

A New Agenda for the Gulf Coast


What Congress can do now to confront
the ongoing crisis of Hurricane Katrina

February 2007



A Special Report by
GULF COAST RECONSTRUCTION WATCH
A Project of the Institute for Southern Studies





“For our future to be strong, all of our communities must be strong. It says in the Bible that where there is injustice in the world, the poorest people, those with the least power, are injured the most. That was certainly true for the people of Hurricane Katrina. Hurricane Katrina was a natural disaster compounded by man-made disaster. It is now 18 months past time to get our response right.”

— *House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) at the
National Press Club on Jan. 22, 2007*

“To all who carry a burden of loss, I extend the deepest sympathy of our country. To every person who has served and sacrificed in this emergency, I offer the gratitude of our country. And tonight I also offer this pledge of the American people: Throughout the area hit by the hurricane, we will do what it takes, we will stay as long as it takes, to help citizens rebuild their communities and their lives. And all who question the future of the Crescent City need to know there is no way to imagine America without New Orleans, and this great city will rise again.”

— *President George W. Bush in Jackson Square,
New Orleans, September 15, 2005*

A NEW AGENDA FOR THE GULF COAST was written by Chris Kromm and Sue Sturgis of the Institute for Southern Studies, with input from over 40 people and organizations in the Gulf Coast and beyond. For PDF copies of this report and more coverage of Gulf Coast issues, visit www.southernstudies.org/gulfwatch

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INTRODUCTION

Hurricane Katrina struck 18 months ago, wreaking unprecedented destruction on the Gulf Coast. One and a half years later, hundreds of thousands of people are facing a grim reality: New Orleans and the Gulf Coast are still in crisis.

Katrina may have fallen off the national radar, but the disaster never stopped. Lack of affordable housing, overburdened schools, a decimated health care system, chronic public health threats and other challenges have kept tens of thousands of the Gulf's people from returning home, and have made day-to-day life for many in the region a struggle for survival.

Especially hard-hit are the very same people who were left behind when the storms hit in August 2005: children, the poor, African-Americans and Latinos, working families and the elderly.

Clearly, bold steps to tackle the problems facing the Gulf Coast are needed. But where is the leadership? By almost any measure, Washington has so far failed to meet the challenges facing the Gulf. Indeed, a series of federal failures — from the botched emergency response to the storm, to a recovery riddled with missteps, delays, and a general lack of creative vision — have shattered many people's faith in the government's ability to help those in need.

Yet the scale and depth of problems on the Gulf Coast demand federal action. Washington has a special responsibility to act, given that much of the death and destruction witnessed in New Orleans were the result of breakdowns in a federally-run levee system and the national hurricane response.

But most importantly, **there are concrete steps Congress and the President can take now to ensure the Gulf sees a more vibrant future.** With this report, we not only document the key problems to be tackled. We also highlight practical proposals — put forward by dozens of community leaders and policy experts — that spell out an action plan for Washington to put the Gulf Coast back on the road to recovery.

In many cases, the course of action is clear — **all that is needed is for federal policy-makers to live up to their promises and responsibility to help the Gulf coast and its people rebuild.**

The United States has overcome enormous domestic challenges before. Though the Katrina crisis is among the most difficult, we remain convinced that it can be solved with the caring and good will of the American people, and renewed leadership in Washington.

*Institute for Southern Studies
February 2007*



18 MONTHS AFTER KATRINA INDEX

Collective worth of 19 Katrina contracts that experienced significant overcharges, wasteful spending or mismanagement: **\$8.75 billion**

Amount that Hurricane Katrina spending waste could exceed this year because half of government cleanup contracts valued at \$500,000 or greater being awarded with little competition: **\$1 billion**

Since Hurricane Katrina struck in August 2005, the number of Louisiana homeowners who've received federal rebuilding aid: **94**

The number of tenants who've received federal rebuilding aid: **0**

Amount of federal funds Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour allocated to compensate homeowners without flood insurance: **\$3.4 billion**

Amount Barbour allocated to rebuild public housing in impacted areas: **\$100 million**

