

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2404

March 20, 2014

Amanda Hallberg Greenwell
Director, Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Herbert Hoover Building, Room 5221
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Ms. Greenwell:

I am writing to express my disappointment in the manner in which NOAA has handled the environmental approval process for post-Hurricane Isaac disaster-relief projects in South Mississippi. As you know, FEMA declared several cities and counties along Mississippi's Gulf Coast as "disaster areas" following Hurricane Isaac's devastation in August 2012. Since that time, three area municipalities – Harrison County, the City of Gulfport, and the City of Long Beach – have petitioned FEMA for disaster relief funds to rebuild and repair hurricane-damaged piers. Discouragingly, NOAA has groundlessly hindered their requests.

Harrison County repaired its pier following NOAA-mandated post-Katrina and post-Gustav repair guidelines; however, FEMA has denied Harrison County's reimbursement requests because of NOAA's refusal to acknowledge its ongoing adherence to previously-established rebuild regulations.

FEMA has also blocked the cities of Gulfport and Long Beach from pier-repair efforts by unjustifiably delaying its response at NOAA's insistence. South Mississippi municipalities depend upon well-functioning piers and harbors for the health of their economies. NOAA's impedance of disaster recovery efforts unjustifiably harms these communities.

So that FEMA might expedite fund distribution and reimbursement for disaster recovery that occurred over a year ago, I am requesting that 1) NOAA acknowledge Harrison County's compliance with established, NOAA-mandated guidelines and 2) that NOAA expedite approval of pier-rebuilds in Gulfport and Long Beach.

If you have any questions, please call my office at (202)225-5772.

Sincerely,



Steven Palazzo
Member of Congress