

**Office of the Governor**  
**State of Louisiana**

**JOHN BEL EDWARDS**  
GOVERNOR



P.O. Box 94004  
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70804-9004  
(225) 342-7015  
GOV.LA.GOV

**REQUEST FOR MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATION  
COVER LETTER**

*October 14, 2020*

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Through: George A. Robinson  
Regional Administrator  
FEMA Region VI  
800 North Loop 288  
Denton, TX 76209-3698

**SENT VIA EMAIL**

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§5121-5207 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 C.F.R. §206.36(D), I hereby request an expedited Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Louisiana as a result of Hurricane Delta. This Category 2 storm caused major damage to private homes, public facilities, and caused the state and local governments to incur significant costs associated with saving lives and preserving public health and safety. The damages from the hurricane, in conjunction with the State's response efforts related to the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery efforts after Hurricane Laura, has overwhelmed the capabilities of state and local resources. I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and local governments, and that in accordance with 44 C.F.R. §206.36, federal assistance is necessary to supplement the efforts and available resources of the state and local governments, disaster relief organizations, and compensation by insurance for disaster-related losses.

I took the appropriate action under state law and declared a statewide emergency (133 JBE 2020) on October 6, 2020. Furthermore, I directed the execution of the State Emergency Operations Plan in support of the statewide emergency declaration in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act. A copy of that declaration is attached. Local jurisdictions took similar emergency measures, and began executing their own emergency plans. A total of 56 parishes declared states of emergency.

For the parishes directly in the path of Hurricane Delta that were significantly damaged, I am requesting Public Assistance, Category A (Debris Removal) and Category B (Emergency Protective Measures), and all categories of Individual Assistance. Those parishes are:

**Acadia, Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson Davis, and Vermilion.**

After further damage assessments are completed, I anticipate that there will be additional parishes that will be requested. Under Individual Assistance, I request Housing Assistance, Disaster

Unemployment Assistance, Disaster Care Management, Crisis Counseling, and Other Needs Assistance including but not limited to medical, dental, childcare, and funeral expenses. Finally, I am requesting Hazard Mitigation statewide.

### ***Background***

Louisiana began preparing for Hurricane Delta on October 5, 2020, after the National Weather Service (“NWS”) forecast the storm to make landfall on Louisiana’s coastline. This was the sixth time during the 2020 hurricane season that a hurricane was projected to strike the State. Unlike many of the previous forecasts, however, NWS advised Louisiana that it had high confidence of a Louisiana landfall. Based upon this projection, I ordered the execution of Louisiana’s Emergency Operations Plan on October 6, 2020. The Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (“GOHSEP”) increased the activation level of its Emergency Operations Center (“EOC”), which was already activated due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Hurricane Laura recovery efforts.

Hurricane Delta quickly established itself as a devastating storm, reaching major hurricane status even before it reached the Gulf of Mexico. It weakened slightly while crossing the Yucatan Peninsula, but Delta soon regained its major hurricane status after entering the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Although the NWS projected that Hurricane Delta would weaken prior to making landfall, the storm’s winds were still recorded at 100 mph when it struck Cameron Parish in southwest Louisiana on the evening of October 9, 2020. Outer bands from Hurricane Delta began impacting Louisiana almost 24 hours before landfall, bringing significant amounts of rainfall during the evening of October 8, 2020. When Delta struck Louisiana as a strong Category 2 hurricane, it brought high storm surge and heavy rain. Parts of Calcasieu Parish received 16-17 inches of rain by the time Delta made landfall. In addition to the impacts in southwest Louisiana, the NWS reported life threatening storm surge across much of south central Louisiana.