Amount he's allocated to assist owners of damaged rental properties: **\$0**

Number of students put on waiting lists for New Orleans public schools in January 2007 because there was no room to accommodate them: **300**

Number of teachers that Louisiana's state-run Recovery School District was short for 2007: **70**

Proportion of Louisiana schools serving displaced students where class size increased: **1/3**

Percent drop in enrollment of Louisiana state public colleges and universities from fall 2005 to fall 2006: **12**

Damage sustained by local nonprofit health centers in Louisiana and Mississippi: **\$60 million**

Amount of federal aid made available to those health centers to date, in the form of tax credits: **\$15 million**

The number of adult inpatient psychiatric beds in post-Katrina New Orleans, compared to a pre-storm high of 234: **17**

When New Orleans' University Hospital reopened in November 2006, the number of its 575 pre-storm beds available: **85**

Of the \$300 million Louisiana requested to help hospitals and health care workers from the \$2 billion pool Congress appropriated for post-storm health care needs, the amount that's been delivered so far: **\$0**

Estimated economic benefit each year of the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet, or "Mr. GO," which experts say helped worsen the impact of Hurricane Katrina: **\$6.2 million**

Annual cost of operating and maintaining Mr. GO: **\$12.5 million**

Institute for Southern Studies, February 2007. Sources on page 13

HOUSING AND SHELTER

THE PROBLEM

Lack of affordable and safe housing is stopping tens of thousands of Gulf Coast residents from coming home. The scope of the problem is staggering:

- About **110,000 displaced families are still living in temporary trailers or receiving FEMA rental assistance**. Some rental aid was extended until August 2007, but tens of thousands have already been cut from the rolls.¹
- **Over 107,000 people have applied for aid under Louisiana's "Road Home Program," yet just over 630 closings have been held to date.**² The state legislature has demanded the firing of ICF International, the contractor being **paid \$756 million to administer the program**, but others say that would delay the process only more.³
- After Katrina, **thousands of homeowners faced difficulties getting property insurers to honor policies**. Many insurers are also gutting coverage and enacting rate hikes that put required insurance out of reach.
- **There are not adequate programs to help renters in Louisiana and Mississippi**, although they constituted nearly half of those displaced by Katrina. In New Orleans, average rents are up 45 percent from pre-Katrina levels.⁴
- Despite the region's severe affordable housing crisis, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO), which is in HUD receivership, plan to **raze almost 5,000 public housing units in the city**, even though they did not suffer significant storm damage.

THE SOLUTION

Gulf-based and national organizations have put forward clear steps Washington can take to help people return home:

- ACORN, a community organizing group, and others have urged FEMA to extend housing aid for 18 months, similar to extensions granted in Florida and elsewhere, instead of threatening evictions every six months.⁵ For those whose housing aid has been cut off, the National Low Income Housing Coalition recommends FEMA make a comprehensive review and **reinstate those found to have been wrongly terminated.**⁶
- Gulf advocates agree that **HUD should halt the demolition of livable public housing** in New Orleans. The Advancement Project calls for an **investigation into HUD's decision,**⁷ while the National Low Income Housing Coalition advocates finding an impartial judge to oversee HANO and **one-to-one replacement of public housing units.**⁸
- The NAACP has called on officials to address **predatory lending practices** that plagued vulnerable Gulf communities before the storm and now threaten low-to-moderate income households.⁹
- To **help renters displaced by the storm**, the People's Hurricane Relief Fund, a grassroots organization based in New Orleans, calls on FEMA to extend compensation to tenants — not just homeowners — for Katrina losses.¹⁰
- The Citizens' Road Home Action Team, a watchdog group, has called on ICF to **significantly ramp up the rate of loan closings under the Road Home plan.**¹¹ Congress should also exercise oversight of the troubled program, which is **funded with federal Community Development Block Grant money.**
- While Congress has promised hearings into State Farm Insurance, which is cancelling Gulf insurance policies, the Consumer Federation of America is calling for an **investigation of insurance practices throughout the Gulf.**¹²



Photo: Craig Morse

EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS

THE PROBLEM

Another key barrier to the revival of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast are the region's devastated schools. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita closed more than 1,100 schools across the Gulf Region; the storms had an especially devastating impact on the already-challenged public education system in New Orleans.

