region, and ultimately for your states and districts as well.

That's why the AIA, along with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, firmly believes that it is critical that Congress create a package of tax incentives and grants to restore and rehabilitate the historic structures affected by this year's hurricanes. The existence of such incentives will give hard-pressed homeowners an alternative to moving away.

#### **Federal Tax Incentives for Historic Rehabilitation**

Section 47 of the Internal Revenue Code currently contains two types of tax credits for historic rehabilitation. The first, a 20% credit, applies to structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places or sited in a listed National Historic District. The second, a 10% credit, is available for rehabilitation expenses involved in fixing structures built before 1936. Both credits are available only to structures that are used for commercial purposes. These incentives have a successful history of preserving some of the Nation's most important historic structures. It is now time to use the experience we've obtained

with these credits to fashion new, similar tools to save the cultural heritage of the storm ravaged gulf coast.

**Damage to Residential Structures**

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita destroyed or damaged hundreds of thousands of homes. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the value of damage to residential structures – not including relatively minor, easily repairable damage – ranges from \$17 billion to \$33 billion.<sup>1</sup>

The rebuilding of residential and nonresidential buildings in this region is not simply a matter of replacing structures that were lost and renovating those that were damaged. The natural temptation, surveying such damage, is to get a bulldozer, raze neighborhoods to the ground and start fresh. This impulse must be avoided, particularly in the absence of expert assessment by architects and engineers who are experienced with historic resources. New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region cannot afford to lose its historic character – and that applies as much to the small, shotgun residences that often house the poor, the elderly and young families as it does to large, well-known landmarks.

To ignore the need for a direct, immediate federal commitment to win this massive battle between nature and history is to ignore the fabric of America.

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<sup>1</sup> Congressional Budget Office Testimony before the Committee on the Budget, U.S. House of Representatives. October 6, 2005.

**Damage to Historic Structures**

There is no place in the world like New Orleans. And the architecture is part and parcel of its special character. It is not just about the French Quarter or the Garden District that we see on tourist postcards, but the numerous other communities that house irreplaceable historic structures. There are 20 neighborhoods within New Orleans designated on the National Register of Historic Places, containing 37,000 historic structures.<sup>2</sup> Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas are also blessed with many historic communities that have felt the effects of the hurricanes and, sadly, some of them have been washed away forever.

In Mississippi, beautiful antebellum homes, monuments to resiliency and steadfastness, which had not only survived the Civil War, but dozens of storms and hurricanes prior to Katrina, are no longer standing or have been badly damaged. In Alabama and Texas, the damage was not as widespread. In Alabama, most of the damage was centralized in Mobile. While in Texas, Hurricane Rita whipped up dramatic fires in Galveston's historic Strand District and destroyed important buildings.

**Historic Preservation Disaster Assistance Package**

Rebuilding communities is complex, difficult and costly work. In addition, restoring a community's historic structures requires money, time, experienced craftsmen, and better and more durable materials than replacing them with new or temporary structures. To encourage community residents and assist with the rebuilding effort, the AIA believes the federal government should provide those affected with a package of grants and tax

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<sup>2</sup>Callimachi, Rukmini. *Preservationists: Don't tear down New Orleans*. The Associated Press. September 28, 2005.

incentives. The combination of grants and tax incentives that the AIA proposes today is designed to leverage local dollars, attract outside investment, restore buildings, and revitalize communities. To know that we have these tools at our disposal and then not use them to assist these communities to handle this epic problem at this time would be unwise.

First and foremost, the AIA supports a Disaster Relief Historic Homeowner Assistance Tax Credit, which would provide a credit of 30 percent of qualified rehabilitation expenditures made by persons who substantially rehabilitate historic homes located in the Hurricane Disaster Area and used as a principal residence. The credit would be limited to \$40,000 total.

The credit would be refundable for lower income persons (\$30,000 in income for individuals; \$60,000 for married filing joint return), so that those with incomes too low to benefit from the credit may still use the incentive.

It would define "qualified rehabilitation expenditure" in a manner similar to the existing historic rehabilitation tax credit (Section 47 of Internal Revenue Code) except that it would apply to capital improvements to non-depreciable property (certified rehabilitation of a qualified historic home). Not less than 5 percent of expenses would be allocated for improvements to exteriors. The property must be owned by the taxpayer and serve as his or her principal residence. Under the proposal, "substantially rehabilitated" would mean that a minimum of \$5,000 must be spent on qualified rehabilitation expenditures.

This program would benefit owners of "qualified historic homes" that need to be substantially rehabilitated.

Second, the AIA supports the creation a new two-year, \$60 million grant program from the federal Historic Preservation Fund for repairing damaged historic properties. Under the Historic Preservation Disaster Relief Grants Program, funds could be used for preservation projects and planning, including the preservation, stabilization, restoration, and repair of historic structures and sites listed in or eligible for the National Register, and for business and technical assistance for Main Street districts.

