

Testimony of Paul J. Zimmermann
Director of Operations
Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans

to

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Subcommittee on Border, Maritime and Global Counterterrorism
"Assessing the Resiliency of the Nation's Supply Chain"

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The lower Mississippi River is one of the most significant waterways in the United States. Over 6,500 ships per year transit the five port authorities comprising the lower Mississippi River - the ports of Plaquemines, St. Bernard, New Orleans, South Louisiana and Baton Rouge - carrying over 485 million tons of cargo - nearly 25% of our nation's waterborne commerce. To have the Mississippi River closed for any duration of time would be problematic for our nation's economy. To have it closed for an extended period of time would be catastrophic. We simply must insure that it is protected and that it can recover quickly from any event, natural or manmade.

In terms of protection, from 2002 through 2005 the Department of Homeland Security provided the Port of New Orleans \$5.7 million Port Security Grants. These funds were used for lighting, fencing, barriers, metal detectors, cameras, a mobile command center and a river patrol vessel. These grants did not require matching funds.

In 2005, the Port of New Orleans joined its sister ports in forming the Lower Mississippi River Portwide Strategic Security Council. In recognition of its economic significance, the mission of this five-port Council is to help insure that the ports on the lower Mississippi River become the safest and most protected maritime complex in the United States.

In 2006 and 2007 the Council received grants totally nearly \$30 million. These funds are to be utilized for various vessel tracking, surveillance, communications and training projects. The 2006 and 2007 Port Security Grants, unlike prior year's grants, require a 25% matching contribution. This required match, along with corresponding operational and maintenance costs, present significant financial hardships and could result in projects not being undertaken. We strongly encourage that this matching requirement be eliminated from future Port Security Grants and that operational and maintenance costs be included.

The sheer volume of maritime traffic combined with numerous targets of interest makes the lower Mississippi River particularly vulnerable to a U.S.S. Cole-type of attack. The United States Coast Guard does an excellent job of vessel inspections and aids to navigation management on the Mississippi River and I would like to recognize Capt. Lincoln Stroh, U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port, Sector New Orleans for his efforts. Capt. Stroh strongly emphasizes the need for a collaborative approach to keeping our ports safe and takes a strong leadership role in that regard. I will comment, however, that the Coast Guard is severely hamstrung in the Port of New Orleans area as they do not have enough assets on the water to provide an appropriate level of deterrence, interdiction, surveillance and presence on the Mississippi River.

From a disaster recovery perspective, Hurricane Katrina provided the Port of New Orleans, and indeed all of neighbors on the U.S. Gulf Coast, with a unique, though unfortunate, opportunity to learn the value of preparing ahead for the return to business after a devastating event.

It is said that every cloud has a silver lining. While the Port of New Orleans recovered fairly quickly after Katrina, the events that took place contributing to its recovery were basically reactionary with an emphasis on mere survival. For the purposes of this hearing, the who, how, when and where of activities after the storm are not as important as the resulting plan formulated to guide

our recovery from future events. Our organization now has plans in place to address command and control, personnel, financial, operational, communications and risk management issues in the event of a disaster. (Components of this plan are attached.) The need for such a plan is indeed what every organization should come to realize is the silver lining coming from Katrina.

In a large scale recovery effort it is essential that each and every organization involved be virtually self-sustaining from the onset of the incident. A realistic disaster recovery plan must be in place, exercised and funded. A port is comprised of numerous service providers - public and private. River pilots, tugboat operators, longshoreman, truck drivers, regulatory agencies, fuel providers, etc. all play a role in keeping a port operational. Each element should have its own organizational recovery plan in place. To the extent possible I would suggest that all Federal, state and municipal agencies develop its own local disaster recovery plan.

From an overall protection and recovery standpoint, a great deal has been done on our nation's mightiest river. However, a great deal remains to be undertaken. In the war on terrorism, and in terms of maintaining international trade resiliency, all concerned on must never fall victim to complacency.

The Port of New Orleans learned great lessons from Hurricane Katrina. We learned the value of the Mississippi River to our nation, we learned the value of human life and we learned the value of human resolve - all must be protected. In that regard we stand ready to assist this subcommittee in anyway we can.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE PORT OF NEW ORLEANS

ELEMENTS OF DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN

- Possible Events: Fire, earthquake, flood, terrorist event, hurricane, power blackout, nuclear disaster, computer virus, bridge collapse
- Employee Information: Where will they go in event of evacuation? Contact names, numbers, email
- Facility Assessment: Procedures to insure facilities are inspected and deemed safe for occupancy or use after event.
- Communications: Cell phones, satellite phones, VHF radios, interoperable UHF radios, internal and external capabilities, maintain contact with service providers, law enforcement and regulatory agencies
- Satellite Office: Pre-arranged hotel with housing and office accommodations for pre-determined senior staff. Proceed directly to hotel in case of an event.
- Incident Command: Pre-determined staff in charge at event site, administration office and satellite office.
- Harbor Police Department: Provide safety and security to port facilities and local community.
- Financial Services: Provide out-of-area banking services for employees, direct deposit, checking, accounts receivable/payable. Key financial data stored offsite and accessible from remote location.
- Daily Communications: Staff conference call at pre-determined time.
- Website Updates: Pre-determine who does it and who provides update information.
- Departmental Functions: Each department knows their respective role: Example:
Maintenance - initial facility assessment, repairs
Marketing - communicate with customers
Media - pre-determined spokesperson
- Risk Management: Understand insurances and claims process beforehand, communicate with insurers, FEMA
- Housing: MARAD

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Testimony Outline:

- A. Economic significance of the Mississippi River.
- B. Department of Homeland Security Port Security Grants.
 - 1. Elimination of matching requirements.
 - 2. Inclusion of operational and maintenance costs.
- C. Lower Mississippi River Portwide Strategic Security Council.
 - 1. Unique in its collaborative approach to security.
- D. U.S. Coast Guard in New Orleans.
 - 1. Performance.
 - 2. Asset shortage
- E. Hurricane Katrina.
 - 1. The need for a disaster recovery plan is the silver lining.
- F. Organizational Disaster Recovery Plans.
 - 1. Elements.