Unfortunately, Hurricane Delta followed a very similar path to Hurricane Laura, one of the strongest storms to ever strike Louisiana, which made landfall just six weeks prior to Delta on August 27, 2020. In fact, Hurricane Delta’s point of landfall near Creole, Louisiana, was less 15

miles from Hurricane Laura's point of landfall near Cameron, Louisiana. The image below illustrates the similarities in the two hurricanes' paths. Although the citizens and local governments in southwest Louisiana have been working nonstop to conduct recovery operations after Hurricane Laura, there are still hundreds of buildings that have not yet been repaired. Over 8,000 blue tarps could be seen on rooftops prior to Hurricane Delta's landfall, and piles of debris that had not yet been removed dotted the landscape. The remaining debris was a particular concern, and I warned citizens of the danger posed by Hurricane Delta's winds converting that debris into life-threatening projectiles. Survivors who were forced to evacuate for extended periods due to utility outages barely had time to evaluate their homes before once again being forced to evacuate ahead of

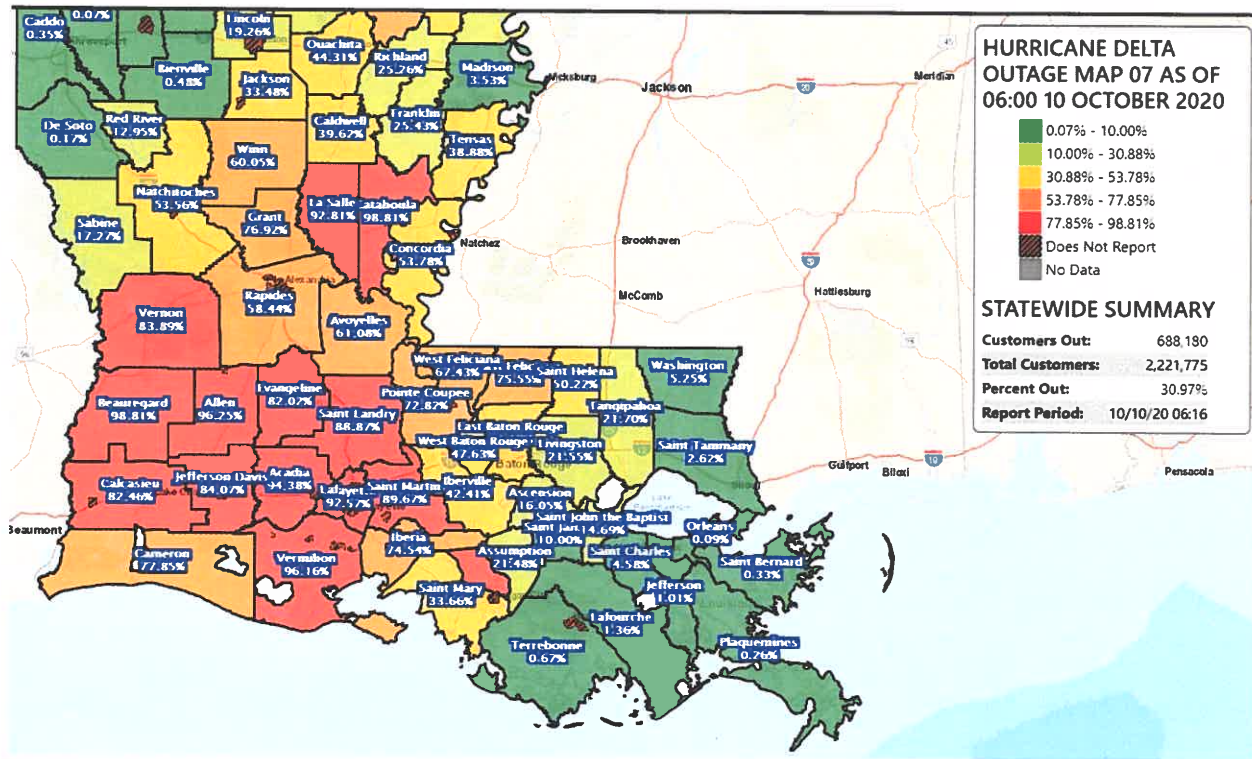
Hurricane Delta. Many Hurricane Laura survivors are now dealing with buildings and residences that were flooded by Delta just six weeks after being damaged by Laura's winds.