Projects that receive insurance payments and other state or federal credits or grants would be eligible for Historic Preservation Disaster Relief Grants, but it must be clearly demonstrated that these funds will be used for projects not fully covered by insurance or other state or federal funding sources.

Grants would be administered by the State Historic Preservation Officer in each state and would be available to non-federal owners of National Register or National Register-eligible properties including individuals, non-profit organizations and developers.

A non-federal match would not be required.

Finally, the AIA believes that the current IRS rules governing the existing historic rehabilitation tax credits must be relaxed for Gulf Coast users of the credits that were unlucky enough to have renovated their historic properties just in time to be damaged by the recent hurricanes. To do otherwise would be to force these taxpayers to suffer the “double whammy” of sustaining substantial damage to their building and then have to repay the federal government for disallowed rehabilitation expenses. As a result, the AIA seeks waivers to the existing Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit for commercial properties, which would:

- Provide a reasonable period of time to place properties back into service to avoid recapture penalties. Recapture of the credit should not apply if a property is repaired and placed back into service within a reasonable period of time, and that for properties damaged by Katrina, that period will be at least three years, or longer as circumstances warrant. Such waiver would permit property owners to use the \$5,000 minimum threshold for hurricane-related repair work.
  
- Waive recapture for properties destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. Katrina caused such widespread devastation that some properties have been completely destroyed. Others have not suffered a total casualty but have irreplaceably lost their historic integrity. In either case, owners of such buildings still in the five-year recapture period are subject to recapture. This rule creates a double loss for these owners and will diminish the resources that they can draw upon to help rebuild the region generally.

- Waive recapture for properties subject to default. A foreclosure, deed in lieu of foreclosure or other transfer in connection with the satisfaction of defaulted obligations to a lender triggers recapture, again creating a double loss to property owners. We request that recapture be temporarily waived with respect to buildings that are disposed of for the benefit of a lender in connection with a borrower default that occurs during the next 12 months.
  
- Permit property owners to treat rehabilitation costs as capital expenditures. Only rehabilitation expenses that are capital costs (meaning those not currently deductible) are eligible for the credit. This will eliminate investor uncertainty and pave the way for syndicated tax credit equity to flow into projects as a source of financing repairs.
  
- Permit property owners additional time to complete rehabilitation projects. In general, qualifying rehabilitation expenditures must be incurred within a 24-month period. Owners should be permitted to use the 60-month rule for rehabilitation projects that were underway prior to the hurricane or that include repair of hurricane damage.

**The Role of the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training**

In response to the clearly stated need for a national preservation initiative, Congress passed the Historic Preservation Act Amendments of 1992, creating National Center for

Preservation Technology and Training in Natchitoches, LA. The mission of the Center is to develop and proliferate skills and technologies that enhance the preservation, conservation, and interpretation of prehistoric and historic resources throughout the United States. It is indeed fortuitous that the Center is located so close to the disaster-affected areas.

The AIA believes that the Center should be involved in the administration of Historic Preservation Assistance Package and could provide valuable assistance to the local state historic preservation officers who will otherwise find themselves overwhelmed with the scope of rehabilitation needs.

**Conclusion**

Mr. Chairman, I commend you for holding this hearing. As a native of Louisiana, and an ardent supporter of the preservation movement, I cannot tell you how much it means to me and the 76,000 architects who are AIA members that you took the time to focus on this vital national issue.

Residents across the affected areas, as well as architects across our nation, look forward to working with you and your colleagues on this very important priority.

Thank you.



Mr. TURNER. I appreciate your time with us here today, and recognizing that all of our panelists began their discussion with their personal tragedies of Katrina, and recognizing that historic preservation is a forward-thinking issue and obligation after we initially turn to the needs of the individuals impacted by the tragedy.

A lot of the discussion in all of the written data that we have deals with issues of administration, deals with issues of existing programs or proposed programs, and some recommendations as to what we need to do. Normally whenever we have a hearing, we structure it first where the national experts or the representatives of the national governments speak first. In this instance, we flipped the normal structure of the hearing process so that we could hear from the people who were local, on the ground, facing these issues, and then we'll hear the national perspective from our national institutions and our national government so that you would have an opportunity to respond then to the information that you heard.

When you prepared your written testimony, you might have been aware of some of the things that they were going to be saying, but having sat through the testimony of the first panel, I'm certain that each of you had some thoughts or ideas that related to what your proposals were, what your recommendations were, but also something you might want to embellish as a result of their comments.

So I want to ask each of you to, if you would, in an open question give us some of your thoughts with respect to what you heard from the first panel, some of the things that you think were of value and of importance that we need to highlight, and how their comments relate to some of the things that you were speaking of before us today.

I'll begin with you, Mr. Nau.

Mr. NAU. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was struck by something the Lieutenant Governor said when he was asked about the 106 process when he said it's probably not a process problem, that it's more a resource problem. And I reflect back to the discussions I had Friday when I was in New Orleans and with the FEMA and State and city people, and if you can picture a funnel, and in that funnel are all these 12 or more Federal agencies, the States involved, and where that funnel comes to a very narrow opening is the State Historic Preservation Office.

