

made in, what, '43, '44 and '45. There was gas rationing. I can't remember people grumbling about the gas rationing.

Everybody had a victory garden who could. They were encouraged to do that. It was the patriotic thing to do. We started daylight savings time so you could have some time after work in the evening to work on your victory garden.

Everybody saved their household grease. I am still not quite sure what they did with that, but we took it to a central repository.

The point is everybody was involved. It was the last time in our country that everybody has really been involved, and we need a program that involves everybody. We also need a program that kind of has the technology focus of putting a man on the Moon, because there are some really big technology challenges here.

Thirdly, this program needs to have the kind of urgency that we had in the Manhattan Project, because time is really of the essence here. We don't have the luxury of a leisurely approach to solving this problem.

There will be an increasing deficit of oil in the world and in our country; but I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, I think the biggest deficit today is leadership, both here and in the world.

With so many experts, and these two studies, and again I go back to the two studies, here they are, paid for by our government, saying that we are at or nearly at peak oil and pointing to the dire consequences if you haven't prepared for that, I don't see our leaders in our country or in the world standing up and telling their citizens that we face this problem.

This chart shows what we need to do. The first thing we need to do is to buy some time. How do we buy time? Right now there is no surplus energy available to invest in alternatives, like building a nuclear power plant, like finding a really good way to make ethanol, to make a whole lot more solar panels, to make a whole lot more wind machines. By the way, wind machines are producing electricity at 2.5 cents a kilowatt hour. That is very competitive.

If we can have a very aggressive conservation program that you can do quickly, we can free up some oil, which buys us some time so that we can invest in these alternatives.

Then we need to use this wisely. Somehow we need an entity which is making judgments as to what is the best uses of the limited resources of both time and energy that we will have.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, we need to invest three things to get these alternatives. We need money and we need energy and we need time. Of course, in this Congress, we never worry about money, we just borrow that from our kids and our grandkids without their approval. But we can't borrow time from them, and we can't borrow energy from them.

Thinking about our children and grandchildren, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make an argument that there is a moral dimension to the challenge we face. To the extent that we are able to go out there and get these remaining resources to fill the gap, to continue life as we know it, we are going to be denying our children and our grandchildren access to these energy sources.

Right now, we are telling them although we cannot do it, we cannot even come close to running our government on current revenue, not only will they have to run their government on current revenues, they will have to pay back all the money we borrowed from their generation.

I am having a moral problem with going out there with the techniques that we have to get this gas and oil and coal, the little that remains, more quickly. We will certainly be denying our children the opportunity to do that.

Somehow we have to have an organization which makes decisions. We have only limited time. We have only limited energy. How will we invest it? What is the wisest way to invest it?

There are many benefits that can come from this. One of the benefits, Mr. Speaker, I can imagine Americans going to bed in the evening feeling really good about the contribution they have made that day to this problem. This shouldn't be viewed as a problem; this should be viewed as a challenge. Life is really easy in our country. Most people don't have to really stretch to do well.

I think that our people would marshal. We have the most creative, innovative society in the world; and if our people only knew that there was this problem, I think that all of our energy, our creativity, our innovation could be marshaled to address this.

We have no alternative but to be a role model. We use a fourth of all the world's energy. We are a role model. We need to be a good role model for this transition.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, with the realization that if every American is challenged to address this problem, that there is a way out, we will have a bright future. But the later we start, the more difficult that transformation will be. We should have started a decade ago. We can't turn back the hands of time, but we can from now on do what we should have been doing in the past.

□ 1630

RELIEF FOR SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA FROM RITA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, next month the Gulf Coast will prepare for

yet another Hurricane season. As we prepare for this year's storm season, it is important to remember that two category 3 storms hit the gulf coast last year.

In late September, the eye of Hurricane Rita made landfall in Cameron Parish in the southwest corner of Louisiana. The storm inflicted devastating damage to my district in southwest Louisiana as well as to the districts of my colleagues from southeast Texas.

In the coming weeks, House and Senate conferees will meet to determine a final bill to provide important relief to residents on the gulf coast. Today we are not here to compete with one another, but to together ask our colleagues to consider our needs and to remember Rita.

