Office of the Governor
State of Louisiana

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR

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March 23, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

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 CFR § 206.36, I hereby request a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Louisiana as a result of the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) global pandemic. As a result of this natural catastrophe, the State of Louisiana has taken significant measures to save lives and protect the health and safety of its citizens.

The response to the spread of COVID-19 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 CFR §206.36, supplementary 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.

In further response to this situation, I have taken the appropriate action under state law and proclaimed a state of emergency on March 11, 2020 (25 JBE 2020) and ordered the execution of the State Emergency Operations Plan in accordance with Section 501(a) of the Stafford Act. A copy of the declaration of the state of emergency is attached. Subsequent additional Emergency Declarations were ordered (see attached).

I am requesting a Major Disaster Declaration to provide assistance to the State of Louisiana for activities involved in preserving life, health, and safety. Specifically, I am requesting Individual Assistance (including Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Disaster Case Management, Crisis Counseling, and Other Needs Assistance not limited to medical, dental, childcare, and funeral expenses) and Public Assistance for Emergency Protective Measures (Category B) as well as Direct Federal Assistance and assistance from the Community Disaster Loan Program.

In accordance with 44 CFR § 206.47 (d), I would like to request 100% Federal funding for emergency work under Stafford Act Section 403, as well as Direct Federal assistance. I also request 100% Federal funding in accordance with Title 32 U.S.C 901-908, to execute homeland security defense activities to combat COVID-19 in the State of Louisiana.

Finally, I am requesting statewide Hazard Mitigation.

BACKGROUND

On March 11, 2020, the same day that the World Health Organization designated COVID-19 as a worldwide pandemic, I declared a State of Emergency to assist parishes in efforts to mitigate and lessen the spread of the virus that was rapidly spreading throughout Louisiana. I have activated the State Emergency Operations Center and directed state agencies to thoroughly prepare for any public health needs and deploy additional resources to assist local authorities.

In an effort to reduce the spread of the virus, I encouraged social distancing by mandating that all public gatherings of 50 people or more be postponed or cancelled. I also took measures to close all public schools in the State of Louisiana until April 13, 2020. I have also closed public buildings in some areas and encouraged the use of remote work by government employees. Additional measures taken to protect the health and safety of the public include mandating the complete closure of all casinos, video poker establishments, movie theaters, bars, bowling alleys, fitness centers and gyms, closing restaurants to patrons eating on site but allowing takeout, drive-through and delivery orders.

To further combat the spread of COVID-19, I have issued a Stay at Home Order on March 22, 2020, directing all Louisiana residents to shelter at home and limit movements outside of their homes to essential needs. This order mandates that all state agencies are closed to the public. I further encouraged social distancing by limiting public gathering to no more than 10 people. In order to continue to protect the health and lives of Louisiana citizens, I mandated the closure of all public amusement businesses, personal care/grooming businesses, and indoor malls.

A top priority of the State is to ensure that our healthcare system does not become overwhelmed. Currently, Louisiana has the third highest number of confirmed cases in the United States, with more than 1,172 confirmed cases and 34 deaths. The amount of COVID-19 confirmed cases is increasing on a daily basis. Conversely, we only have 381 ICU beds available. With our current rate of new virus cases, our hospital current capacity to successfully treat infected patients will be

exceeded. For the New Orleans area, the current projections of hospitalizations significantly exceed capacity beginning on April 4, 2020. COVID-19 continues to impact the State of Louisiana at an alarming rate every day. The full impact may not be fully actualized for some time.

In response to this situation, I have taken the appropriate action under State law and proclaimed a State of Emergency and issued 25 JBE 2020 (established a public health emergency), 27 JBE 2020 (addresses different measures and guidelines that affect State government and limited gatherings to 250), 28 JBE 2020 (postponed State elections), 29 JBE 2020 (addresses additional measures and guidelines that affect State government), 30 JBE 2020 (addresses additional measures and guidelines and limited gatherings to 50), 32 JBE 2020 (addresses issues relating to K-12 education), and 33 JBE 2020 (stay at home order) and ordered the execution of the State Emergency Operations Plan in accordance with Section 401(a) of the Stafford Act. Copies of the State of Emergency declarations are attached.