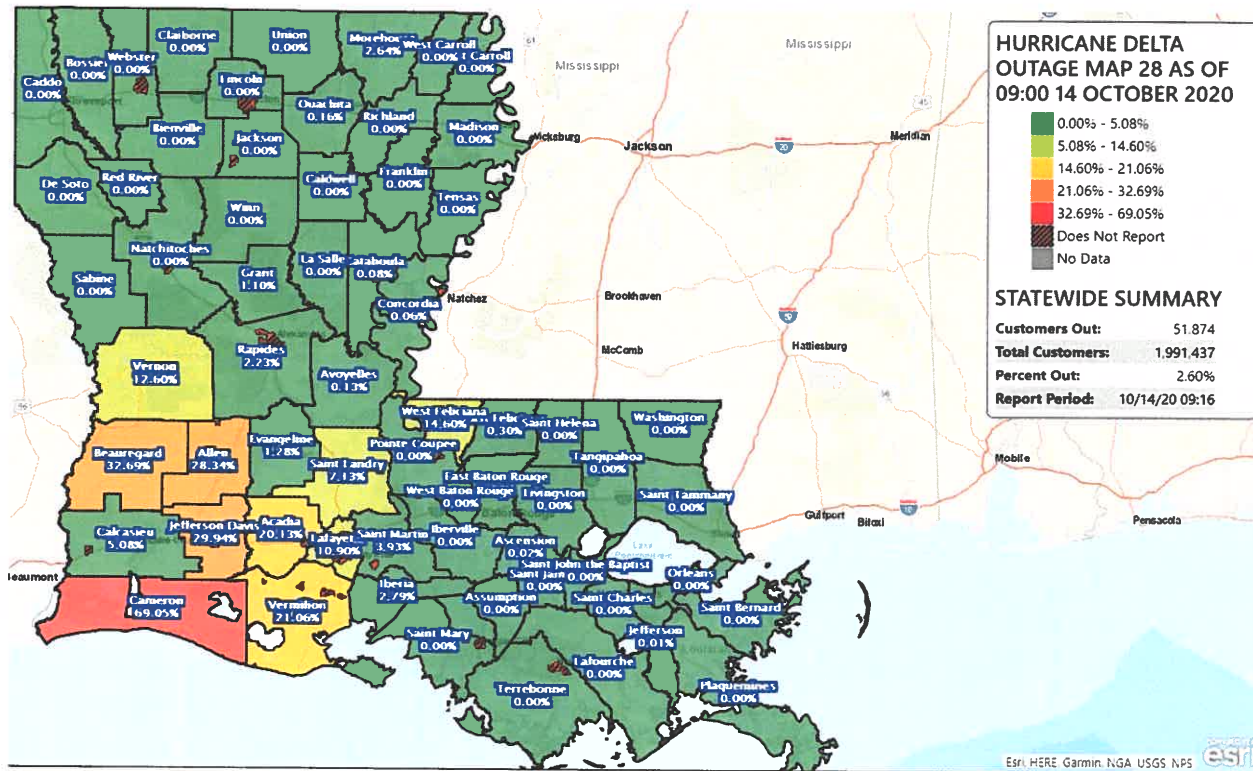


State and local government officials began assessing damages from Hurricane Delta once the conditions were clear enough to allow safe entry. Of course, the primary concern was the safety and health of those citizens who remained in the path of the storm. While we are unaware of any fatalities during Hurricane Delta's landfall, we unfortunately experienced two deaths in the hurricane's aftermath. Both victims expired in fires, one related to a generator and one to a natural gas leak. Another victim of one of the fires is hospitalized and in critical condition.

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
October 14, 2020  
Page 4

Hundreds of thousands of citizens are struggling without basic utilities in the aftermath of the hurricane. As of 6:00 a.m. on October 10, 2020, the Louisiana Public Service Commission (“PSC”) reported that over 688,000 Louisiana citizens were without power. Below are two graphics showing power outages for each parish in the state. Hurricane Delta’s path is clearly shown by the massive amounts of power outages in the initial graphic, reported in the immediate wake of the storm. The second graphic, reported today, shows that tremendous efforts are being made to have all power restored within one week. However, this still leaves many citizens without power for a significant period of time.





