

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 9, 2011

The Honorable Robert M. Gates
Secretary
United States Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Secretary Gates:

We write in support of Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal's Appeal of your denial of Title 32 U.S.C. 502(f) funding.

As you will remember, Governor Jindal requested that the Federal Government pay for 45 days of military service for the State of Louisiana 1,500 National Guard and Air National Guard soldiers and Airmen. The services of these soldiers and airmen are needed to deal with historic flooding along the Mississippi River and Atchafalaya Basin.

Today, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) opened the flood gates at the Bonnet Carré Spill way just north of New Orleans to alleviate the pressure on Mississippi River levees within the New Orleans region, it is expected that the Corps will open the Morganza Spillway—for the first time since 1973—in order to relieve pressure on Baton Rouge area levees. The opening of this structure will cause a complete evacuation of the Atchafalaya Basin. Despite these actions, flooding will still reach historic crests at almost every flood gage along the lower Mississippi River, possibly causing the suspending of navigation along the Mississippi River.

The Louisiana National Guard will play a very important role in ensuring that losses of property, federal infrastructure and even lives will be limited. Currently, Guardsmen are assisting in placing sandbags and river barriers, inspecting levees and walk door-to-door to notify residents and property owners in basins and floodways from Vidalia, La to Morgan City, La. We expect that Louisiana National Guard will respond to in superb and professional manner.

Thank you for the consideration of this request and we look forward to a timely response.

Sincerely,



Senator David Vitter
U.S. Senator



Jeff Landry
U.S. House of Representatives