COMMITTED STATE AND LOCAL RESOURCES

State agencies and local jurisdictions have committed extensive resources in response to this disaster. A highlight of those state-wide activities is as follows:

- All 64 parishes have declared a State of Emergency and have activated their EOCs.
- Several new taskforces have been activated at the State level to assist with the COVID-19 pandemic.
    - Medical Surge Logistics
    - Hospital Medical Surge
    - Isolation and Quarantine Sites
    - Drive through Testing Sites
    - Logistical Distribution
    - Feeding Task Force
    - Small Business Support
    - EMDAC
    - Mapping
    - WebEOC/Zoom Ops
    - Procurement
    - Future Ops Cell
- We began contracting to build out hotels which will provide additional hospital beds to supplement diminishing hospital capacity.
- Bayou Segnette State Park, Bayou Chicot State Park, and Lake Bistineau State Park isolation sites were opened to receive quarantined patients. We purchased trailers and contracted services in order to house over 300 patients.

- Drive through and mobile testing sites across were opened across the State.

The state has also provided a significant amount of resources in the form of Personal Protective Equipment. Please see the chart below for figures as of March 22, 2020:

ITEM	ISSUED
.5 Liter Bottles	21900
1 liter bottle	900
Antibacterial Soap - 1 gal	26700
Anti-Fog Goggles	600
Disposable Dust Masks	19470
Face Mask Standard Earloop	84095
Face Shield	104081
Gloves - Large	17036
Gloves - Medium	1395
Gloves - Small	14117
High Risk 14 mil Latex Exam Gloves L	1920
High Risk 14 mil Latex Exam Gloves Med	3600
High Risk 14 mil Latex Exam Gloves XL	768
Latex Gloves Med	11141
MRE	2803
N95 Mask	48443
Nitrile Gloves L	22424
Nitrile Gloves Med	19087
Nitrile Gloves Sm	12258
Nitrile Gloves XL	7314
Nitrile Gloves XXL	2320
PVC Overboots - XXL	288
Safety Goggles	180
Samsung A50	145
Scratch Resistant Goggles	2934
Shoe Covers	1
Soap Towelettes - 10ct	400
Surgical Gown 2XL	14116
Surgical Gown L	24422
Surgical Gown XL	18653
Tyvek Suit - 4X-Large	8200
Tyvek Suit - 5X-Large	1675
Tyvek Suit - XXX-Large	17335
Tyvek Suits - Large	15285
Tyvek Suits - Medium	14143
Tyvek Suits - X-Large	13786
Tyvek Suits - XX-Large	5721

Vinyl Gloves L	100
Vinyl Gloves Med	2000
Vinyl Gloves Sm	1000
Vinyl Gloves XL	1000
Wipes Plus - 800ct/pk	7508

INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE

In accordance with 44 C.F.R. §206.48(b), as recently amended, there are several factors to consider for Individual Assistance:

(1) Concentration of damages

Louisiana's economy relies heavily on the petroleum industry. While we are currently still calculating damages throughout the State, we do know that a number of advanced chemical plant operations and refineries are reducing shifts to minimums required for operations. The reduced operations, combined with the global drop in oil prices associated with the actions of other countries, has taken a devastating toll on Louisiana revenues.

We have also seen significant disruption in retail and service sector businesses like restaurants, hotel, and retail stores. A report from the American Hotel and Lodging Association estimated that over 65,000 jobs in Louisiana's hotel industry have been eliminated or will be as a result of COVID-19.

While grocery and pharmaceutical supplies are operational, panic buying is still impacting inventories. Supply chain issues continue to exacerbate industry concerns of staying afloat. We are also seeing a shortage in Personal Protective Equipment which is a critical need.

Closure of schools and daycares are causing absenteeism which has become pronounced in some areas of the state. Consequently, these closures are also impacting business operations like poultry production, call centers, and food production.

