

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 050800)

RESOLUTION

Urging the Bush administration to immediately institute a fair, open, and honest contracting process and policies in the rebuilding and reconstruction of the Gulf Coast region devastated by Hurricane Katrina that will assure and include a substantial commitment to diversity and maximum utilization of Gulf Coast residents.

WHEREAS, The Bush administration recently awarded at least seven “no-bid” contracts, worth many hundreds of millions of dollars, to companies with political and personal ties to various administration officials, for the rebuilding and reconstruction project in the Gulf Coast region, following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina; and

WHEREAS, It is reported by national and international news media that the Bush administration is using the very same contracting practices, like “cost-plus” contractor billing, and employing the very same contractors, like Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg, Brown, and Root, blamed for spending abuses, cost over-runs, and poor performance outcomes in Iraq, evoking accusations of cronyism and profiteering; and

WHEREAS, Internal governmental audits and external scrutiny by informed, interested parties confirm contracting problems of all types are made worse or go completely unchecked because of inadequate, inexperienced, under-funded, and overworked procurement staff of the Federal Emergency Management Agency attempting to handle matters far beyond its financial and administrative scope; and

WHEREAS, These observations have resulted in bi-partisan calls in Congress for 1) an audit of these contract awards by the Congressional Government Accounting Office, 2) an investigation by the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security, and 3) the establishment of a new governmental agency to manage the Gulf Coast region project that would be directed by a federal appointee with the required expertise and profile; and

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WHEREAS, The events of Hurricane Katrina, witnessed world-wide, shed glaring light on a deep demographic divide in our country that is forged by issues of race, class, and poverty, exposing wide-spread socio-economic disparity throughout the Gulf Coast region, which in the words of Congresswoman Maxine Waters, deserve public policy discussion, focus, and remedy so there is no further victimization; and

WHEREAS, The economic recovery and revitalization of the Gulf Coast region and the restoration of the homes, businesses, and lives of its residents, is directly and critically dependent upon the role afforded them in the rebuilding and reconstruction project, fueled so far, by over 60 billion dollars in federal appropriations; and

WHEREAS, Diversity in contract participation and workforce utilization, fair pay, and contractor accountability are all severely undermined by current administration reconstruction project policies of non-competitive contract awards, suspension of Davis-Bacon prevailing wage provisions, and the waiving of certain federal affirmative-action initiatives; and

WHEREAS, This approach by the Bush administration contradicts the true desire of many and the President's own words and goal to "clear away the legacy of inequality" in America that he stated at the Hurricane Katrina victims memorial service in the National Cathedral, and only serves to add unkind economic insult to a natural disaster injury; and

WHEREAS, Leaders all across the U.S. are calling on President Bush and Congress to set a righteously inclusive, proactive agenda to facilitate recuperation from the overwhelming destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina and address the pervasive problems of long-term poverty and socio-economic isolation in the Gulf Coast region and other parts of the country; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby urge the Bush administration to immediately institute a fair, open, and honest contracting process and policies in the rebuilding and reconstruction of the Gulf Coast region devastated by Hurricane Katrina, that will assure and include a substantial commitment to diversity, maximum utilization of Gulf Coast residents and companies, prevailing wage provisions, transparency and accountability measures to prevent profiteering and corruption, the appointment of a Gulf Coast Project management agency and administrator, and the implementation of Congressional oversight.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be forwarded to the office of the President of the United States and to all members of the Philadelphia Congressional delegation.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty-second of September, 2005.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Patricia Rafferty
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmembers Tasco, Miller and DiCicco

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Tasco, Miller, DiCicco, Goode, Council President Verna, Councilmembers Reynolds Brown, Kenney, Ramos, Blackwell, Clarke and Mariano