- By December 2006, 74 percent of all public schools were open across the entire Gulf region, but **only 49 percent of public schools had reopened in New Orleans.**¹³
- Most schools that have reopened are charters, public schools run under contract by private groups. Each have their own application procedures and approaches, **creating widespread confusion among parents attempting to enroll their children.**
- The **number of children is outstripping capacity**, with students facing packed classrooms, few special-education services and a lack of books. This January, New Orleans public schools placed 300 students on waiting lists because they had no room, sparking lawsuits by public-education advocates.¹⁴



THE SOLUTION

Parents, school officials and education experts have outlined several key changes in federal policy that can help revive the Gulf Coast's struggling schools:

- **Education recovery efforts should be transferred from FEMA to the U.S. Department of Education**, which has far greater experience in handling school issues, according to reports released in 2006 by Democratic members of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.¹⁵
- House Committee members have also argued that **local school officials need greater discretion and flexibility to reopen schools to meet demand**, a change that would involve revisiting federal requirements prohibiting the use of "restart" funds for school construction.
- **Schools need adequate funding and resources to succeed.** As the House Committee report notes, "Public and private elementary and secondary schools were provided \$6,000 per student to pay for teacher salaries, academic services, after-school programs and counseling services. This figure amounts to just **two-thirds of what the average school in the U.S. spends per student** — and average schools are not facing the tremendous challenges posed by Katrina." Many education groups have also called for **greater support of special needs students.**
- To **help parents navigate the maze of new school rules and calm school chaos**, the United Teachers of New Orleans has called for creation of **a centralized body that can handle essential services** such as enrolling students, hiring teachers and other employees, distributing textbooks, and furnishing schools with desks and chairs.¹⁶
- **Devastated colleges and universities also need support:** Last fall, for example, Tulane University's undergraduate enrollment was down by about 23 percent, while enrollment at Loyola University dropped by almost 30 percent. Across the Gulf, higher education received just \$250 million in rebuilding funds, while estimates for **damages and lost revenue in Louisiana alone stand at \$630 million.**¹⁷

Photo: FEMA

HEALTH CARE

THE PROBLEM

Hurricane Katrina devastated health care facilities across the Gulf Coast, with the situation especially dire in New Orleans. The storm shattered the city's Charity Hospital system, a safety net for the uninsured, with a loss of 700 beds.¹⁸ Louisiana established the Health Care Redesign Collaborative to guide recovery and rebuilding of health care in hurricane-affected areas, but major gaps remain:

- University Hospital in New Orleans has reopened, but with **fewer than 100 of the 575 beds it had before the storm**. The number of inpatient psychiatric beds has plunged by 93 percent, from a pre-storm high of 234 to 17.¹⁹
- The storm also destroyed many private clinics and doctors' offices and **displaced thousands of physicians and nurses**. Almost a year after the storm, for example, **75 percent of New Orleans-area doctors were no longer submitting claims to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana**.²⁰
- Louisiana's Health Collaborative endorsed a Bush administration plan to use a Medicaid waiver and Medicare demonstration project to create government-subsidized private insurance. However, **the waiver that was supposed to be in place by the start of 2007 has been delayed**.²¹
- In Louisiana, state officials will consider legislation in their upcoming session to direct the uninsured into "medical homes," government-run health maintenance organizations emphasizing primary and preventive care — **a policy change that may or may not happen, and would take time to implement**.²²



In the meantime, thousands of Gulf residents lack access to needed care.

THE SOLUTION

In the wake of Katrina, exemplary volunteer efforts such as the Common Ground Health Clinic and its Latino Health Outreach Project have provided free care to thousands of throughout the greater New Orleans area, but these efforts are not enough to meet the region's enormous need. Government-supported solutions are clearly necessary.