Essentially all of the parishes in southwestern Louisiana and many in central and northern Louisiana received catastrophic damage from Hurricane Delta. Trees and power lines caused numerous road blockages. The Louisiana Department of Health has reported that 71 water systems serving a population of over 32,000 were impacted, and 74 Boil Water Advisories are currently in effect for over 220,000 survivors. In several parishes, a lack of power and cellular service has limited our ability to assess the needs of the local governments. State assets are conducting flyovers to get a better understanding of the overall destruction left in Hurricane Delta's path.

Due to inaccessibility issues from flooding and road damages as well as the continued mandatory evacuations that remain in place in certain areas, the extent of new damages will take some time to assess. Response efforts to save lives and preserve public health and safety will continue for some time before we can fully transition to recovery. Because of these issues, full Preliminary Damage Assessments ("PDAs") for both Public Assistance and Individual Assistance are not feasible at this time. The survivors who have been dislocated from their homes will need assistance immediately, however. For these reasons, I am requesting an expedited Major Disaster declaration in order to bring immediate relief to these struggling communities.

### ***Parish Information***

Although we are still gathering information and beginning to assess damages, parishes are reporting hurricane impacts as they are able to obtain the information. As of this date, GOHSEP has been able to capture the following information for the requested parishes:

#### **Acadia Parish**

FEMA has validated \$140,000 in estimated costs for debris removal, as well as \$330,975 in costs for emergency protective measures associated with establishing Points of Distribution (“PODs”) within the parish. Additionally, 53 homes with major damage have been reported and 8 more were destroyed.

#### **Calcasieu Parish**

FEMA has validated \$4,000,000 in estimated costs for debris removal. Additionally, 226 homes with major damage have been reported and 25 homes destroyed.

#### **Cameron Parish**

Many areas in Cameron Parish are still inaccessible, and the parish has not yet determined it safe to lift the mandatory evacuation order. As a result, assessing damages will be delayed until it is safe for residents and local government to return to the area. So far, FEMA has validated \$920,000 in estimated costs for debris removal. Due to mandatory evacuation orders, only four (4) homeowners have reported their information so far, but all of those reports show major damage. Distinguishing between damages from Laura and Delta will be particularly problematic in Cameron Parish. However, based on a windshield survey by the Parish Emergency Manager, the estimated number of homes major and destroyed is over 700.

#### **Jefferson Davis Parish**

FEMA has validated \$600,000 in estimated costs for debris removal. Additionally, 33 homes with major damage have been reported and so far one more was found destroyed.

#### **Vermilion Parish**

FEMA has validated \$3 million in estimated costs for debris removal. Additionally, 26 homes with major damage have been reported and 4 more were destroyed.



*Calcasieu Parish*



*Cameron Parish*



*Jefferson Davis Parish*



*Vermilion Parish*

It is certain that once state, local, and federal authorities are able to conduct a full assessment of damages, the cost of Hurricane Delta will be much higher.

***State and Local Resources Committed to Alleviating Results from Disaster***

When I declared a state of emergency, GOHSEP increased the EOC readiness level and began processing support requests from local governments and other state agencies. Numerous other agencies also activated and manned their own EOCs to provide assistance and coordination within their areas of responsibility. State agencies have so far incurred \$17 million in costs to respond to Hurricane Delta. Those response efforts include the following:

**Evacuation/ Sheltering**

Over 21,000 survivors from Hurricane Laura evacuated and were sheltered in non-congregate shelters (“NCS”) at some point. Congregate shelters are not utilized for long-term sheltering in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. During the ensuing six weeks after Laura, Louisiana agencies and their partners were able to return all but 8,000 survivors to their home parishes. Approximately 2,000 of those survivors were returned during the week prior to Hurricane Delta. At the time of Delta’s landfall, approximately 6,000 evacuees were in NCS shelters spread across several Louisiana hotels, and another 2,000 evacuees were sheltered in Texas hotels. Louisiana has contracted with the American Red Cross to oversee the NCS operations.

