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Dear President-elect Obama,

As representatives of New Orleans, the Bayou Parishes of Lafourche and Terrebonne, and the Gulf Coast Region, we would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations on your historic presidential victory. In your past two visits to New Orleans, of which All Congregations Together played a major role in organizing, you shared with us your desire to support us as we rebuild our city and region. Now that you have won the election, it is time to move from dreams to action.

All Congregations Together (ACT) and Bayou Interfaith Shared Community Organizing (BISCO) have a single and powerful request: **sign an executive order implementing the Gulf Coast Civic Works Act (HR 4048) in your first 100 days of your Administration.** The Gulf Coast Civic Works Act will create 100,000 prevailing jobs and training opportunities for local and displaced workers to rebuild infrastructure and restore the environment.

HR 4048 is co-sponsored by 26 Congress members, including Charlie Melancon (D-LA), Rodney Alexander (R-LA), William Jefferson (D-LA), Gene Taylor (D-MS), and Bennie Thompson (D-MS). In addition to ACT and BISCO, the Gulf Coast Civic Works Act has developed a long list of supporting organizations, including the Louisiana Republican Party, Mississippi Center for Justice, Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation, ACORN, and 108 faith-based leaders. This past week, the New Orleans City Council voted unanimously to support the Gulf Coast Civic Works Act.

The Gulf Coast Civic Works Project (GCCWP) fits in perfectly with your plan to develop 2.5 million jobs through infrastructure projects. The GCCWP rebuilds and repairs public infrastructure including schools, police and fire stations, hospitals, parks, roads, water and sewer systems, and cultural centers; builds equitable flood protection and restores the marshes and wetlands; and serves as a national model for disaster recovery and infrastructure development.

In addition to the jobs and infrastructure projects, we need the GCCWP since it provide oversight of the federal money and projects. As you know, vast amounts of federal money have been wasted and abused in post-Katrina. In one instance in the Gulf Coast, the federal government gave a \$500 million contract to Ashbritt to remove debris at the rate of

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\$23 a cubic yard. After receiving the contract, Ashbritt subcontracted the work to C&B Enterprises at the rate of \$9 per cubic yard, which turned around and hired Amlee Transportation at \$8 per cubic yard. Amlee Transportation then subcontracted the work to Chris Hessler Inc. at \$7 per cubic year, which ultimately hired Les Nirdlinger, a New Jersey hauler, at \$3 per cubic yard.

We have read the scholarship on the New Dealers, and we have learned that they were deeply concerned about this exact issue. That is why we support the Gulf Coast Civic Works Act, since it provides oversight through Local Advisory Councils composed of municipal officials and citizen groups, as well as a "Civic Works Agency" (currently described in HR 4048 as a Regional Authority but could come under the Office of the Federal Coordinator for Gulf Coast Rebuilding).

The GCCWP is in line with your philosophy of democratic action and community change. It can also serve as a national model for your administration as it tackles infrastructure and job creation. Therefore, ACT, BISCO, and our coalition partners **request a meeting with you and/or your transition team in the next four weeks.**

It is our sincerest hope and prayer that you will issue an executive order creating the Gulf Coast Civic Works Project. We thank you in advance for your continued partnership. We can be reached at 504-495-5338 for ACT or 985-446-5364 for BISCO.

In spirit,

Mary Croom Fontenot

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Attachments: Executive Order
Two-page bill summary
New Orleans City Council Resolution
Statement by 108 faith leaders