- To fill immediate gaps, groups like Opportunity Agenda have called on leaders to back the **creation of community health clinics** to provide convenient and accessible treatment.²³
- To monitor health threats in the wake of Katrina, Opportunity Agenda has also called on the **U.S. Public Health Service and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to provide ongoing care and testing to residents exposed to toxic pollution released in the storm's aftermath**.²⁴
- With people scattered across the country in the wake of Katrina, the federal government can play a helpful role in **connecting people displaced across the nation with critically needed care and medications**, according to a report released by the Kaiser Family Foundation last August. They urge federal lawmakers to learn from these lessons in developing health care plans for future disasters.²⁵
- Any proposed health efforts must include a special **focus on the most vulnerable individuals** — including the elderly, people with developmental disabilities and children, Kaiser further concludes. This principle must be incorporated into any waiver programs or other health policies for the Gulf.²⁶

Photo: Charity Hospital



JOBS AND ECONOMY

THE PROBLEM

Despite signs of revival, the economic recovery of the Gulf Coast continues at a slow pace – and many are being left behind.

- Many of the region's **African-American residents have found themselves displaced, unable to find jobs** and return home due to a lack of affordable housing and health care.²⁷
- Meanwhile, the private companies charged with the rebuilding have often turned to low-cost immigrant labor. By some estimates, as many as **100,000 new immigrants have come to the Gulf Coast** for reconstruction jobs.²⁸ Many of these workers report wage theft by their employers: a survey of workers in New Orleans last year found that as many as **60 percent had a potential wage claim**.²⁹
- Federal policies to jump-start the Gulf economy have been strongly criticized for not helping those who need it most. For example, **an investigation into Gulf Opportunity Zones** by the Institute for Southern Studies found that **many firms sought federally subsidized financing for ventures only loosely connected to Katrina and Rita**. In Louisiana, one of the first projects to win preliminary approval was construction of an office building and parking garage in Baton Rouge – well upriver from storm-damaged areas – for The Shaw Group, an engineering firm with close administration ties that received at least \$950 million in no-bid contracts related to the storms.³⁰

THE SOLUTION

Private initiatives to stimulate the economy and protect workers' rights have flowered after Katrina. Community Development Corporations, micro-lending institutions, churches and unions have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in economic development projects. The Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance has recovered more than \$800,000 in back wages owed to immigrant workers by various contractors.³¹ But the federal government must also take action to invest in a vibrant Gulf economy that works for all:

- **The U.S. Department of Labor must step up to its responsibility to protect Gulf Coast workers.** Despite widespread reports of immigrant wage theft and other exploitation, as of May 2006 DOL had only *one* permanent bilingual investigator in Mississippi and four in Louisiana. In Louisiana, there is no division that handles wage and hour claims, because the state does not have a minimum wage law. The Advancement Project and National Immigration Law Center call on the DOL to expand resources to enforce wage laws and other workplace protections.³²
- **The failed Gulf Opportunity Zones must be replaced with an economic development strategy that promotes good jobs and local business.** Good Jobs First³³ and the Institute for Southern Studies³⁴ have recommended that all **tax credits and other subsidies given to promote Gulf development be linked to accountability standards** including requirements that jobs pay a fair wage, support for local and minority businesses, “clawbacks” if jobs aren’t created, and environmental protection.
- National civil rights leaders, clergy, scholars and others are calling on Congress to pass legislation implementing a **Gulf Coast Civic Works Project** modeled on the Works Progress Administration of the Great Depression.³⁵ This project proposes **hiring 100,000 residents of the region to rebuild New Orleans and other storm-devastated communities**. As the national group ColorOfChange notes, the project would “give them a chance to bring themselves home while saving the government billions of dollars.” With a cost of just over \$3 billion, the Works Project would provide living wage jobs, make housing available, empower individuals, and “restore faith among our citizenry of the government’s ability to respond to the needs of its people through a public-private partnership.”³⁶