All of those 106 reviews have to funnel through that one spot, and I can't imagine any State that has staffed up and planned for this level of disaster. And I would say from the Federal agency standpoint, the efficiency of being able to address all of the 106 reviews, whether it's the Corps of Engineers, FEMA has to do every one, Park Service, everyone is going to have to go through these 106.

I think it should be the focus of the Federal effort right now to try to widen and put resources into the SHPO offices; obviously Louisiana, Mississippi, some to Alabama and some to Texas because of Rita's impact in the Beaumont, Port Arthur and east Texas area.

So my big takeaway from what I saw Friday and what I heard from the Lieutenant Governor, I echo what he said, it's not a process problem. That process has worked very, very well for 40 years.

It's about resources. And if we don't address that, then I would suggest to you that the efficiency of the process is going to bog down, and then there will be cries against the 106 process, when, in fact, it's simply going to be a resource issue. Thank you.

Dr. MATTHEWS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would harken back to three or four things I heard very briefly. First is the value issue. Mr. Koonce, sitting to my left, grew up in Louisiana where the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training occurred. He cited Jonas Salk's influence in a monastery. He and at least one other very distinguished leader in historic preservation architecture grew up in this little town; probably not an accident that they among many others became professionals in this field because they were impacted by the place they came from.

As you carry this forward from knowing on the ground the grass-roots influence, the long, long reaction of the kind of impact of living in a place where you connect and where the environment connects you to something that just happens because you're there, I would suspect you have convened this subcommittee hearing in part because you know this really matters.

New Orleans is unique, is distinct. Forty years ago you all passed, your predecessors did, the National Historic Preservation Act, which established the SHPOs that John talked about, the 106 process, the identification of significant resources. That identification made it possible in this terrible crisis to go straight to those targeted areas. Whether they were significant or not, they defined the character of the places; the humble, the proud, the grand, the small, the neighborhood, the grandmothers' back houses, the houses we saw washed off foundations, which might be put back if they're not demolished first. The National Historic Preservation Act as defined by Congress in 1966 has made it possible 40 years later in a crisis no one anticipated to go in with a target, a target to use as a guide. The 106 process requires that they be taken into consideration.

I heard on the radio this morning that children in New Orleans last night went trick-or-treating; some of them went as mold. Did you hear that? They're so impacted by this mold growing on everything that some of them last night dressed as mold.

Second, following up on John, the economic benefit is that in Florida when I was State Historic Preservation Officer, we solicited proposals for a grant and found that \$4.22 billion a year came directly back to the State of Florida in direct State revenues based on heritage tourism, historic sites, and everything that generates, and that is probably a lot more than you wanted to know about what I was thinking.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that opportunity.

Mr. MOE. Mr. Chairman, what I heard from the earlier panel was what we've been hearing from these organizations and their spokesmen for months now. One of the things we do at the National Trust is to try to convene the State and local partners of the preservation movement in both the public and private sector as well as our national partners, and we came very quickly to a consensus, as I think you heard today, about the need for a Federal response. And it was very easy to start out using the example of

the historic tax credit because, as has been said, that's such a successful vehicle. It's been responsible for the private investment of \$38 billion in different projects in this country the last 20-some years.

Where we had to be more creative was on the grant side. It used to be—when we went through the Mississippi River floods in 1993 and the Northridge earthquake the next year, FEMA had a discretionary fund that we were able to tap into for historic resources very easily and very effectively. Obviously the needs in those two instances and others were more limited, but somewhere along the line that fund disappeared. Therefore, we saw the need, particularly for a disaster of this scale, for a new major congressionally authorized grant program, because there is simply no substitute for getting dollars quickly into the hands of property owners to fill in the gap of financing this recovery.

The other thing that I've learned was from Mitch Landrieu, Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana. I participated in a program with him some weeks ago in New Orleans, and he, I think has very effectively put together a program of using culture as a means of recovery in New Orleans. There is no city in America like New Orleans, not simply because of its architecture, but because of its unique culture. Jazz, gumbo, and architecture, that's what makes New Orleans. And that is the basis for the very effective historic tourism program that they have.

And so it is not only important culturally to bring these properties back, but it is important for the economy of New Orleans to get the tourism economy going again.

Finally, one of the things that I learned from my visits to both areas was that FEMA has been doing—in New Orleans has been doing a very effective job on the historic preservation front. They have very able leadership in the historic preservation front, and we've been working very closely with them on the 106 issues and so forth, which is critical to authorizing demolition by the city because they can't do it without Federal funds.

One of the things I found in Mississippi was a great need for more FEMA engineers to help go out and do the surveys. There is a critical need for engineers to speed up this process so that a lot of these damaged properties don't disappear.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Koonce.

Mr. KOONCE. One of the things that we've heard is that there are so many agencies in this country that can have a very positive effect on the outcome of this recovery effort, and I think we should all be extremely proud of the amount of intense effort and resources that are being put into that effort. They need help, and that was one of the things that I heard during the earlier presentation. We need to find a way to empower them to do what they're designed to do, capable of doing and want to do.