The Louisiana Workforce Commission reported on Thursday, March 19th that its unemployment claims count for the week had reached 30,000, compared to 1,698 for the previous week, representing a nearly 1700% increase. Additionally, the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services reported that SNAP applications have nearly doubled from the normal rate.

(2) Trauma

Louisiana has had its share of trauma as it relates to disasters. Losing life and property are two of the most significant losses that someone can experience. However, COVID-19 has unleashed unprecedented impacts at multiple levels of our communities and State. Additionally, the state has suffered tremendous economic loss amid businesses closing, the loss of sales tax revenue, and other large scale events like festivals and concerts being cancelled. This pandemic outbreak has

devastatingly impacted our citizens with increased stress and anxiety especially for those that suffer from one or more pre-existing mental health condition.

Currently 41 of the 64 Louisiana Parishes have positive cases of COVID-19. The number of positive cases and deaths are rising daily. The first presumptive positive case in Louisiana was on March 9, 2020 and the first death just days later on March 14, 2020. We have seen a ten-fold increase in cases over the last two weeks.

As the positive cases and number of deaths across the state began to rise, I signed multiple proclamations with additional measures to protect the health and safety of Louisiana citizens. The first major closure was for colleges and universities followed by public schools across the entire state. This emergency poses a major disruption of daily routines for both parents and children which consequently leads to mental health concerns. Families are struggling to find options for childcare and meals as many schools provided free breakfast and lunch.

Those effected most by this virus are people who have tested positive and are homeless. The group is already at high risk because of social determinants that have a detrimental effect on their lives and contribute to negative health outcomes. In order to combat this, the state has set up isolation sites to support these individuals. Some are awaiting COVID-19 test results but remain under quarantine. While others have already tested positive and need to be quarantined, but do not require hospitalization. The Louisiana Department of Health along with other state agencies are providing services to these individuals including crisis counseling and stress management.

Some of the behavioral health concerns that have been displayed include:

- Suicidal ideation
- Depression
- Fear of spreading the virus to loved ones
- Stress related to
  - school closures
  - lack of or loss of employment
  - cancellation of religious services
  - being isolated from family members
  - being in an unfamiliar environment
- First Responder/Health care workers fearful of exposure

Further, Louisiana's current health care delivery system is quickly getting to the point where they are at capacity because of the treatment of COVID-19 patients. The added burden of having to address the mentally ill, developmentally disabled and/or addicted, who are among this COVID-19 population, could potentially be disastrous. We need the means to support our already fragile mental health system in order to provide for these additional challenges.

Given the fluid nature of COVID-19, many citizens are scared and even confused, creating additional fears and worry about the future of this event. This uncertainty continues to escalate distress as citizens attempt to cope with all aspects of the pandemic. Ironically, mental health experts have noted that stress increases the risk for becoming ill. The effects of COVID-19 have

caused disruptions to and increased the demand for life-saving and life-sustaining services and delays Louisiana's ability to recover from a disaster.

(3) Special Populations

One major issue that our state must address is the fact that our first responders and essential personnel are putting their own health at risk while working. In the event they too become infected, it will present another challenge to our already strained healthcare system. I am gravely concerned about a massive shortage of provider health care workers and direct service professionals especially for those with disabilities on waivers. Many individuals on Home and Community based Service (HCBS) waivers depend on these workers for fundamental assistance and essential supports (such as getting out of bed, bathing and preparing meals).

There is a major concern for our elderly population, who remain indoors and need additional support to accomplish basic household living tasks. Additionally, we have thousands of individuals with disabilities living in congregate settings (group homes and institutions-like settings). These segregated settings range from 5 or 6 bed homes to facilities housing over 100 residents. Additionally, care and resources are needed for children in schools, which is causing a massive amount of effort to provide meals and establish platforms for distance learning.

(4) Volunteer Agency Assistance

Louisiana volunteer agencies have been diligently working to provide services to individuals affected by COVID-19 physically, economically and emotionally. The volunteer agencies are available mostly to assist with temporary feeding or man hours for transportation, medical assistance, Disaster Case Management and Crisis Counseling. Due to the rapid spread of COVID-19, our volunteers are needed to fulfill these crucial functions.

