

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3749

To establish a national commission to address the rebirth and renewal of neighborhoods and communities affected by Hurricane Katrina.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 13, 2005

Mr. LEACH introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To establish a national commission to address the rebirth and renewal of neighborhoods and communities affected by Hurricane Katrina.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Gulf State Community
5 Renewal Commission Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Whereas Hurricane Katrina’s devastation is colossal
8 in scope;

9 Whereas it poses a massive national redevelopment
10 obligation; and

1 Whereas the expertise of America’s professionals in
2 the fields of city and regional planning, architecture, home
3 building, and finance is required.

4 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.**

5 There is established the Gulf State Community Re-
6 newal Commission (in this Act referred to as the “Com-
7 mission”).

8 **SEC. 4. PURPOSES.**

9 The purposes of the Commission are to—

10 (1) examine, evaluate, and report on the re-
11 building of communities in both urban and rural
12 areas that were affected by Hurricane Katrina;

13 (2) identify actions necessary for rebuilding
14 such communities, and neighborhoods and town cen-
15 ters in such communities;

16 (3) identify professions and resources available
17 to such communities to assist in such rebuilding;
18 and

19 (4) create models and plans for such rebuilding
20 that address—

21 (A) transportation needs;

22 (B) economic development and job cre-
23 ation;

24 (C) the tourism industry;

25 (D) housing needs;

- 1 (E) agriculture development;
- 2 (F) environmental concerns;
- 3 (G) natural disaster mitigation; and
- 4 (H) any other areas of the public and pri-
- 5 vate sectors determined relevant by the Com-
- 6 mission.

7 **SEC. 5. COMPOSITION OF THE COMMISSION.**

8 (a) MEMBERS.—Subject to the requirements of sub-
9 section (b), the Commission shall be composed of 21 mem-
10 bers, appointed by the President, who shall include—

11 (1) not less than 11 members who are experts
12 in city or regional planning issues;

13 (2) not less than 3 members who are historians
14 or otherwise employed in academic institutions;

15 (3) not less than 3 members who are
16 hombuilders, architects, or contractors;

17 (4) not less than 2 members who are experts in
18 mortgage finance; and

19 (5) not less than 2 members who are experts in
20 small business issues.

21 (b) QUALIFICATIONS.—

22 (1) STATE REPRESENTATION.—The Commis-
23 sion shall include a total of 14 members from the
24 States of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, and
25 7 members representative of other States.

1 (c) DEADLINE FOR APPOINTMENT.—All members of
2 the Commission shall be appointed on or before October
3 30, 2005.

4 (d) CHAIRPERSON; VICE CHAIRPERSONS.—The Com-
5 mission shall have a chairperson and two vice chair-
6 persons, with a resident of each State referred to in sub-
7 section (b)(1) holding one of the three positions.

8 (e) INITIAL MEETING.—The Commission shall meet
9 and begin the operations of the Commission as soon as
10 practicable after appointment of all the members.

11 (f) QUORUM; VACANCIES.—After its initial meeting,
12 the Commission shall meet upon the call of the Chair-
13 person or a majority of its members. 11 members of the
14 Commission shall constitute a quorum. Any vacancy in the
15 Commission shall not affect its powers, but shall be filled
16 in the same manner in which the original appointment was
17 made.

18 **SEC. 6. FUNCTIONS.**

19 The functions of the Commission are—

20 (1) to hold such hearings and conduct such ex-
21 aminations and studies as may be appropriate to
22 carry out the purposes of the Commission under sec-
23 tion 2; and

24 (2) to submit to the President and Congress
25 such reports as are required by section 10 con-

1 taining such findings, conclusions, and recommenda-
2 tions as the Commission shall determine regarding
3 actions, plans, and models for rebuilding neighbor-
4 hoods and communities affected by Hurricane
5 Katrina.

6 **SEC. 7. POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.**

7 (a) HEARINGS AND SESSIONS.—The Commission
8 may, for purposes of carrying out this Act hold hearings,
9 sit and act at times and places, take testimony, receive
10 evidence, and administer oaths.

11 (b) CONTRACTING.—The Commission may enter, to
12 such extent and in such amounts as are provided in appro-
13 priation Acts, into contracts to enable the Commission to
14 discharge its duties under this Act.

15 (c) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The
16 Commission may secure directly from any department,
17 agency, or instrumentality of the United States any infor-
18 mation related to any inquiry of the Commission con-
19 ducted under this Act. Each such department, agency, or
20 instrumentality shall, to the extent authorized by law, fur-
21 nish such information directly to the Commission upon re-
22 quest.

