

Subj: **New Orleans Business Council Press Release**
Date: 11/16/2005 12:57:32 P.M. Central Standard Time
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Mike:

Attached is the press release that was sent out yesterday by the New Orleans Business Council.

Regards,
Barry

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Jay Lapeyre, Chairman, New Orleans Business Council 504-733-6000

BUSINESS COUNCIL CALLS ON BLANCO TO ASSURE LEVEE SAFETY
WITH PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE... NOT PATRONAGE

NEW ORLEANS, LA, Nov. 15, 2005...The Business Council of New Orleans and the River Region today called upon Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco (D- LA), in the interest of community safety, to replace the membership of the Orleans Parish Levee Board with highly qualified, apolitical experts in engineering and project management.

"Many of Louisiana's citizens and successful companies have relocated out of state," said Jay Lapeyre, Business Council Chairman.

"These citizens and businesses will not return to Greater New Orleans and others will not remain unless they know the region is safe from preventable devastation caused by flooding," Lapeyre said.

The 30 year old Business Council is comprised of local business, University and organisation leaders. They made their concerns known to Governor Blanco in a letter sent directly to her. signed by 36 Council members.

The Council letter defended the position of drowned and near drowned citizens and businesses seeking immediate change at the Orleans Levee Board. "Professional, apolitical expertise is vitally needed to oversee, rebuild and maintain our levee system," Lapeyre said. "The future of New Orleans and the entire area depends on it."

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ADD ONE BUSINESS COUNCIL CALLS ON BLANCO

Governor Blanco ousted the former president of the Levee Board for his conduct before and after Katrina. However, according to the Council's letter that is not enough to solve the current lack of qualified, trained, levee safety experts

In this legislative session, Blanco proposed legislation to create an oversight board to monitor the Levee Board. According to the Business Council, this additional bureaucracy compounds the problem.

The Council's mission is to give New Orleans a safe, diverse, dynamic economy that will become a more attractive place for business and families to work and live.

Following is the complete text of the letter as signed by the Business Council of New Orleans and the River Region.

Dear Governor Blanco:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with members of The Business Council of New Orleans last week. Many of our most successful companies have relocated out of state. These businesses will not return to Greater New Orleans and others will not remain unless they know the region is safe from preventable devastation caused by flooding.

The levees in greater New Orleans failed, hundreds of citizens died, tens of thousands are homeless, property damage is in the billions, a great city has been devastated, and yet the Orleans Parish Levee Board continues to protect the unqualified and the corrupt. You ousted the former president of the Levee Board for his disgraceful conduct before and after the storm, but his replacement is

now muzzling a staff lawyer who knows the truth. How can we tolerate that behavior? The drowned and near-drowned citizens of this community want radical change and want it now.

We call on you to clean house at the Orleans Parish Levee Board and replace its current membership with highly qualified, apolitical experts in engineering and project management. We also ask you to urge the Attorney General to aggressively investigate the prior activities of the Levee Board.

In this legislative session, you have proposed legislation to create an oversight board to monitor the levee boards. This additional bureaucracy will only compound the problem. We call on you to immediately announce your support for legislation to:

- Replace the existing multiple-district levee system with a single levee district covering all areas that impact hurricane protection in Greater New Orleans.
- Grant this body full authority to take all actions needed to protect lives and property from levee failure.
- Staff the body with commissioners chosen based on their expertise and without the slightest appearance of political patronage.
- Provide independent oversight and public reporting on plans and execution, with input provided by the National Academy of Sciences.
- Cause this body to promptly divest the Levee Board's interest in projects extraneous to levee construction and maintenance, either by transferring those projects to appropriate state or municipal agencies or by selling them at public auction.

One reason that Congress shows little interest in providing needed financial assistance to our communities is the perception that our politics are corrupt. For the Federal Government to act, this state

must take concrete steps to clean up corruption. Reforming the levee board system will signal that the cleanup process has begun.

We call on you to declare an all-out war against corruption, the appearance of corruption and patronage politics throughout the state. These activities have no place in the recovery of this region and in the new Louisiana. To restore public trust, we must create government that is honest, competent, transparent and accountable.

Respectfully,

The Business Council of New
Orleans
and the River Region

Lapeyre Jr., James M.
Chairman, Business Council of New Orleans
and the River Region
President
Laitram, L.L.C.

Adler II, Coleman E.
Owner & C.E.O.
Coleman E. Adler & Sons, Inc.

Bachmann, Richard A.
Chairman & C.E.O.
Energy Partners, Ltd.

Bollinger, Donald T. (Boysie)
Chairman & C.E.O.
Bollinger Machine Shop & Shipyard, Inc.

Byrd, Daryl G.

President & C.E.O.
IBERIABANK

Byrd, Marshall D.
Vice President & General Manager
Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company

Casbon, John N.
C.E.O., Southeast Region
First American Title Insurance Co.

Coleman, Thomas B. (Tommy)
Managing Partner & C.E.O.
International Matex Tank Terminals

Cooper II, Angus R.
Chairman & C.E.O.
Cooper/T. Smith Corporation

Fowler, Hardy B.
Office Managing Partner
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Georges, John D.
Chief Executive Officer
Imperial Trading Co., Inc.

Goldring, William (Bill)
Chairman
Magnolia Marketing Company

Johnsen, Erik F.
President
International Shipholding Corporation

Kallenborn, John J.
President – New Orleans Region
JPMorgan Chase Bank, NA

Kerstein, David A.
President
Helis Oil & Gas

Koerner III, John E.
President
Koerner Capital, L.L.C.

Lagarde III, Maurice Leonard
President
HCA-Delta Division

Lane III, H. Merritt
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Mayer, Mark A.
President
Peter A. Mayer Advertising Inc.

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Merrick, Robert W.
Chairman & C.E.O
Latter & Blum, Inc./Realtors

Metcalf Jr., William M.

Chief Executive Officer
City Business

Monteleone, William A. (Bill)
Chairman
Hotel Monteleone

Oreck, Thomas A.
President & C.E.O.
Oreck Corporation

Packer, Dan
President & C.E.O.
Entergy – New Orleans

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Reiss Companies, LLC

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President & C.E.O.
Transoceanic Shipping Company, Inc.

Solomon, Gary N.
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Crescent Bank & Trust
Stewart Jr., Frank B.
Chairman of Board
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Taylor, Dean E.
President & C.E.O.

Tidewater, Inc.

Cowen, Dr. Scott S.
President
Tulane University

Forman, L. Ronald (Ron)
President & C.E.O.
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Walk, Frank H.
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Walk, Haydel & Associates, Inc.

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