

Office of the Governor
State of Louisiana

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GOVERNOR



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Open Letter from Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards
To All Friends of Small Business

Dear Friend:

In the wake of the catastrophic flood that has impacted Louisiana at historic levels, I am writing this appeal for assistance on behalf of a community that represents the lifeblood of our economy and is responsible for the livelihoods, now at risk, of an unfathomable number of our fellow citizens: Louisiana small businesses.

Even as state and federal officials have already mobilized recovery programs, the sheer magnitude of the devastation suggests that greater and more urgent resources are needed to assist those small businesses hit hard by this tragedy. While the full impact of the flooding remains to be calculated, U.S. Census data indicates that more than 50,000 businesses and 590,000 employees could have been impacted. In Livingston Parish alone, which lies east of Baton Rouge and experienced proportionally the most severe impact, an estimated 3,305 businesses that employ 27,653 employees were located in the areas that flooded, representing a staggering 91 percent of the businesses there and 94 percent of the community's employees.

In the spirit of the "Cajun Navy," a flotilla launched by Louisiana private citizens who on their own initiative rescued thousands of people in peril and inspired the nation, I am appealing to private citizens across the nation to help Louisiana's small businesses with the early support they need to stand back on their feet.

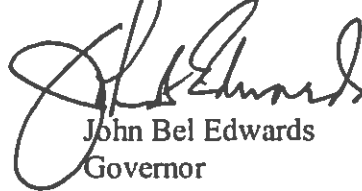
To assist with that effort, the Baton Rouge Area Chamber, Greater New Orleans Inc, the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, the Louisiana Association of Chambers of Commerce Executives, the Louisiana Chapter of the National Federation of Independent Business, and One Acadiana have partnered to launch the **Louisiana Small Business Rebirth Fund**, which will provide small businesses with "triage" grants to help them get restarted.

I fully endorse this effort, and I strongly encourage anyone interested in contributing to the Louisiana Small Business Rebirth Fund to visit www.LaBizRebirth.org and donate today.

Donations to the Louisiana Small Business Rebirth Fund will be used to provide grants to those small businesses trying desperately to reopen and serve their community. 100 percent of the funds will flow directly to Louisiana small businesses, and contributions are tax deductible. An independent review team will consider each application on the merits and prioritize those requests that will help get the business back up as quickly as possible, and save the jobs essential for people to rebuild their lives.

The people of Louisiana are strong and resilient. However, the severity of this flood event is testing our spirit in ways we have not seen since the challenges posed by Hurricane Katrina. While I know our best days remain in front of us, thousands of Louisiana's strong and proud small businesses just need a jump start to get running again. I ask that you please consider donating to the Louisiana Small Business Rebirth Fund, and encouraging others to do so, as a strong act of solidarity for Louisiana's recovery.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Bel Edwards". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "E".

John Bel Edwards
Governor