There are more than just agencies who need to be equipped, however; there are the political jurisdictions, there are the individuals. Everybody has been so devastated by the overwhelming losses that took place here. And the thing that I think I also heard in most of the discussions is that leadership is required. All of the business entities and citizens, the political jurisdictions, are not going to magically start working in concert because there is a lot of talk

about it. There are so many diverse solutions in the people's minds that we should go ahead and implement immediately because it is what needs to happen.

But there is not just one solution, there are many solutions that need to be developed. Not all those solutions that are being discussed today I think you could consider to be totally good. So there is an obvious reflex that needs to be addressed. How do you address it? It is, independent of the American Institute of Architects, the worst thing we can do is for everyone to suddenly just rebuild everything that they had before without consideration to whether it was the best solution then. I'm not talking in terms of the historic architecture. That which has endured for many, many years has earned its place in the environment of every city. But everything about our city has not been exactly as they should have been, and we need to give careful attention as to how we go about rebuilding, accommodating the interest of the business community, the citizens, a place for housing, a place to bring together people in the central business districts and to create more sustainable, livable, healthy and safe communities.

I think that what we need to have is some conceptual guidepost, something that says here's the manner in which we go about addressing the problem. Now, that doesn't give you individual answers to every community's needs, every city's needs or every State's needs, obviously, but it does give a guidepost around which decisions can begin to be made that will yield the greatest benefit in the future.

I guess when we start thinking about this rush to do something, we begin to be admonished by the statement, if we don't have time to do it right, when are we going to have time to do it over? And the same thing applies to the money; if we don't have the money to do it right, when are we going to find the money to do it over? So the admonition should be to all of us that we do it right, as right as we possibly can the first go-around, so we don't have these guessing efforts to contend with.

Mr. TURNER. That's an excellent saying. Thank you, Mr. Dent.

Mr. DENT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Now Mr. Koonce, I noticed during your testimony you made reference to Dr. Pierce Lewis. You made a reference to Dr. Pierce Lewis in your remarks, from Penn State, the geographer. I thought you quoted him. He was my professor at Penn State University. I thought that was interesting. He was a great geographer, and I'm sure he had interesting comments on the city of New Orleans and why it exists where it does. Very interested man.

My question to you, though, Mr. Koonce is this: If the legislative package that you propose is successful, it's going to take time for these Federal grants to get on the ground. Will they be likely too late for stabilization efforts?

Mr. KOONCE. I'm having difficulty hearing you. I'm sorry.

Mr. DENT. If the legislative package that you have proposed here today, if it's successful, it is going to take time for those grants to get on the ground. Will they likely be too late for stabilization efforts?

Mr. KOONCE. I'm not sure that it's going to be so quickly solved that it would not be possible for the tax credits and the other

issues that you may be promoting to be used. Maybe there is some effort that could be exerted in the interim that would help people to make decisions, particularly when property ownership is a problem, that they can't meet the demands all at this point in time. I really don't have an answer to that.

I guess it's the prerogative of architects to look at the longer-term solution, and we will look to those who have the knowledge of the disbursement of money from the Federal Government to come up with a manner that can get it into the hands at the earliest possible time.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Moe, a question for you. You mentioned a few moments ago that about \$3.8 billion in private investment has been leveraged by the historic preservation tax credit.

Mr. MOE. It was \$38 billion.

Mr. DENT. \$38 billion; I'm sorry. I thought I heard \$3.8.

OK. Are you aware of any studies indicating how much private investment could be leveraged by extending these tax credits to private homeowners?

Mr. MOE. No. We don't have specific recent information. I think there are some studies that we undertook some years ago, and we would be happy to provide those to you. But there is no question but that if the experience of the existing tax credit is any indication, there is a very high leveraging ratio. I can't give you a specific number.

But what is so attractive about the existing tax credits is that it usually is the last piece that's needed to fill in the financing gap for these redevelopment projects. And it's an indispensable piece, because what they've done is they've basically tapped out the private markets.

I think the same concept would apply with homeowners, where they have some insurance, they have some mortgage ability, some other means, but they don't have the total amount needed to restore their houses. So I think the same principle would apply.

Mr. Dent, if I may respond to a question briefly that you asked Mr. Koonce. If the Congress authorized the grants immediately, there is no question they could be dispensed in very short order because the State Historic Preservation Offices are equipped, ready, and manned to dispense these grants. Our fear is that the Congress may not act until December, and hopefully they will act, but not before then. There is some risk that there will not be enough stabilization money between now and then to save some of these at-risk properties.

The National Trust has set a goal of raising at least \$1 million, hopefully a lot more, most of which we will be giving out in the form of stabilization grants and pilot projects in both Mississippi and New Orleans, but this will not address the full need of stabilization. So there is a real urgency behind the need for these grants.

Mr. DENT. Thank you.