Unfortunately, more than 6 months after Hurricane Rita hit the coast of southwest Louisiana and southeast Texas, our road to recovery is not yet complete. Hurricane Katrina is off the front pages. Hurricane Rita is off the back pages.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that the people of southwest Louisiana, and our friends in southeast Texas are not asking for a Federal handout. We do, however, need the Nation's support and the support of this body to recover and protect ourselves from future disasters.

This Hurricane supplemental is especially critical to my constituents in southwest Louisiana. Homes are destroyed or uninhabitable. In Cameron Parish, 90 percent of the homes were reduced to slabs of concrete. Students and teachers in southwest Louisiana are still waiting on Federal education disaster assistance to rebuild.

Our farmers are also hurting. Last year, farmers in Vermilion Parish planted 75,000 acres of rice. This year that number has been reduced to only 25,000. And this is why. This is why, right here. This is a picture just 4 weeks ago in my district, some 7 or 8 miles inland from the coast. These were rice fields that have been virtually destroyed due to tremendous saltwater damage that Hurricane Rita has left in its wake. Before Rita, this field was a thriving rice crop.

And you can see, this is another field. Same thing. All this white in here is salt deposition. This just 4 weeks ago, over 6 months from Rita. And we are still coping with this.

We owe it to these farmers to work as hard for them as they do for their families and neighbors in southwest Louisiana.

Mr. Speaker, our industries are hurting as well. The Lake Area Industry Alliance, home of a vast petrochemical complex which serves the entire U.S., reports damages to its facility of nearly \$50 million. This picture here was taken in the immediate aftermath of the storm.

They show the Henry Hub, just one of the many energy facilities in my district that supply much of our Nation's energy industry. This facility alone

supplies close to 40 percent of the natural gas for our country, and was off line for a considerable amount of time following Hurricane Rita. It highlights the strategic interest that southwest Louisiana plays to our energy industry and why we must ensure that this infrastructure will be protected from storms.

This is another photo of the same area, more close up, showing the tanks. We had about 7 or 8 feet of water in this area. One way we can protect our energy infrastructure is to expand drilling in the Outer Continental Shelf. This can provide a long-term oil and gas supply that would serve the bridge to renewable energy sources.

Most importantly, it would also provide States with critical revenue sharing from any oil or gas leasing off their coast, allowing States like Louisiana to fund our own protection from future disasters.

Mr. Speaker, despite our many challenges, the people of southwest Louisiana remain determined to rebuild their communities and businesses. Parents look forward to the day when their children can once again attend schools and churches in a safe and comfortable environment.

Travelers look forward to a day when they can escape the summer heat with a trip to Holly Beach in Cameron Parish. Farmers look forward to the day when they can once again tend to their fields.

Mr. Speaker, southwest Louisiana has already begun to plan for our future. It is up to us as Members of Congress to help them realize it.

EQUITABLE FUNDING FOR HURRICANE RITA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, Congressman MEEK from Florida, for allowing me to reclaim my time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my good friend, Congressman BOUSTANY from Louisiana, in urging our colleagues not to forget the victims of Hurricane Rita as they determine priority funding in the Hurricane supplemental bill that is before the House and the Senate today.

You may know, but, of course, last August Hurricane Katrina, the sixth largest Hurricane in gulf coast history hit the gulf coast. It sent a human tide of over half a million evacuees to Texas. And while our State was struggling with the unprecedented effects of that storm, its own coast took a direct hit from Hurricane Rita, the fourth largest storm in gulf coast history, just 3 weeks later.

As Hurricane Rita grew into one of the most intense storms in recorded history, steering a path through Texas and along the Louisiana border, our State, and especially southeast and

east Texas were in the midst of its unprecedented response to Hurricane Katrina.

So our region not only took in evacuees, tens of thousands from Louisiana, and are thrilled that we did, we also took in 2.7 million evacuees from Hurricane Rita, the largest in history.

