

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Contact: Patrick Dufresne

Phone: (985) 652-9278

PORT OF SOUTH LOUISIANA HOSTS U.S. REPRESENTATIVE CHARLIE MELANCON



(L to R) Port of South LA Commission President P. Joey Murray, III; Port of South LA Executive Director Joel T. Chaisson; U.S. Representative Charlie Melancon; Port of South LA Vice-President Jay Roberts; Joe Dantin

(Reserve, LA) The Port of South Louisiana hosted United States Representative Charlie Melancon on a tour of facilities and infrastructure located within “America’s Largest Tonnage Port.” Mr. Melancon surveyed the Port’s tri-parish district via helicopter and was accompanied by Port of South Louisiana Executive Director Joel T. Chaisson, Commission President P. Joey Murray, III, and Commission Vice-President Jay Roberts.

Upon completion of the aerial tour, the congressman addressed state and local dignitaries and industry leaders during a reception held at the Port’s Globalplex Guest House in Reserve, Louisiana. Mr. Melancon, representing Louisiana’s 3rd Congressional District, recently introduced the Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief and Economic Recovery Act of 2005 in the U.S. House of Representatives. The relief and recovery legislation named “Project Pelican,” addresses a wide range of immediate and long term economic needs in Louisiana.

“I’m proud to take the lead in the House of Representatives and carry this delegation package forward. Hurricane Katrina took a major toll on Louisiana and the relief in this legislation can’t wait,” said Melancon.

The proposed legislation covers all aspects of the disaster relief effort including: agriculture, economic re-development, trade and commerce, transportation, financial institutions, health care, housing, labor, military, veterans care, tax relief, education, coastal restoration, and environmental issues.

Highlights of The Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief and Economic Recovery Act of 2005 include:

- USDA Rural Development – Provides temporary waivers and exemptions necessary for increased workload due to current population shifts.
- \$20 billion to accelerate repair and enhance levees and drainage projects in coastal Louisiana to protect against a Category 5 hurricane

- Streamline the process for construction and reduce non-federal cost share of these Corps of Engineers projects
- Provide incentives for employers to hire displaced workers and local businesses
- Provide for federal assistance to restore local tax bases



- Create financial incentives to encourage businesses to hire local residents and invest in buildings, equipment and infrastructure within the affected area
- Provide additional funding and access to job training and job placement services
- Provide tax relief and incentives to businesses to lessen the economic impact of the disaster
- Extension of deadlines for paying excise and payroll taxes
- Waiver of duties and customs formalities
- Relaxing rules relating to tax exempt bonds affected by the hurricane
- Programs to rebuild and revitalize Louisiana's ports
- Accelerate the repair and enhancement of all affected highway transportation infrastructure
- Lift the \$100 million cap on the Federal Highway Administration's Emergency Relief Program
- Expand corridors vital to the nation's energy supply to minimize future vulnerability
- Increases the appropriation for the Delta Regional Authority from \$27 million to \$250 million and authorizes it to offer infrastructure, wastewater, and grant funds to every parish in the state of Louisiana

In his closing remarks Congressman Melancon added that "...the economic relief and recovery package is only the first step in building a better Louisiana for all of its citizens. The challenges ahead will require the assistance and leadership from all of our leaders at the federal, state and local levels of government."