Feeding Louisiana has been providing services to Louisiana during these trying times. As the Coronavirus (COVID-19) incident evolves, it is important to note the increased need for volunteers to better help us serve the hungry through our five-member food banks. I fully anticipate an increase in the number of food-insecure individuals where there is a need to serve in Louisiana. With that said, I need volunteers to continue our regular food distribution, as well as any potential increased demand for emergency food. Feeding Louisiana is committed to the well-being of their volunteers, staff and clients.

I would also like to note that there is a shortage of supplies for Feeding Louisiana which is affecting whether they can continue to operate. Some of the supplies issues are as followed:

- Non-TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) food items are reaching critically low levels.
- Food banks are reporting that they will likely run out of these items in the next several days.
- Louisiana food banks are spending up to $150,000 daily to purchase non-TEFAP items for distribution, straining organizational budgets.

- USDA-Food and Nutrition Service National Office has not supported the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry's request to approve a Disaster Household Commodity Distribution Program utilizing TEFAP commodities.
- With approval, Food Banks could begin distribution of TEFAP items to meet the significant increase in demand we are seeing on the network.

The Salvation Army is also diligently working to follow the COVID-19 CDC and State guidelines while still providing their normal social services to clients and community members who request services like food pantry, hot meals, and homeless sheltering. The following are their current actions beyond their normal day-to-day:

- Serving the homeless population who utilizes Salvation Army services and monitoring any potential outbreak within facilities related to this population.
- Providing onsite and "to-go" meals from our facilities where daily meals are prepared to include Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe, New Orleans and Shreveport.
- Posturing themselves for mission assignments from local and state partners regarding supporting distribution points (PODs) of food and supplies or mobile door-to-door distribution.

Lastly, **Catholic Charities of Louisiana** has stepped in to assist with food preparation and meal delivery.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

In accordance with 44 C.F.R. §206.48(a), there are several factors to consider for Public Assistance:

As previously mentioned, COVID-19 has rapidly made its way throughout the State of Louisiana. In an effort to be proactive, Louisiana executed its Emergency Operations Plan on March 11, 2020. A nationwide Presidential Emergency Declaration was authorized the same day, and began providing Direct Federal Assistance.

For nine full days Federal, State, and local resources have been fully activated to combat the public health emergency that has been caused by spread of COVID-19 throughout the State and Nation. These resources will remain fully activated during this natural catastrophe. This extended activation has led to elevated costs associated with the emergency protective measures.

(1) Estimated Cost of Assistance

State and local officials are still implementing protective measures, with life and safety as their top priority. Considering the rapid spread of COVID-19, I expect our emergency managers to remain in the response phase of incident management until we have flattened the curve. Due to the ongoing nature of this event, anticipated actions and costs are still being compiled at this time.

However, as of March 22, 2020, State and local governments have incurred more than $65.6 million in costs associated with this disaster.

(2) Localized Impact

COVID-19 has only served to exacerbate the State of Louisiana's resources and has further stretched local resources beyond our capability to adequately address all the recovery needs of the 64 parishes affected by this incident. Local communities are overwhelmed with school and business closures. The closure of businesses is resulting in a significant loss of revenue. Parts of the State can largely be described as rural and local resources are simply not enough for the impacted area to efficiently recover from this disaster.

Orleans and Jefferson Parishes lead the State in the amount of confirmed cases. Local law enforcement, the National Guard, and medical resources have been deployed and will be needed to maintain public safety. Additional staffing in the healthcare profession as well as healthcare supplies have been significantly increased to help with this global pandemic.

Hospital capacity in the State of Louisiana is another major concern. For example, the Louisiana Department of Heath predicts that hospital capacity for Region 1 which includes Orleans and Jefferson parishes, will be completely utilized on April 4, 2020. Thus, overwhelming our healthcare system and putting the lives and health of Louisiana citizens further in jeopardy.