Then the hurricane shifted; Hurricane Rita went right up those same communities that had already done so much. Rita delivered a devastating blow to the region. As this photo illustrates, the resulting physical damage was massive.

The town of Sabine Pass was leveled. Further inland, entire communities, including houses, businesses, bridges, roads and utilities, were severely damaged or destroyed by Hurricane-force winds and torrential rains.

Over 75,000 Texas homes were damaged or destroyed in Rita, \$1 billion of our timber crop, the largest economic driver in east Texas; and today, 10 percent of our Rita evacuees have yet to return. Without homes or without places to work, we are again in a real fight for our lives.

Today we have a number of our Texas leaders, southeast Texas Recovery Team in Washington meeting with the White House, meeting with House leaders, meeting with FEMA and HUD to talk about how Texas can recover.

We had, as I said, 75,000 homes damaged or destroyed. Many of those have temporary blue tarps on today that are starting to deteriorate or blow off. When the hurricane season hits, we will put more and more people out of their homes.

We are asking for about \$1 billion in community development block grant funds in housing to help repair those homes, to help get people back in their homes, to help southeast Texas recover.

We are also asking for equal treatment. These are all photos from the Beaumont Enterprise and their special edition on Rita, showing the damage from this region. But as we rebuild, we find that, unfortunately, the Federal Government split Hurricane Rita along State lines, literally provided one assistance to our Louisiana neighbors, and a different level to our Texas neighbors, which is terribly unfair and creates a terrible burden on our Texas communities, many of whom are poor, many with very high minority and poverty rates, all of them eager to help our Louisiana neighbors, but also eager to try to recover ourselves.

So we are up here asking for the same 90/10 reimbursement rate of FEMA that our Louisiana folks have received for the exact same hurricane, same storm, same damage. Different treatment, same storm. It ought to be the same storm, same damage, same treatment.

Mr. Speaker, let me close with this. This Congress, our government, are charged with a duty to wisely allocate precious taxpayer dollars. This hurricane supplement has become a magnet for some less-than-justified projects.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you this: that the Hurricane Rita assistance in schools of 90/10 and in housing are not only fair and justified, but will go a long way toward helping these communities who did so much for our Louisiana neighbors and are doing so much today to help them recover at a time of terrible need.

LADIES OF THE GULF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. MEEK for allowing me to make some additional comments with my friends, Mr. BRADY from southeast Texas, and Dr. CHARLES BOUSTANY from Louisiana.

The area of the State of Texas that I represent, Mr. Speaker, borders Louisiana, and also borders the Gulf of Mexico. And today we had another storm hit not Texas, but Washington, DC. Individuals from southeast Texas and east Texas, government leaders, community activists, chambers of commerce presidents, came to Washington to make the case for what occurred in the last 6½ months in southeast Texas.

By way of review, the ladies of the gulf came into the Gulf of Mexico last fall. The first of those, Katrina, came through, became the sixth largest hurricane, most powerful hurricane to ever hit the gulf coast. And when that occurred, 450,000 people from Louisiana went west. They crossed the Sabine River into Texas. Many of them came into my district.

Many of those people are still there. Several thousand kids are still in school in Texas from Louisiana. So many people are in Texas from Louisiana that we have a mayor's race in New Orleans this Saturday, and the two candidates campaigning for mayor in Louisiana have billboards all over the Houston area soliciting votes from people in Louisiana that happen to be in Texas.

Katrina was mainly a water-damage hurricane. The waters rose, caused damage, the waters stayed a long time. One of the towns of course hit was New Orleans. The national media focused on Katrina day after day after day. But 3 weeks later, another lady of the gulf came. Her name was Rita. She became the fourth most powerful hurricane to ever hit the gulf coast. She hit western Louisiana and east Texas, part of the area that I represent.

The largest evacuation in American history took place in Texas because of Hurricane Rita. Over 2 million people evacuated their homes. In Beaumont alone, 8,320 people were airlifted out of hospitals, in the middle of the night with C-130 transport planes, to 14 different States.

The first responders before Hurricane Rita hit loaded their police cars, their emergency equipment, their fire trucks, their front-end loaders, and