23 (d) ASSISTANCE FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

24 (1) GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION.—

25 The Administrator of General Services shall provide

1 to the Commission on a reimbursable basis adminis-
2 trative support and other services for the perform-
3 ance of the Commission's functions.

4 (2) OTHER DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES.—In
5 addition to the assistance prescribed in paragraph
6 (1), departments and agencies of the United States
7 are authorized to provide to the Commission such
8 services, funds, facilities, staff, and other support
9 services as they may determine advisable and as may
10 be authorized by law.

11 (e) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Commission may use
12 the United States mails in the same manner and under
13 the same conditions as departments and agencies of the
14 United States.

15 (f) POWERS OF SUBCOMMITTEES, MEMBERS, AND
16 AGENTS.—Any subcommittee, member, or agent of the
17 Commission may take, if authorized by the Commission,
18 any action which the Commission is authorized to take by
19 this section.

20 **SEC. 8. STAFF OF THE COMMISSION.**

21 (a) DIRECTOR.—The Commission shall have a Direc-
22 tor who shall be appointed by the Chairperson.

23 (b) STAFF.—The Chairperson, in consultation with
24 the Vice Chairpersons, may appoint additional personnel

1 as may be necessary to enable the Commission to carry
2 out its functions.

3 (c) APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN CIVIL SERVICE
4 LAWS.—The Director and staff of the Commission may
5 be appointed without regard to the provisions of title 5,
6 United States Code, governing appointments in the com-
7 petitive service, and may be paid without regard to the
8 provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53
9 of such title relating to classification and General Schedule
10 pay rates; except that no rate of pay fixed under this sub-
11 section may exceed the equivalent of that payable for a
12 position at level V of the Executive Schedule under section
13 5316 of title 5, United States Code. Any individual ap-
14 pointed under subsection (a) or (b) shall be treated as an
15 employee for purposes of chapters 63, 81, 83, 84, 85, 87,
16 89, and 90 of such title.

17 (d) DETAILEES.—Any Federal Government employee
18 may be detailed to the Commission without reimbursement
19 from the Commission, and such detailee shall retain the
20 rights, status, and privileges of his or her regular employ-
21 ment without interruption.

22 (e) CONSULTANT SERVICES.—The Commission is au-
23 thorized to procure the services of experts and consultants
24 in accordance with section 3109 of title 5, United States
25 Code, but at rates not to exceed the daily rate paid a per-

1 son occupying a position at level IV of the Executive
2 Schedule under section 5315 of title 5, United States
3 Code.

4 **SEC. 9. COMPENSATION AND TRAVEL EXPENSES.**

5 (a) COMPENSATION.—Each member of the Commis-
6 sion may be compensated at not to exceed the daily equiva-
7 lent of the annual rate of basic pay in effect for a position
8 at level IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315
9 of title 5, United States Code, for each day during which
10 that member is engaged in the actual performance of the
11 duties of the Commission.

12 (b) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—While away from their
13 homes or regular places of business in the performance
14 of services for the Commission, members of the Commis-
15 sion shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem
16 in lieu of subsistence, in the same manner as persons em-
17 ployed intermittently in the Government service are al-
18 lowed expenses under section 5703(b) of title 5, United
19 States Code.

20 **SEC. 10. REPORTS; TERMINATION.**

21 (a) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after
22 the date of the first meeting of the Commission, the Com-
23 mission shall submit to the President and the Congress
24 an initial report containing such findings, conclusions, and
25 recommendations for the rebuilding of communities and

1 neighborhoods affected by Hurricane Katrina as have been
2 agreed to by a majority of Commission members.

3 (b) INCREMENTAL REPORTS.—The Commission shall
4 submit to the President and the Congress an incremental
5 report containing such findings, conclusions, and rec-
6 ommendations for the rebuilding of communities and
7 neighborhoods affected by Hurricane Katrina as have been
8 agreed to by a majority of Commission members, at each
9 of the following times:

10 (1) Not later than 12 months after the submis-
11 sion of the initial report of the Commission.

12 (2) Not later than 24 months after the submis-
13 sion of the initial report of the Commission.

14 (c) TERMINATION.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission, and all the
16 authorities of this Act, shall terminate 60 days after
17 the date on which the second incremental report is
18 submitted under subsection (b)(2).

19 (2) ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES BEFORE TER-
20 MINATION.—The Commission may use the 60-day
21 period referred to in paragraph (1) for the purpose
22 of concluding its activities, including providing testi-
23 mony to committees of Congress concerning its re-
24 ports.

1 **SEC. 11. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Com-
3 mission to carry out this Act \$7,500,000. Such funds shall
4 remain available until expended.

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