



# Press Release

**Congressman John Conyers, Jr.  
Michigan, 14<sup>th</sup> District**

**Ranking Member, U.S. House Judiciary Committee  
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus**

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**Conyers Releases Non-Partisan  
Congressional Research Service Report on Federal Response to  
Hurricane Katrina:**

**Report Confirms that Louisiana Took Necessary and Timely Steps**

Pursuant to a September 7 request by Representative John Conyers to review the law and legal accountability relating to Federal action in response to Hurricane Katrina, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) issued a report today about whether the Governor of Louisiana took the necessary and timely steps needed to secure disaster relief from the federal government. The report unequivocally concludes that she did.

Congressman Conyers issued the following statement:

“This report closes the book on the Bush Administration’s attempts to evade accountability by shifting the blame to the Governor of Louisiana for the Administration’s tragically sluggish response to Katrina. It confirms that the Governor did everything she could to secure relief for the people of Louisiana and the Bush Administration was caught napping at a critical time.”

In addition to finding that “...it would appear that the Governor did take the steps necessary to request emergency and major disaster declarations for the State of Louisiana in anticipation of Hurricane Katrina. (p.11)” The report found that:

- All necessary conditions for federal relief were met on August 28. Pursuant to Section 502 of the Stafford Act, “[t]he declaration of an emergency by the President makes Federal emergency assistance available,” and the President made such a declaration on August 28. The public record indicates that several additional days passed before such assistance was actually made available to the State;
- The Governor must make a timely request for such assistance, which meets the requirements of federal law. The report states that “[e]xcept to the extent that an emergency involves primarily Federal interests, both declarations of major disaster and declarations of emergency must be triggered by a request to the President from the Governor of the affected state”;
- The Governor did indeed make such a request, which was both timely and in compliance with federal law. The report finds that “Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco requested by letter dated August 27, 2005...that the President declare an emergency for the State of Louisiana due to Hurricane Katrina for the time period from August 26, 2005 and continuing pursuant to [applicable Federal statute]” and “Governor Blanco’s August 27, 2005 request for an emergency declaration also included her determination...that ‘the incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and affected local governments and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary to save lives, protect property, public health, and safety, or to lessen or avert the threat of disaster.’”