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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: media@restore.la.gov

Restore La. Task Force Receives Program Progress Report and Update on Pending SBA Loan Legislation

Today, the Restore Louisiana Task Force met in Monroe and received remarks from Monroe Mayor James E. "Jamie" Mayo, West Monroe Mayor Staci Mitchell and Ouachita Parish Policy Jury President Scotty Robinson. The Task Force also received remarks on behalf of Gov. John Bel Edwards from Communications Director Shauna Sanford, followed by an update from Congressman Garret Graves on the recent progress of pending legislation that addresses the policy that considers Small Business Administration (SBA) loans to be a Duplication of Benefits (DOB) for federal grant funds.

"I am excited to say there is good news in sight for homeowners approved for SBA loans," Sanford said. "In response to pending federal legislation, Gov. Edwards instructed his staff to swiftly reopen the Restore Louisiana Homeowner Assistance Program survey to ensure we can assist as many homeowners who were impacted by this onerous duplication of benefits issue as possible. We are also preparing a waiver request to send the President and have asked HUD to prepare policy guidance."

The Restore Louisiana Homeowner Assistance Program survey has been reopened until October 19, 2018, and the formal application deadline was extended until November 16, 2018.

"We have been working to change this flawed policy for two years, passing our solution out of the House twice and negotiating for months with the Senate and White House to keep the bill moving. Now that we have reached an agreement, passage and President Trump's signature are set for this week, which means Louisiana's flood victims will finally get some much-deserved relief," said Graves. "Alongside Gov. Edwards and the delegation, we are already urging the President to quickly approve the state's waiver request so that these resources are finally put into the hands of the people who need them most."

Once the new legislation passes Congress, is signed into law by the President and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides guidance indicating it will no longer consider SBA

loans for home repairs to be a duplication of benefits, the program will update awards for all current applicants impacted by the legislation regardless of where they are in the program. The program will implement this change once the guidance is issued and contact applicants as the workflow progresses.

Additionally, the Task Force received a presentation from the Louisiana Watershed Initiative, which is focused on key functions related to watershed-based floodplain management throughout the state, including those related to data management, planning, policy and outreach and engagement with local jurisdictions, key stakeholders and citizens. Technical advisory groups are actively meeting and will soon expand their work to involve non-state and federal agency representatives, driven by a foundation of objective, science-driven decision-making at the watershed level.

Representatives from Ouachita Strong, the interjurisdictional, long-term resilience planning initiative formed with assistance from the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP), the Office of Community Development (OCD) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), presented recent progress to the Task Force as well.

The Task Force received updates on the Restore Louisiana Homeowner Assistance, Rental Housing, Economic Development and Infrastructure programs. Details are as follows:

Homeowner Assistance Program:

- More than 53,700 homeowners have completed and submitted the initial survey.
- Nearly 43,700 homeowners qualify for assistance based on their survey responses.
- Over 35,600 applications have been processed and determinations made.
- More than 14,100 eligible homeowners have been offered grant awards totaling over \$479M.

Rental Housing Programs:

- Neighborhood Landlord Rental Program: 77 contingent commitment letters mailed totaling \$35.7M for 340 units. Two units are occupied, two units have been completed and are advertising for leasing and 16 units are under construction. All other projects are expected to break ground between October and November 2018.
- Multi-family Restoration Loan Fund: Two completed projects have received disbursements totaling \$1.5M, and all loans will be closed by end of September. All rehabilitation will be completed by end of March 2019.
- Piggyback Program: The total development cost for 870 units is \$126,443. Projects will break ground in February 2019.
- Rapid Rehousing: 1,217 applications have been received, 661 households have leased housing and 151 have completed the program.
- Permanent Supportive Housing: 139 households are receiving services.

Economic Development and Infrastructure Programs:

- Small Business Program: 225 loans totaling approximately \$27M have been funded, and an additional 75 approved loans totaling approximately \$8M will be disbursed. The total program, including program delivery and administrative costs, should be approximately \$41M.
- Farm Recovery Program: 957 awards have closed, with more than \$9.5M disbursed.

- First Responders Public Service Program: The Notice of Funding Availability has been published. Applications are due November 12, 2018, with award notification by December 2018.

About the Restore Louisiana Task Force

The Restore Louisiana Task Force comprises 21 individuals from throughout the state who were appointed by Gov. John Bel Edwards to oversee the rebuilding process after historic flooding in March and August 2016 impacted 51 disaster-declared parishes. The Task Force's mission is divided into six categories: community planning; economic; health and social services; housing; infrastructure; and natural and cultural resources. All Task Force documents are available at [Restore Louisiana Task Force Resources.](#)