



For Immediate Release  
Office of the Press Secretary  
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## President Bush Participates in Briefing at Emergency Operations Center

Emergency Operations Center  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

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12:08 P.M. CDT

THE PRESIDENT: I'm going to make a quick statement. Then I want to come around and say thank you in person to you.

First of all, Governor, thanks for having me down here. Phase one of the response to Gustav went very well. A lot of it had to do with the people in this room. We're much better coordinated this time than we were with Katrina. State government, the local government, and the federal government were able to work effectively together.

There is still more work to be done. One of the key things that needs to happen is they got to get electricity up here in Louisiana, get moving as fast as possible. The Governor understands it's a problem, his team understands it's a problem, and I understand it's a problem.

There's a lot of folks from this state that are working hard to re-string the lines. There are people from out of state coming into Louisiana to help, as well, and, of course, all the citizens of this state want to thank the people from other states that are moving in here to help get the electricity up as soon as possible. And I would ask that if utilities in neighboring states have extra manpower, please coordinate with the state and send the folks in. Part of this recovery is going to require the electricity coming back as quickly as possible.



We talked about the need to make sure that in parts of Louisiana that are getting flooded now, rural Louisiana, that MREs and water and ice get delivered to those communities as quickly as possible.

As a governor of a neighboring state, I remember often how people would say, all they care about is the big cities. And I understand there's a lot of focus on New Orleans, and there should be focus on New Orleans. But in the briefings today, it is clear that this state is focused, as well, as on people who live in rural Louisiana and in the smaller towns of Louisiana. And so the efforts will be aimed at helping people there.

Bobby talked about the need for -- to release energy or oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Last night we got a request from a company doing business here in Louisiana and we met that request. And if -- so oil was released from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. And we will continue to do that upon requests by companies.

All in all, the response has been excellent. But the people here understand that there is more work to be done. And that's why I came down here with members of the federal government to listen and to figure out how to help.

I can't thank you all enough for working as hard as you are. Looking around, I can see that some people may not have had much sleep recently. (Laughter.) The people of your state care a lot about the fact that you are working as hard as you are. And if this helps you keep going, I want to thank you, and I want to thank all the volunteers and the faith-based community that always rises up in a challenge like this. They listen to that universal call to love a neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself. And that's happening here in Louisiana again. And I know the

people that are -- whose lives have been affected appreciate a total stranger coming in to help.

And finally, the people in Louisiana must know that all across our country there's a lot of prayer -- prayer for those whose lives have been turned upside down. And I'm one of them. It's good to come down here. Governor, I can't thank you enough for your leadership and your team's leadership, and we stand ready to help.

And now I'm going to come around and thank every one of you for working. God bless. (Applause.)

END 12:12 P.M. CDT

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