



September 16, 2005

Dear Friends:

In last night's televised speech to the nation, President Bush accepted responsibility for the failures of the federal government's inadequate response to Hurricane Katrina. However, he failed to address the core vulnerabilities Katrina exposed—the federal government's inability to respond to disaster and the abandonment of the poor, disabled and elderly. President Bush needs to provide real leadership and present a clear and long-term plan for recovery that includes reforming FEMA, building a partnership with the people of the region to create new housing, repair infrastructure, construct schools, revive the local economy, and restore their lives.

Congress has an obligation to support Katrina victims and to help them rebuild their devastated communities. However, there must be oversight and accountability in Katrina relief and reconstruction efforts. Congress must ensure the taxpayer dollars of hardworking Americans are spent wisely and effectively.

It was unfortunate that this week the Republicans in Congress adopted a partisan plan (H.Res. 437) to create a Republican-controlled Katrina investigation panel. The legislation allows the Speaker of the House sole authority to appointing the 20-member Select Committee on Hurricane Katrina without requiring any consultation with Democratic leadership. This makes the investigating and reporting to Congress on the response to Hurricane Katrina, by local, state and the Bush Administration a purely partisan effort.

Katrina victims and all of America deserves an independent commission, modeled after the 9/11 Commission, to investigate the

Hurricane Katrina disaster response. We must learn the lessons of this tragedy and never allow it to happen again.

Sincerely,



Congresswoman Betty McCollum  
Serving Minnesota's Fourth Congressional District

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