Below you will find graphic representations of the magnitude of the impacts to Louisiana's population from COVID-19, most importantly the per capita impacts and growth rates which indicate that this will be an prolonged response far beyond the capabilities of State and Local resources:

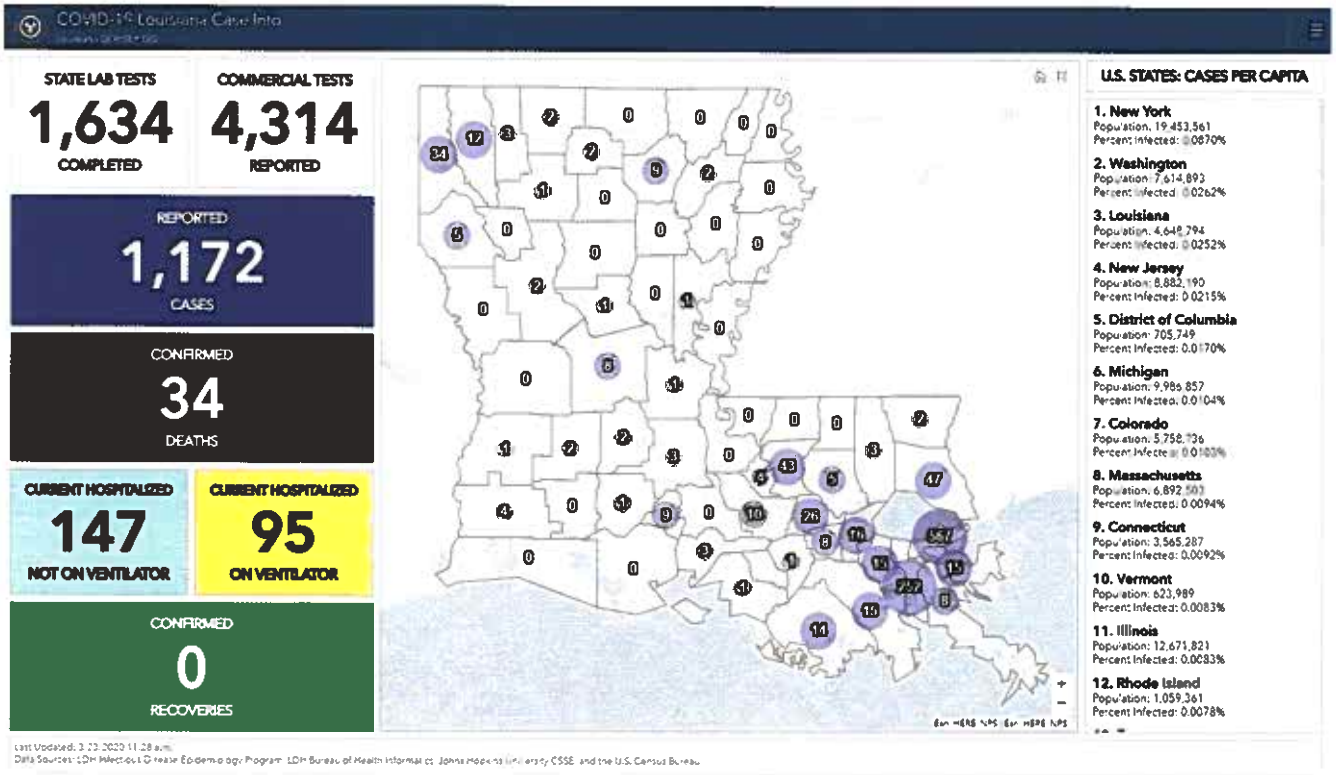

COVID-19 Louisiana Case Info
STATE LAB TESTS
1,634
COMPLETED
COMMERCIAL TESTS
4,314
REPORTED
REPORTED
1,172
CASES
CONFIRMED
34
DEATHS
CURRENT HOSPITALIZED
147
NOT ON VENTILATOR
CURRENT HOSPITALIZED
95
ON VENTILATOR
CONFIRMED
0
RECOVERIES
U.S. STATES: CASES PER CAPITA
1. New York
Population: 19,453,561
Percent Infected: 0.0870%
2. Washington
Population: 7,614,893
Percent Infected: 0.0262%
3. Louisiana
Population: 4,648,794
Percent Infected: 0.0252%
4. New Jersey
Population: 8,882,190
Percent Infected: 0.0215%
5. District of Columbia
Population: 705,749
Percent Infected: 0.0170%
6. Michigan
Population: 9,986,857
Percent Infected: 0.0104%
7. Colorado
Population: 5,758,736
Percent Infected: 0.0103%
8. Massachusetts
Population: 6,892,503
Percent Infected: 0.0094%
9. Connecticut
Population: 3,565,287
Percent Infected: 0.0092%
10. Vermont
Population: 623,989
Percent Infected: 0.0083%
11. Illinois
Population: 12,671,821
Percent Infected: 0.0083%
12. Rhode Island
Population: 1,059,361
Percent Infected: 0.0078%