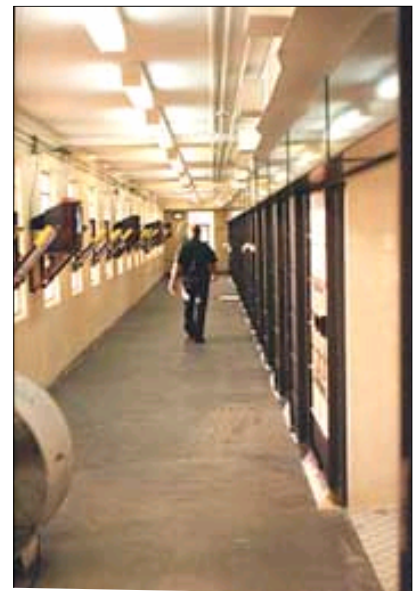
Photo: Misty Keasler for Newsweek

CRIME AND JUSTICE

THE PROBLEM

Hurricane Katrina devastated the civil infrastructure of the New Orleans area, including the city's long-troubled criminal justice system. The storms unleashed a new series of tragedies:

- When floodwaters began rising across the city, there were an estimated 5,000 detainees — including children as young as 10 — in the Orleans Parish Prison. As documented in an American Civil Liberties Union report released last August, the prisoners faced **horrific conditions as buildings were plunged into darkness, ventilation systems shut down, and sewage-tainted floodwater rose chest-high.**³⁷
- Some police deputies abandoned their posts, leaving people locked behind bars for days without food or water. Other deputies were themselves locked in at their posts, unable to help the prisoners. The deputies say they received **no emergency training and were unaware of any evacuation plan.**³⁸
- Since Katrina, **New Orleans' already high violent crime rate soared even higher.** Two high profile murders — of musician-teacher Dinerral Shavers in December 2006 and filmmaker-activist Helen Hill the following month — sparked large marches and angry calls for change.³⁹



THE SOLUTION

Although crime is often viewed as a “local issue,” federal officials can play a key role in preventing future problems and helping New Orleans implement solutions to address its troubled justice system:

- The Department of Justice should **evaluate Orleans Parish Prison's evacuation plans** and determine if meaningful improvements have been made, and **Congress should audit its progress,** according to the ACLU's National Prison Project.⁴⁰
- As New Orleans grapples with crime, the ACLU also warns against the growth of **expensive and possibly unconstitutional police “check points” in the city,** instead encouraging federal officials to tackle problems leading to crime by ensuring that good jobs, decent housing and quality schools are available.⁴¹
- U.S. Attorney Jim Letten recently announced plans to double the number of federal agents working with the New Orleans Police Department⁴² — but such a plan will only work if federal authorities **address distrust between city residents and the police.** For example, the New Orleans activist group Safe Streets-Strong Communities surveyed 500 city residents and found that **two-thirds of respondents said they were afraid they or their loved ones will be harmed instead of helped by police.**⁴³ Federal resources and oversight must be brought to bear to improve policing in New Orleans and end this crisis of trust.

Photo: Angola Prison, Louisiana

CONTRACTING AND OVERSIGHT



THE PROBLEM

Reconstruction of the Gulf Coast has involved the extensive use of private contractors, often with little oversight or open bidding. Fraud, over-charging, and other scandals have been ongoing problems, crippling the recovery and costing taxpayers millions of dollars.

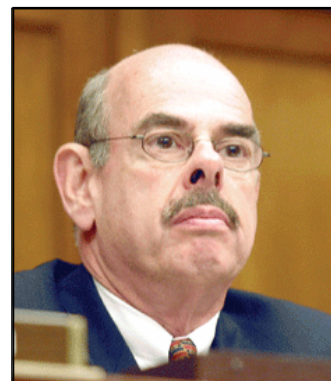
▫ A report prepared last year for what was then the minority office of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform identified **19 Katrina contracts collectively worth \$8.75 billion** that experienced significant overcharges, wasteful spending or mismanagement.⁴⁴

- The contracting process has also shortchanged small and minority-owned firms. While such firms **under law were supposed to get 5 percent of Katrina-related contracts, they got only 1.5 percent.**⁴⁵

THE SOLUTION

Congress has many tools at their disposal to heighten oversight and rein in contracting abuses.

