

Written by

Wednesday, 30 September 2009 15:06

Washington, D.C. – Signaling his continued commitment to Katrina-Rita recovery, President Barack Obama announced he will visit the Gulf Coast in mid-October and see first-hand the progress in the region. President Obama also today signed an Executive Order extending the Office of the Federal Coordinator for Gulf Coast Recovery and Rebuilding for six months. The Office of the Gulf Coordinator was first established November 1, 2005.

Since taking office eight months ago, the Obama Administration has worked hard to provide residents of the Gulf Coast with the tools that they need to recover from the hurricanes, and to rebuild their lives and communities. The Administration is deeply committed to serving the needs of Gulf Coast residents by cutting through the bureaucratic red tape that has delayed assistance and improving coordination among federal agencies and with state and local partners. As a result, more than \$1 billion in public assistance projects that had been stuck for years have been obligated since the start of the Administration, including fire and police stations, health clinics, libraries, and university buildings. In addition, thousands of individuals who had been trapped in temporary disaster housing are on the road to self-sufficiency. The Recovery Act is providing significant resources to the Gulf, providing support to communities and individuals while also supporting the region's infrastructure and creating and saving jobs in critical areas like education and law enforcement.

In addition, President Obama is taking steps to improve disaster recovery efforts across the country. A six-month effort led by Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano and Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan will examine lessons learned during previous catastrophic disaster recovery efforts, areas for improved collaboration between federal agencies and between the federal government and state and local governments and stakeholders. The effort also will review federal disaster recovery programs for efficacy and review methods to build capacity within state, local and tribal governments as well as within the non-profit, faith-based and private sector.