

Congress Passes Hurricane Recovery Funding *Paul and Colleagues Successful in Obtaining 90% Reimbursement for Texas Communities Affected by Hurricane Rita*

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June 13, 2006 Washington, DC: Congress today passed legislation that provides promised reimbursement funds for several Texas communities affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita last year. HR 4939 provides \$6 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Disaster Relief Fund; and \$5.2 billion for Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grants. This money will reimburse several south Texas communities for millions of dollars spent feeding, sheltering, and schooling Katrina refugees, and also fund long-term restoration of infrastructure damaged by Rita.

Congressman Paul was instrumental in making sure the promised level of reimbursement from FEMA—fully 90% of the expenses incurred by local governments—was included in the final bill. He worked closely with his congressional colleagues, including Texas Representatives Ted Poe and Louie Gohmert, to make the Appropriations committee aware of the importance of hurricane recovery funding:

“In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, many of the cities and counties in Texas opened up their doors to the Katrina evacuees,” Paul wrote in a June 6 letter to Appropriations Committee Chairman Jerry Lewis. “Almost one month later, Texas was struck by Hurricane Rita. Even today, Texas is still recovering from the damage and bearing lingering costs associated with those two hurricanes. It is inequitable to provide a larger federal share to Louisiana communities than Texas communities when both suffered.”

“I certainly support reducing spending in the supplemental bill,” Paul added today. “But the reductions should come from low-priority earmarks. The 90% FEMA reimbursement does not increase the price tag for HR 4939. FEMA reimbursement money is just that—reimbursement—that was promised to Texas communities when they spent state and local tax dollars performing FEMA functions. I’m pleased Congress included this funding in HR 4939 as a matter of basic fairness.”