Figure 1: Fastest Growth in Confirmed Cases: All Areas

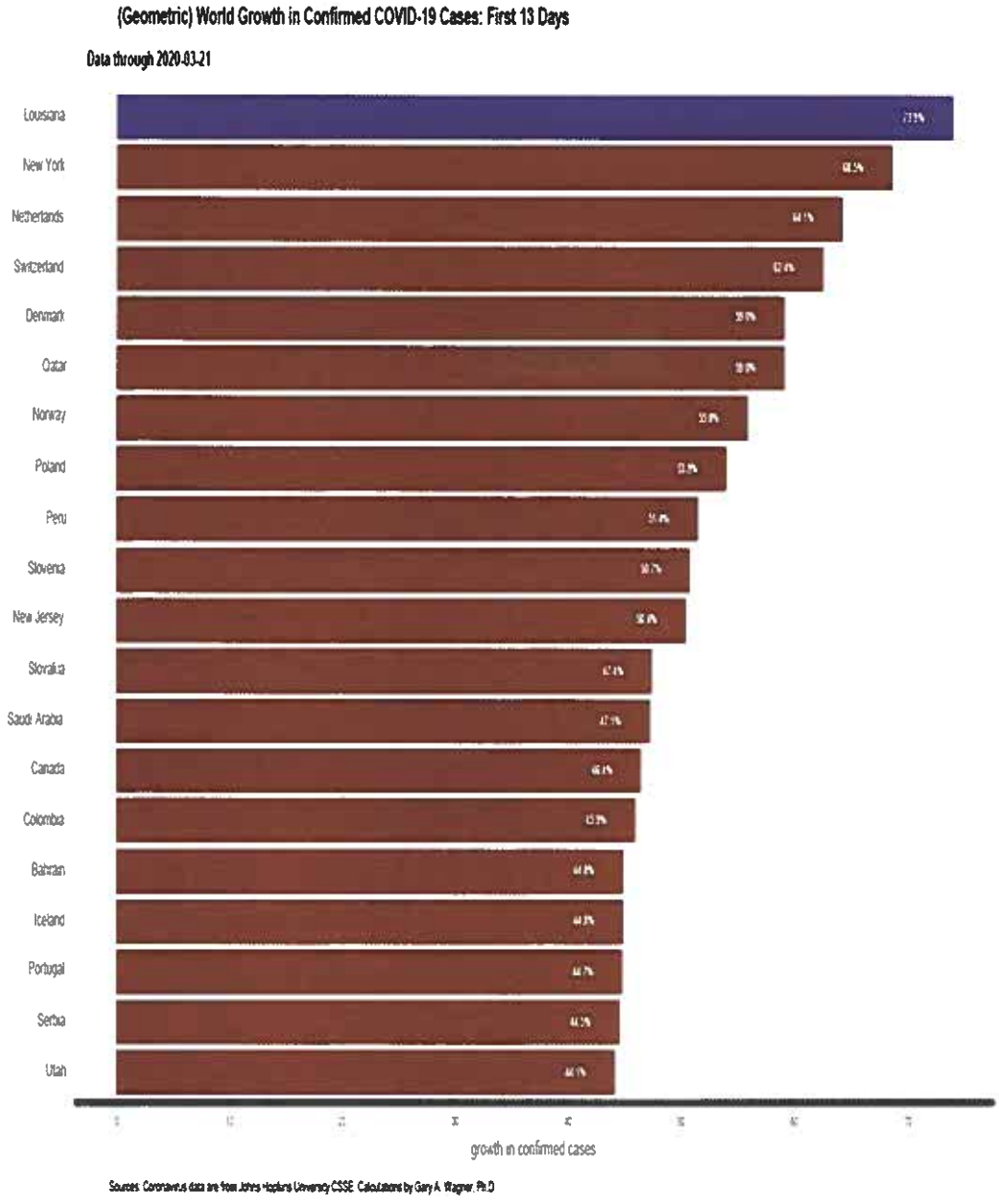
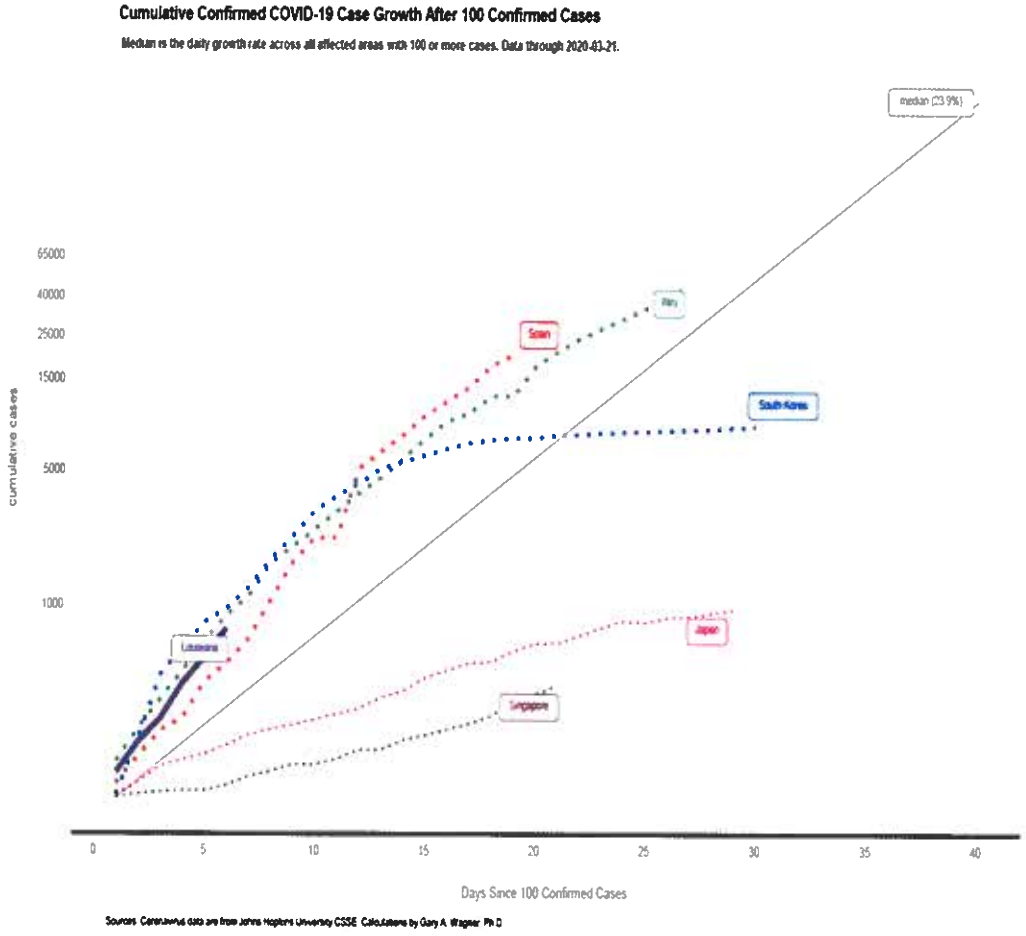


Figure 2: Growth Trajectory After First 100 Confirmed Cases



(3) Insurance Coverage in Force

No estimated eligible Category B Public Assistance expenses are expected to qualify for insurance coverage.

