

Office of the Governor
State of Louisiana

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR



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May 31, 2016

The Honorable David Vitter
United States Senate
516 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
United States Senate
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steve Scalise
United States House of Representatives
2338 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Cedric Richmond
United States House of Representatives
240 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Boustany
United States House of Representatives
1431 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Fleming
United States House of Representatives
2182 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ralph Abraham
United States House of Representatives
417 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Garrett Graves
United States House of Representatives
204 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senators and Representatives:

Louisiana has been identified as one of the high risk states for the local transmission of the emerging Zika virus. Given the seriousness of this threat to our state, I am writing to urge you to act as quickly as possible to provide the necessary funding to states like Louisiana that are at a high risk of a Zika outbreak.

As you might be aware, the Zika virus is spread through the bite of an infected *Aedes albopictus* or *Aedes aegypti* mosquito. State surveillance has determined that the *Aedes albopictus* mosquito is found statewide in Louisiana. Additionally, the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is

found in significant numbers in the highly populated parishes of Jefferson, Orleans, St. Bernard, and in parts of Plaquemines, St. Charles, and St. Tammany.

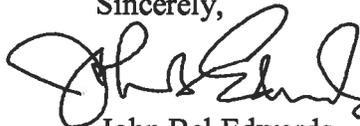
Timing is critical. Due to the high risk for Zika transmission and the geographic location of the Aedes species mosquito in densely populated areas, there is an urgent need to make significant additional funding available to bolster prevention and preparedness measures against this disease, which can cause severe birth defects in women who are infected during their pregnancy. Significant new funding is required to launch a statewide media campaign for public education and information sharing, and also to meet the needs of Louisiana residents who may be affected by Zika. This additional funding will allow for enhanced surveillance, testing, and mosquito control activities, as well as the distribution of materials to the public for the prevention of transmission. However, the facts surrounding the current spread of the Zika virus give rise to serious concern that any further delay may mean important additional funding would arrive too late.

Without timely access to adequate funding to support response planning in the face of local transmission of Zika, a public health emergency of a severity and magnitude that exceeds Louisiana's response capabilities could occur. Our goal is zero locally-transmitted cases of Zika, but reaching that goal will require additional funding for effective preventive measures.

I appreciate your efforts in Congress to help our state secure the resources necessary to protect Louisianans from the Zika virus, and I am asking for your assistance in passing federal legislation authorizing additional funding for states to combat Zika as soon as possible.

If there is any additional information I can provide, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Bel Edwards". The signature is stylized and cursive.

John Bel Edwards
Governor