Mr. TURNER. To expand on Mr. Dent's question, one of the important opportunities that rebuilding the gulf area presents to us is to look at some of the economic development tools, the urban redevelopment tools, historic redevelopment tools that we've all talked about but have not yet been able to implement, that we could on

a pilot basis place in the gulf area and determine their effectiveness. The historic homeowner assistance tax credit has been one that many people have discussed. It's in the recommendations from Mr. Koonce in the Historic Trust, and you were speaking about it briefly, Mr. Moe. I wanted to open it broadly to other members of the panel to talk about the opportunity of the historic homeowners assistance tax credits.

And I'm going to begin with you, Mr. Koonce, since you have a specific proposal that's outlined in your recommendations. We are talking about the historic homeowner assistance tax credit recommendation that's in your comments. If you can talk about the specifics as to how your recommendation, you would see this working. And then if the other members could talk about how this could fill a need that currently is not present and might be an economic development tool and, again, something that we could try on a pilot basis that we see as a need throughout many communities in the country.

Mr. Koonce.

Mr. Koonce, I know you are having difficulty hearing us. In your testimony you begin in the section dealing with historic preservation disaster assistance package of outlining several elements, one of which would be the historic homeowners tax credit.

Mr. KOONCE. This package is put together as a partnership between the National Trust Historic Preservation and the American Institute of Architects. I have been involved to a greater extent in looking at the conference that I mentioned to you a moment ago, but I am confident that my good friend, Mr. Moe, is going to be able to address that much better than I. So I think in the interest of expediency I would defer to him.

Mr. MOE. Mr. Chairman, the proposal that we've put before the Congress is for a 30 percent credit against qualified expenditures for the restoration of historic homes. This would provide a very significant gap in the funding that I talked about earlier.

What is unanswered here, and which we must deal with, is the administration of these tax credits. We do have an existing infrastructure in both the National Park Service and in the State Historic Preservation Offices for administering the existing tax credit, and that's assumed by everyone, I think, that same infrastructure would be used for these credits. However, because the amounts are so much lower, we have to take a real look at the transaction costs involved and whether or not they're realistic and reasonable in the context of the work being done. So we don't have all the answers there, but we hope that we can get a focus to answer those questions. But there is no question that it can be uniquely helpful.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Nau, Ms. Matthews, either one of you wish to comment on historic homeowners tax credits?

Dr. MATTHEWS. I can only comment that the administration hasn't taken a position on the tax credit and set of waivers, so I can't comment at this time, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you.

Mr. NAU. The ACHP endorses this concept because we feel that it would be an effective way to stimulate the rehabilitation of these historic owner-occupied properties; trying to predict what the economic impact of that is, I think, is what Dick has said is very dif-

ficult. But based on that, that's been in the available commercial historic properties, it only says that success breeds success. And this kind of a concept I think provides a hand to private property owners that says the government is with you if you're willing to go back and rebuild it and preserve it. So I applaud the National Trust and AIA for taking this lead. Thank you.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Koonce, in your written testimony and in your presentation, you talked of the issue of the conference that's upcoming. It certainly is a wonderful opportunity to garner resources, specifically at the issues of what needs to be done with respect to the gulf area and historic preservation.

What are some of the issues that you expect to be highlighted and to come out of the conference that might be helpful to us in the future?

Mr. KOONCE. Thank you. That is more in my area of knowledge, which I can—

Mr. TURNER. I thought I'd help you out.

Mr. KOONCE. Thank you. Well, you might say that there has been a totally separate effort in the gulf coast of Mississippi that has been produced by the Congress of New Urbanism and some of their people who subscribe to those philosophies of design of communities. They have obviously done a thorough job there, and are to be commended. I'm sure that one solution is not going to fit all of the communities there in Mississippi and our gulf coast.

On the other hand, the conference that is to be conducted in just 10 days I guess, or less, beginning in New Orleans, is the conference for recovery and rebuilding in Louisiana. So the outlook is very diverse there, looking at not only the city of New Orleans, but other smaller communities, and those that are almost isolated that are down on the very gulf coast like Cameron and other cities.

What will happen is that we will convene a group of very qualified people in a number of different areas of expertise. There will be architects, engineers, there will be planners, there will be historians, there will be economists, there will be psychologists. There will be those who can orchestrate discussions of great intensity while recording electronically and enabling opportunities for people to respond electronically to all of the issues that are on their mind.

The audience or the group of participants for that conference will be leaders from every jurisdiction, every community, every city, every parish that's affected in the State; they will come to represent the interests of their own section of Louisiana and to be informed about what there is that they can take home with them.

The process will be on the first day to discuss a number of very important principles and designs considering elements of a design and planning of their communities that must be given strong consideration, and looking at the characteristics of solutions that can be derived in each of those cases. All of the folks will be seated around tables, some 500 to 600 participants, able to respond immediately to their thoughts about the applicability of those principles in their own communities.

So we will be able to help them record what they generally are thinking throughout the entire conference.

In addition, however, to giving the general principles on the first day by qualified experts and having feedback, on the second day we

will be bringing people into their own characteristic groups, having them discuss small-city issues among small-city representatives. Larger-city issues will be, in like manner, separated from the entire discussion.