As of the date of this request, almost 1,000 additional evacuees reported to Louisiana shelters as a result of Hurricane Delta. They are being staged in congregate settings while state and local governments ascertain the condition of the evacuees’ homes. Those without major damage in their homes will be able to leave the shelters, but evacuees with major damage will need to be sheltered in additional hotels.

Numerous incarceration facilities are located within Hurricane Delta’s path. To protect offenders housed in those facilities, the Department of Corrections (“DOC”) evacuated numerous offenders from those facilities to facilities that are located outside of the path of the storm.

The Louisiana Department of Health (“LDH”) has activated all available assets and contracted for additional staff since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to Hurricane Delta, LDH has continued to address COVID-19 concerns among the general evacuee population, as well as the Medical Special Needs Shelter, at which 52 evacuees are currently sheltered. Additionally, LDH is responsible for monitoring and providing assistance to hospitals and other medical facilities impacted by the hurricane. Three (3) hospitals in the most impacted areas remain evacuated, as well as three (3) nursing homes.

**Search and Rescue**

Louisiana has assembled a SAR force consisting of public employees and private individuals. SAR assets include representatives from the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, LANG, the U.S.

Coast Guard, the State Fire Marshal's Office ("SFM"), and volunteer organizations. SAR teams conducted more than 30,000 secondary searches and damage assessments in southwest and south central parishes.

#### *Flood Fighting*

For those areas that experienced flooding, GOHSEP and the Louisiana Coastal Preservation and Restoration Authority ("CPRA") worked together to provide numerous pumps and other flood fighting equipment in order to mitigate the damaging effects of rising water and saltwater intrusion into water supply systems.

#### *Power Generation*

GOHSEP coordinates with other agencies to provide generators to critical locations in order to retain power. Currently, the State has fulfilled 324 generator requests from the affected areas.

#### *Points of Distribution ("PODS")*

GOHSEP is coordinating the distribution of thousands of MREs, water, and ice to 7 parishes experiencing a lack of utilities and food supply. Louisiana National Guard ("LANG") troops are working at these sites, and local governments will provide assistance such as security. LANG has 151 troops devoted to providing security at numerous locations.

#### *Debris*

In addition to providing transportation for many evacuees, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development ("DOTD") is fully engaged in removing debris along all state roads.

#### *EMAC*

Responding to Hurricane Delta required assets beyond Louisiana's current capabilities. We reached out to other states for assistance and brought in a number of disaster response specialists to supplement Louisiana's capabilities.

### ***Summary***

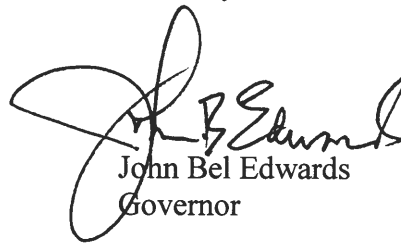
I have determined that this incident, a strong Category 2 hurricane that made landfall in almost the exact location and just six weeks after one of the strongest storm to ever make landfall in Louisiana, is of such severity and magnitude that effective recovery is beyond the capabilities of the state and local governments and that supplemental federal assistance is necessary. For the parishes directly in the path of Hurricane Delta that were significantly damaged, I am requesting Public Assistance, Category A (Debris Removal) and Category B (Emergency Protective Measures), and all categories of Individual Assistance.

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
October 14, 2020  
Page 11

Because of the magnitude of damages in the southwestern Louisiana parishes, I urge you to provide an expedited declaration in order to provide immediate federal relief to these highly impacted communities. I anticipate that, after we have the opportunity to assess the damages in other parts of the state, a number of additional parishes will need federal assistance to allow them to recover from this disaster. I hereby certify that state and local government obligations and expenditures for the current disaster will comply with all applicable cost sharing requirements of the Stafford Act.

I have designated James B. Waskom as the Governor's Authorized Representative ("GAR") and Casey Tingle as the Alternate GAR and also as the State Coordinating Officer ("SCO") for this request. Director Waskom and Mr. Tingle will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and will provide further information and justification on my behalf.

Sincerely,



John Bel Edwards  
Governor

Enclosures:

OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13  
Proclamation 133 JBE 2020