- The Project on Government Oversight last year released a report offering a list of **29 recommendations to correct contracting problems**⁴⁶ including poor government planning, inadequate competition and lack of oversight. Proposals included:
 - Requiring at least three competitive bids for existing contractors;
 - Requiring open bidding for all non-essential services;
 - Requiring all contracting opportunities be posted on government websites;
 - Training and hiring more contracting oversight staff;
 - Creating a database that reports contractor misconduct;
 - Considering past misconduct when considering future contracts; and
 - Closing the loophole that allows former government employees to work for a different department or division of the same contractor they oversaw as a government employee.
- A wide range of groups have called on Congress to **establish a new “Truman Commission,”** modeled on a similar initiative launched in World War II, to probe contractor fraud and heighten oversight of the contracting process. In addition, the Congressional Black Caucus has asked House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to **form a new committee to oversee Gulf Coast reconstruction efforts.**



A “Truman Commission” would formalize and expand on investigations like those conducted by Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA) and the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, providing ongoing contract oversight.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

THE PROBLEM

When the federally-built levees failed in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the resulting deluge flooded 80 percent of New Orleans and the surrounding parishes.⁴⁷ Unfortunately, the federally-led investigation into what happened – and how such a disaster can be avoided in the future – was not adequate. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Interagency Performance Evaluation Task Force conducted the probe, even though their involvement presented an obvious conflict of interest.

- Since the Corps of Engineers released their findings last June, **three independent scientific investigation teams have criticized the USACE's report as incomplete and technically inaccurate.**⁴⁸
- Yet the Army Corps' **flawed findings are still being used to guide repair and fortification of the entire south Louisiana flood protection system**, which secures the lives and property of **1.5 million people.**⁴⁹
- There remains **no initiative or funding to rebuild New Orleans levees to withstand a Category 5 hurricane.**⁵⁰

As a result, with hurricane season just four months away, many in the Gulf believe Washington officials have yet to understand past failures and enact adequate plans to protect the Gulf Coast.

THE SOLUTION

Given the federal government's central role in the flooding of New Orleans, groups across the nation point to the responsibility of Washington leaders to act, and concrete steps they can take in preventing future disasters:

- A broad coalition of groups have called on Congress and the President to **guarantee funding to create levees capable of withstanding a Category 5 hurricane.** They also call on Washington oversight of the Army Corps' plans for building the levees to ensure it is carried out promptly and effectively.⁵¹
- Congress should also establish an **independent, bipartisan investigation into the levee failures** in order to ensure that no more lives are lost due to faulty flood protection, according to a Gulf-based coalition called levees.org.⁵²
- Levees.org has called on Congress to acknowledge the errors of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and accept responsibility to the people of Louisiana and the nation. **"Accepting responsibility means reforming the Corps of Engineers by establishing a clearer sense of mission, requiring peer review ... and better prioritization of Corps projects with attention to lives saved, not just economics,"** the group states.⁵³



Photo: NOAA

COASTAL PROTECTION

THE PROBLEM

Despite being one of the best buffers against storms like Hurricane Katrina, wetlands along the U.S. Gulf Coast are disappearing at an alarming rate. Katrina exposed an ongoing crisis:

- Louisiana alone loses 25 to 35 square miles, or 25,000 acres, per year — the equivalent of one football field every 15 minutes.⁵⁴
- Wetlands are an excellent natural barrier for hurricanes. Experts estimate **2.7 miles of wetlands can hold back one foot of storm surge** — and destroying wetlands significantly escalates the risks to coastal communities from storm damage.⁵⁵
- A primary cause of wetlands loss along the Gulf Coast is development, with one particularly problematic project being the federally-built **Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet**. Built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the 1960s as a shipping shortcut from New Orleans to the Gulf, MR-GO has **exacerbated hurricane damage by acting as a conduit for storm surge and by carrying saltwater inland, killing trees and accelerating wetland destruction.**⁵⁶



THE SOLUTION

The federal government must act quickly to prevent the further destruction of the Gulf Coast and save valuable natural buffers that protect the region.

