

**Mississippi Development Authority**

**Economic Development Program**

**Amendment 4 Modification 1**

*Mississippi Economic Development Program  
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August 20, 2007*

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### **Economic Development Program**

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#### **BACKGROUND AND SCOPE**

Public Law 109-148 provided funding for necessary expenses related to disaster relief, long-term recovery, and restoration of infrastructure in the most impacted and distressed areas related to the consequences of hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico in 2005 in States for which the President declared a major disaster under title IV of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. The conference report (HR Rep No. 109-359) expands on this direction, stating that the legislation provides funding for necessary expenses related to disaster relief, long-term recovery, restoration of infrastructure and mitigation in communities in any declared disaster area. Mississippi was allocated \$5,058,185,000.

The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) submits this Economic Development Program Amendment 4 Modification Number 1 of the Final Plan approved by HUD on December 19, 2006. MDA has determined that this represents a substantial amendment to the plan requiring formal submission to HUD and submittal for public comment. The nature, purpose, scope, and beneficiaries are defined in this modification.

#### **PROGRAM PURPOSE**

The Economic Development Program provides activities for Economic Development, Community Revitalization, and Planning. This modification increases the allocation of funds to the Community Revitalization Activity and provides for a Tourism Industry Restoration Grant within the Economic Development activity.

MDA is redirecting \$150 million of the \$2.3 billion allocated for Homeowner Assistance Phase I Grants to the Economic Development Program for Community Revitalization Grants. The total amount allocated for the Economic Development Program is \$650 million.

#### **OVERVIEW**

Since August 29, 2005, the communities of Mississippi's disaster declared counties have suffered significant hardships as a result of Hurricane Katrina. This modification is designed to increase the allocation for Community Revitalization grants and provide for Tourism Restoration Grants. These activities will help drive and stabilize economic development, which is vital to the recovery of these communities.

*Mississippi Economic Development Program  
Amendment 4 Modification 1  
August 20, 2007*

The amended allocation of funds to activities is as follows:

	<b>Original</b>	<b>Modification</b>	<b>Total</b>
Economic Development Grants/Loans	\$340,000,000	(\$5,000,000)	\$335,000,000
Tourism Restoration Grants	-0-	5,000,000	5,000,000
Community Revitalization	150,000,000	150,000,000	300,000,000
Planning	10,000,000	-0-	10,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$500,000,000</b>	<b>\$150,000,000</b>	<b>\$650,000,000</b>

## **COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION**

### **Purpose**

MDA has allocated the \$150 million increase to assist local governments located in the forty-nine Presidential declared disaster counties. Of the \$150 million increase, \$75 million is to assist local governments located in the 49 Presidential Declared Disaster counties, excluding the lower six coastal counties of George, Harrison, Hancock, Jackson, Pearl River, and Stone. The remaining \$75,000,000 is to assist the local governments in the lower six coastal counties.

The Community Revitalization Activity offers grants to local governments that suffered damage from Hurricane Katrina or experienced growth from evacuees from the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Louisiana or Alabama. Eligible activities are those that are included in the HUD regulations and any related waivers and alternative requirements authorized by HUD.

### **Available Funds**

MDA is increasing the funds allocated to this activity from \$150 million to \$300 million. A minimum of \$75 million of the \$150 million increase will be allocated to local governments in the six coastal counties that include George, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Pearl River and Stone counties, Mississippi.

Up to \$75 million of the \$150 million increase will be used for Go Zone Revitalization Grants, which will provide funding for eligible CDBG community development activities in the 49 Presidential Declared Disaster counties, excluding the lower six counties. \$45 million of this \$75 million is set aside for Regular governments and \$30,000,000 is set aside for Small governments. Small governments are cities with a 2000 Census of 3,500 or less and counties with a 2000 Census of 10,000 or less. MDA reserves the right to adjust the allocation between small and regular governments.