(5) Recent Multiple Disasters

Louisiana is still recovering from a number of major disasters in the last ten years. There were three incidents in 2013, 2015, and 2016 that resulted in the issuance of major declarations: FEMA-4102-DR (severe storms and flooding), FEMA-4228-DR (severe storms and flooding), and FEMA-4263-DR (severe storms and flooding).

Other more recent disasters include:

104 JBE 2017 (FEMA-4345-DR)

On September 25, 2017, I requested a Major Disaster Declaration due to Tropical Storm Harvey. On October 16, 2017, a major disaster was declared and Public Assistance was made available to the several Parishes. The declaration also made emergency protective measures including direct federal assistance, under the Public Assistance program available. Assistance was provided to the State for this disaster, totaling $10,965,000 in obligated Public Assistance funding.

127 JBE 2017 (FEMA-3392-EM)

A state of emergency was declared on October 6, 2017, as a result of Tropical Storm Nate. Emergency assistance was issued for the Parishes of Assumption, Iberia, Jefferson, Lafourche, Livingston, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Martin, St. Mary, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne and Vermillion. Public Assistance was obligated for this disaster totaling $4,664,621.

Louisiana is also currently operating under two (2) states of emergency as outlined below:

91 JBE 2019 (FEMA-4439-DR)

On May 21, 2019, I requested a major disaster declaration for Individual and Public Assistance due to severe storms and tornadoes that catastrophically affected the Parishes of Lincoln, Morehouse, and Union. A major disaster declaration was subsequently declared on June 3, 2019. Currently, Public Assistance has been designated for this incident.

33 JBE 2019, 42 JBE 2019, 63 JBE 2019, and 77 JBE 2019 (FEMA-4462-DR)

An emergency declaration was requested and declared on May 29, 2019, as a result of historic and continuous flood fighting. On September 19, 2019 a Major Disaster was declared. Current estimates of Public Assistance costs incurred for this disaster are $28,000,000 which to date have resulted in $4,213,441.59 in obligated Public Assistance funding.

111 JBE 2019 (FEMA-4458-DR)

A major declaration was declared on August 27, 2019, that made emergency protective measures including direct federal assistance, under the Public Assistance program available. Assistance was provided to the State for this disaster, current Public Assistance estimates from this disaster are $51,000,000 with $12,262,221.23 in obligated funding to date.

STATE HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

The State of Louisiana's Hazard Mitigation Plan was approved by FEMA on April 1, 2019 and is expected to expire in April 1, 2024. It is a "standard" plan. The hazard mitigation plans for the affected Parishes have been approved and adopted. This disaster provides an opportunity to implement hazard mitigation projects that will reduce the impact of future disasters of this nature. Therefore, I am requesting Hazard Mitigation assistance statewide.

SUMMARY

I have determined that this incident 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.

I am specifically requesting a Major Disaster Declaration for Individual Assistance (including Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Disaster Case Management, Crisis Counseling, and Other Needs Assistance not limited to medical, dental, childcare, and funeral expenses) and Public Assistance for Emergency Protective Measures (Category B) as well as Direct Federal Assistance and assistance from the Community Disaster Loan Program.

In accordance with 44 CFR § 206.47 (d), I would like to request 100% Federal funding for emergency work under Stafford Act Section 403, as well as Direct Federal assistance. I also request 100% Federal funding in accordance with Title 32 U.S.C 901-908, to execute homeland security defense activities to combat COVID-19 in the State of Louisiana.

I am also requesting statewide Hazard Mitigation.

As the COVID-19 incident progresses over the next several months, I reserve the right to amend this request to include additional FEMA programs as needed.

I have designated James B. Waskom as the Governor's Authorized Representative ("GAR") and Casey Tingle as the Alternate GAR. Casey Tingle is also designated 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:
State Emergency Declarations (25 JBE 2020, 27 JBE 2020, 28 JBE 2020, 29 JBE 2020, 30 JBE 2020, 32 JBE 2020, and 33 JBE 2020)
OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13
Appendix A:
Appendix B