- MR-GO is a “poster child of poorly-designed [Army] Corps projects,” argued a report last year by the Gulf Restoration Network and the Sierra Club Delta Chapter’s Gulf Coast Environmental Restoration Task Force, which demands that Congress step in to ensure MR-GO is promptly closed.⁵⁷
- Although the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers also issued a report last year recommending MR-GO be eventually closed, coastal scientists with Louisiana State University’s Hurricane Center warned that the agency’s proposal **fails to close the**

channel fast enough; Congress must exercise its oversight of the Army Corps to ensure MR-GO is closed immediately.⁵⁸

- Congress must also act quickly to **fund “rapid and systematic” wetland restoration efforts**, the Gulf Restoration Network argues. 118 square miles of Louisiana wetlands were lost from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and efforts to remediate other wetlands destroyed by projects like the MR-GO must begin immediately to preserve environmental health and enhance storm protection for Gulf residents.⁵⁹

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ABOUT GULF COAST RECONSTRUCTION WATCH

Gulf Coast Reconstruction Watch was launched in November 2005 to document and investigate the rebuilding of the Southern Gulf in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Through original reporting, in-depth features, voices from community leaders, and other unique coverage, Watch aims to keep Katrina on the national policy agenda and promote a healthy and just reconstruction in the Gulf.

Gulf Watch has received national attention for its leading reports on Katrina, including *The Mardi Gras Index* (Feb/March 2006), *Storm Cloud Over New Orleans* (June 2006) and *One Year after Katrina* (Aug/Sept 2006). These and other reports have brought widespread attention to Katrina and Gulf Coast issues, being featured by over 80 media outlets including ABC News, Air America Radio, BBC News, "Live with" CNN, National Public Radio, Time.com and XM Radio 169 "The Power." For more information, visit www.southernstudies.org/gulfwatch

Gulf Watch is a project of the **Institute for Southern Studies** and *Southern Exposure* magazine. Founded in 1970 by civil rights veterans, the Institute is a non-profit research and education center that combines research, media and advocacy programs to promote a democratic, just and sustainable future in the South. *Southern Exposure*, the Institute's flagship publication, has garnered dozens of prestigious awards for its insightful coverage of the South, including the National Magazine Award for Public Interest Reporting, the John Hancock Award for Business and Financial Journalism, and most recently the George Polk Award for Magazine Reporting.

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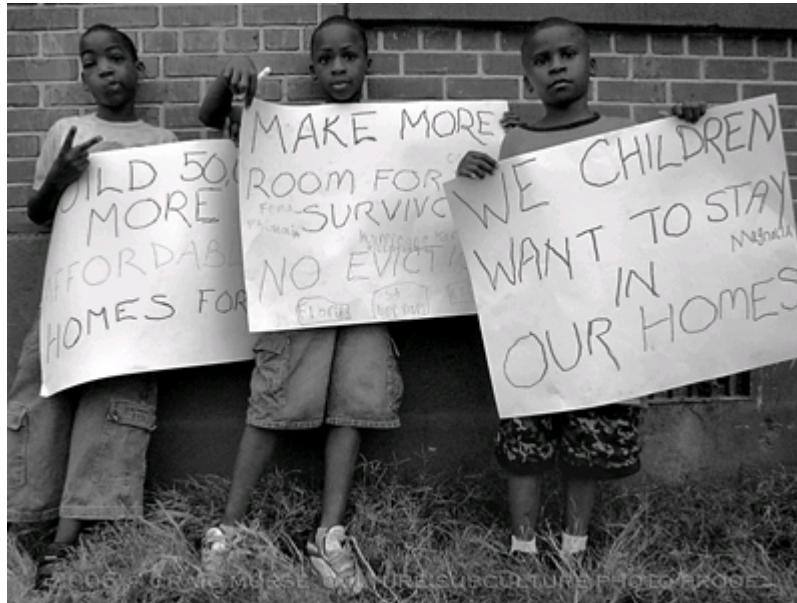


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