Toward the end of the conference there will be recaps, of course, every day. But there will be a final one that says here's what we've learned about the redesign of your cities, of your communities, of your parishes. There will be some folks then that can give the picture about how they will be able to work with those who are commissioned to actually lead the planning and redesign of their communities, letting them be good clients because they will know what is important to them based on the 3 days of discussion that they've had in a very intense sharing of the best principles for creating communities that are sustainable, that are healthy, that are safe, that are properly integrated with all the other elements of the communities.

So we are trusting that those 500, 600 people, who will be a tremendous core for good design, to leave that place responding to the concepts that have been mentioned and created and substantiated and agreed to by them as the elements of the relationship that will exist between them and the firms or the groups of people who are establishing the responsibility for redesign of their communities.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you. Although I have a background in law, my background in the legal profession is not one of a litigator. Litigators have a greater sensitivity to the issue of a transcript and what the final document that comes out of a hearing looks like. Having done now, this year, chaired the subcommittee, I'm getting a greater sensitivity to the issue of a transcript and what's in it and what is not, and having looked at some of these hearings and reflected on what we had hoped would be in the text of the hearing by the people who have testified.

Because of that, I want to give each of you an opportunity to give us, if you will, a commercial. We have, from each of you, the greatest resources of national experts before us on the issue of historic preservation. And one thing I don't want to have missed in the transcript when we turn back to this is the issue of why is this issue today important; why is it important that we even look to what we need to be doing in historic preservation in the face of this large natural and national disaster? So if you would each take a moment and provide us that text example of why this is important to us as a country.

Mr. Nau.

Mr. NAU. I think that's the most important question when you address historic preservation issues is why are you going to preserve them? In one context, it's about heritage, it's about community values. If you look at whether it's the National Park System or county and State-owned assets, it is about the accumulated experiences of who we are as a people. You only are able to feel that by having a sense of place. And if these places are destroyed, you lose the ability to connect to that accumulation of values. That's the hard one to get our arms around.

The easy one for me as a businessman is the economic development aspects of heritage tourism that many of the witnesses today have talked about. There is—someone in the first panel said this



is ground zero for heritage and cultural assets. The tourism industry there was not all about just gumbo, it was about these places all across that gulf coast. And to walk away from the preservation of these assets is to walk away from an industry also hit with the oil and gas. The petrochemical industries were hurt. We would not walk away from those industries. And here I would submit to you the economic development, the future of heritage tourism is in the collective hands of the States, the Federal Government and the cities and the citizens. It's economic development as much as it is the soft side of values and community history. Thank you.

Mr. TURNER. Ms. Matthews.

Dr. MATTHEWS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ditto to everything he said. On top of which, as a historian, the National Historic Sites Act of 1935, passed by you all, was established for the purpose of benefiting, inspiring, and educating the Nation as a whole. As a result, we have 2,500 National Historic Landmarks, many of which lie in the area we've talked about this morning and you have so generously given time to talk about this morning.

The 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, which I think of as the blue collar Congress, the Congress largely educated by the G.I. bill as the first people in their families who had the opportunity to go to college, and came back and said I think neighborhoods are important. As a Congress we think that back yards are important, we think that the context of history is important, which is what we've talked about all morning, the context of a very neat place in a dire situation because of a catastrophic event.

The 1966 act resulted in 80,000 National Register listings which represent 1.4 million properties. So our job is to carry forward for future generations the sense of what has kept many of us, thanks to your generous use of your time, in this room for a long time, things that really matter to us, and if we can put a face on our own minds and experiences and those of all we know regarding a sense of place in this great Nation.

So while the children who dressed last night as mold—that grows on wet buildings, that can be handled properly with professional application—well, the children who dressed up as mold last night, and the little girl on the same radio report who put a blue tarp over her Barbie dollhouse because she wanted it to be protected and not demolished, will those children walk away 15 years from now with a sense of a Nation that could rebuild a city or the sense of a Nation that could not?

Mr. MOE. Mr. Chairman, I think there are at least three primary reasons why it's important, if not essential, to save these historic places. No. 1, it does represent our shared heritage. It's obviously an important part of the heritage of New Orleans and the Mississippi gulf coast. But this is America's heritage, too. It tells an important part about who we were, where we've come from, and hopefully where we're going. The heritage is enormously important.

As has been said, it is also important because of the economic development opportunities it provides in terms of employment, in terms of the overall recovery effort, and especially in terms of the heritage tourism opportunities that it presents.

And third, it's important because of the concept of community. Too often, I'm afraid, preservationists are accused of focusing on the need to save buildings without the human dimension. Well, here's an instance where the human dimension is front and center and must be front and center. All of these buildings that are damaged are somebody's homes, small businesses, places of worship. These people need these places to maintain and come back to their communities. If not, those communities are gone. In New Orleans, for example, 18 of the 20 historic districts are what I would call vernacular neighborhood districts; for the most part, middle and lower-income neighborhoods filled with Creole cottages, shotgun houses, corner stores. These are the places that are in the greatest need of assistance, and that is because they are essential to what the residents of those communities view as their communities.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Koonce.

Mr. KOONCE. The American Institute of Architects and some of its related partners is on the brink, I think, of discovering some amazing things about the power of architecture in each of our lives. Our surroundings, they are determining—the newer scientists who are working with us are—that surroundings have a great deal to do with our sense of well-being, our cognitive skills, our ability to do creative and conceptual thinking, and to do conflict resolution and negotiation are all very important issues. It has to do with longevity of our life.

It's impossible to say at this point in time that there is a direct correlation between historic architecture and that which is not, and this theory that's being projected. But it is appropriate to say that we have historic buildings because they have endured for a reason. Many other buildings have been built in the past that have been just simply done away with because they did not have this ability to inspire, or they did not meet the needs of accommodation that were prescribed in their design. Subsequently, I think we need to think about the reason we still have them. They do represent all of those interests in our culture, in our values and our past that Mr. Moe mentioned just a moment ago. But it's important to think about those buildings that have survived because of the effect they have on each one of us in our daily life, and I think that's a very important criteria.

The other thing is that it was mentioned earlier that we do have process, and that's not the big issue, and I agree with that; but there is such a mad rush in some corners to just go ahead and tear down and rebuild, that if we don't provide the revenues or the money that is necessary to properly invoke the processes that we have, I'm afraid we will be losing some things in the interim that we really will regret having lost.

We need to think in terms of private ownership as well. A lot of the privately owned historic buildings are going to be more difficult for individuals to restore and to maintain than those that are publicly owned or owned by large associations. So it's another issue that it's important for us to act quickly on this entire issue.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you.

Well, before we adjourn, I want to give anyone who has anything they would like to add to the record or has a question that we have not asked that they wanted to contribute, to give any closing re-

marks. It is really not required that anybody provide closing remarks, but at this time, if you did have any items that you wanted to bring to our attention or include in the record, I wanted to give you that opportunity. Does anyone have anything they want to add before we adjourn?

Mr. MOE. Mr. Chairman, I would just like to thank you for your holding this hearing and raising the visibility of these issues because we hope what these panels have had to say will have an impact on the jurisdictional committees that will be considering some of these issues going forward. Thank you very much.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Nau.

Mr. NAU. Let me echo Mr. Moe. And one thought that I would like to put on the record: Right now FEMA does not have the ability to fund either the SHPO offices or bring some of these resources to bear. Mr. Moe referenced that earlier in the grants program. We would recommend that you all really look into that and reconsider it. They're on the ground, they have the ability and knowledge, whether it's this disaster or the next one. They need to be able to try to bring those resources to bear quickly, and right now they can't do it. But thank you for your leadership in this, sir.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you. That was an excellent point concerning FEMA's authority.

I would like to thank each of you for participating today and thank you for your continued efforts as you impact our Nation on this important issue. And I'd like to thank my colleagues for participating today.

The National Preservation Act of 1966 put in place a workable infrastructure for Federal, State, and local governments and non-governmental organizations to partner in historic preservation efforts, but as we have heard today, more can be done. Today's witnesses testified, along with their recommendations, on how Congress can adapt that infrastructure to better respond to Katrina and future disasters. This will provide us invaluable information as we make key policy decisions on this subject.

In the event that there may be additional questions, the record will remain open for a period of 2 weeks for submission of additional questions. We would appreciate if you would be kind enough to answer them if we receive them from members.

With that, we thank you all, and we'll be adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 12:29 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

[Additional information submitted for the hearing record follows:]

**Heather MacIntosh, President, Preservation Action**

**Testimony Before the Committee on Government Reform Subcommittee on  
Federalism and the Census, Michael Turner Subcommittee Chair**

**"Historic Preservation vs. Katrina: What Role Should Federal, State and Local  
Governments Play in Preserving Historic Properties Affected by this  
Catastrophic Storm?"**

**November 1, 2005**

Preservation Action respectfully submits this testimony on the subject of the federal government's role in preserving historic properties in hurricane-damaged communities along the Gulf of Mexico. Since 1974, Preservation Action has been the grassroots voice for preservation on Capitol Hill and is comprised of a network of preservation advocates nationwide. This network is greatly concerned about how our fellow preservationists in disaster-affected communities will be supported by local, state and national government, where funds to support preservation activities will be found, and how, in general, the comprehensive hurricane relief effort will affect historic resources nationwide.

#### **Comprehensive Planning Critical**

Preservation Action strongly supports the provisions proposed within the preservation-directed relief package, that is, \$60 million for grants-in-aid to qualified historic properties, the historic homeowners assistance tax credit, and other provisions within the Community Restoration and Revitalization Act that would deepen the existing tax credit and make it easier to use for smaller projects. All of these elements of support will substantially aid in rebuilding "right" the first time.

Preservation Action is however concerned not only with the initial relief package aimed at supporting preservation in the disaster zone, but with the big picture, that is, how preservation will be integrated into a coordinated rebuilding effort that acknowledges the important role historic assets play in the identity of the affected region, in its economics and in its residents' quality of life. The affected states and communities are handling their relief efforts differently – which may make sense from a political standpoint, but the disaster area spans multiple states with a history, geography and technical problems that are all interrelated and would best be considered together within comprehensive plan for recovery in much the same way that individual states often have preservation plans. These plans are the template for public-private partnerships.

This hearing entitled "Historic Preservation vs. Katrina: What Role Should Federal, State and Local Governments Play in Preserving Historic Properties Affected by this Catastrophic Storm?" is a good first step in understanding how thoughtful rebuilding will proceed with the support of governments at all levels. It is critical however that the dialogue on this highly important issue of rebuilding be open to anyone who can provide insight into innovative solutions.

The question of government support for preserving historic properties should coincide with a public dialogue about how the problem of rebuilding is the responsibility of many, not just governments, agencies and organizations who are now working on the problem of protecting historic resources along the Gulf. Creating a comprehensive plan with public input should help define the role of government, the private sphere, nonprofits, universities, and interested citizens and volunteers. The process of creating this plan should help communities rebuild, not just infrastructure and buildings, but a sense of permanence and pride necessary to sustain the ongoing work that will need to take place in the next several years. In this context, governments are partners, facilitating good work.

While the AIA and the National Trust, as well as other organizational partners are convening a conference on rebuilding Louisiana later this month, it is important that the federal government not delegate coordinating actions and discussions to the private and nonprofit sphere. The problem of rebuilding the hurricane-damaged region can and should be a template for resolving future disasters with public and private participation and should be managed by a central authority that has the power to improve and adapt public policy, reallocate public funds, and can learn from the regional response in a way that improves federal operations, especially as relates to disaster preparedness and response.

#### **Existing Commitments to Preservation Should Be Upheld**

What role federal, state and local governments should play in preserving historic properties affected by Katrina should relate closely to the role governments play in preserving historic properties nationwide, whether or not they were affected by Katrina or any other disaster. Grants are always helpful as they act as seeds for community investment. Tax incentives are crucial to helping property owners “do the right thing” by their historic property and help maintain community character in a way that supports the community’s economy. Establishing standard criteria for rehabilitation work, that is, the Secretary of Interior Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties is crucial to provide a baseline for use by local landmarks commissions and as a measure for evaluating the quality of projects applying for federal tax credits. Professional review of federally-funded projects is also a responsibility of government proscribed by the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106) – as a covenant with citizens, the federal government agrees to evaluate potential damage caused by federally-funded actions in the states.

Given the extraordinary impact of the hurricanes on some of our most historic communities, these basic elements of federal preservation policy should remain strong elements of the federal response. As with other forms of federal support for preservation activity, however, much comes from agencies outside of the Department of the Interior. The transportation bill funds bricks and mortar preservation work in the states – as offsets are sought for the recovery bill in general, funds within the transportation bill should remain to provide preservation support along the Gulf and nationwide. The Department of Housing and Urban Development’s CDBG program provides funds for preservation in so far as it supports the rehabilitation of older

properties for their new or continued use as affordable housing, or satisfy some other community development need. As funds are reallocated within this program, effort should be made to ensure that preservation is supported. Leadership and staff within any agency engaged in the management of historic resources or that provides funds supporting community development should understand the relationship between decisions made to support general recovery and the value of preservation within the comprehensive effort.

Related to this, offset funds for the effort in the Gulf should not reduce funding or other kinds of support for preservation in the rest of the country. In general, funds for preservation from the federal government is "bare bones" and has remained fairly static for years and cannot afford cuts. Ideas to sell federal land to produce offset funds could also negatively affect preservation, especially if the sale of federal land involves transmitting historic properties to private entities intent on commercial development that may or may not support a preservation ethic. As conversations about tapping offshore oil lease revenue for offset funding continue, the federal government should be mindful of its commitment almost thirty years ago to authorize \$150 million from this source for the Historic Preservation Fund – which defines the federal government's role in supporting the preservation of historic properties nationwide. Rarely has more than half of this authorized funding been appropriated.

#### **Conclusion and Thanks**

Thank you for conducting this very important hearing. Preservation Action hopes it will be the first in a series of public conversations about this very important question supporting the best kind of rebuilding effort.

This is a historic moment for communities along the Gulf. The hurricanes' damage and our response are (or will be) a part of the history of the communities we are now looking to rebuild. We are building on the legacy created by many, many generations and the decisions we make now will have lasting impact on many generations to come. The degree to which the federal government acknowledges its existing commitment to historic resource stewardship, and the value of public engagement in solving a very complicated, expensive problem will determine the quality of the end result. Leadership and aid can and will come from many places, not just governments and the organizations and agencies you have represented as witnesses today. Many are now inspired to help, and can help. The challenge is providing the best structure for engagement, and being a good partner by honoring and reinforcing your existing commitment to protecting our nation's shared heritage.

Respectfully,

Heather MacIntosh  
President  
Preservation Action