*Mississippi Economic Development Program  
Amendment 4 Modification 1  
August 20, 2007*

### **Eligible Applicants**

The 43 eligible counties for the Go Zone Revitalization Grants are listed below:

Adams	Jefferson	Oktibbeha
Amite	Jefferson Davis	Perry
Attala	Jones	Pike
Choctaw	Kemper	Rankin
Claiborne	Lamar	Scott
Clarke	Lauderdale	Simpson
Copiah	Lawrence	Smith
Covington	Leake	Walthall
Forrest	Lincoln	Warren
Franklin	Lowndes	Wayne
Greene	Madison	Wilkinson
Hinds	Marion	Winston
Holmes	Neshoba	Yazoo
Humphreys	Newton	
Jasper	Noxubee	

### **Grant Size**

The minimum grant size for Go Zone Revitalization Grants is \$100,000; the maximum grant size is \$4,000,000 for Regular governments and \$2,000,000 for Small governments. The minimum grant size for the lower six counties is \$100,000, with the maximum being \$8,000,000. Local governments may submit more than one application. MDA reserves the right to adjust the amount of the request. This adjustment will be based on the verification of reasonable cost, need, and availability of Katrina CDBG funds.

### **Threshold Requirements**

The activities shown in the application must meet one of the National Objectives of the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) and must relate to the consequences of Hurricane Katrina. These requirements must be adequately documented to support that the activity meets the thresholds and is an eligible activity in order to be rated and considered for funding.

Additionally, a letter must accompany the application, signed by the local government, stating it understands that the use of the CDBG funds is not reimbursable by FEMA, SBA or any other Federal agency. Waivers for audits should be requested prior to the due date of the application. Request for audit waivers will be considered if accompanied by an acceptable statement from the State Auditor's Office or a Certified Public Accountant, giving MDA the current status of the audit and the expected completion date.

*Mississippi Economic Development Program  
Amendment 4 Modification 1  
August 20, 2007*

### **Submission Dates**

All applications must be submitted to the Disaster Recovery Division, Sixth Floor Woolfolk Building, 501 North West Street Jackson, Mississippi, by September 7, 2007. Applications received after 4:00 p.m. on this date will **NOT** be considered for funding.

### **Selection Process**

MDA has designed specific selection criteria that will objectively rate the Go Zone Revitalization Grant applications; the selection criteria are listed below. Rating criteria for the lower six counties remain the same and the proposal process will remain the same, as MDA will request proposals and will then invite applications. MDA will rate all applications and assign points to each rating criterion based on the data provided in the application. For Go Zone applications, funding decisions are based on the scores attained; applicants with the highest score will be funded until funds are exhausted. In the event of a tie, applications will be prioritized in order of the highest number of beneficiaries served by the project.

### **Surveys**

Project area and town wide surveys will be accepted. If using a survey to determine the number of beneficiaries and low/mod numbers it must be conducted after September 2005.

If surveys were used to determine the low/mod or total beneficiaries, a map must be presented with the application that correlates to the survey. The survey must have at least an 80% response.

### **Eligible Activities**

Section 105(a) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, lists all eligible activities that an applicant may undertake. The following is a listing of possible eligible activities for community revitalization:

1. The acquisition of real property (including air rights, water rights and other interests therein) which are:
  - a. blighted, deteriorated, deteriorating, undeveloped, or inappropriately developed from the standpoint of sound community development and growth;
  - b. appropriate for rehabilitation or conservation activities;

*Mississippi Economic Development Program  
Amendment 4 Modification 1  
August 20, 2007*

- c. appropriate for the preservation or restoration of historic sites, the beautification of urban land, the conservation of open spaces, natural resources, and scenic areas, the provision of recreational opportunities, or the guidance of urban development;
  - d. to be used for the provision of public works, facilities, and improvements eligible for assistance under this title; or
  - e. to be used for other public purposes.
2. The acquisition, construction, reconstruction, or installation (including design features and improvements with respect to such construction, reconstruction, or installation that promote energy efficiency) of public works, facilities, and site or other improvements, including:
- a. Water and sewer facilities
  - b. Community, senior and health centers
  - c. Fire protection facilities
  - d. Parking, streets, curbs, gutters and sidewalks, parks and playgrounds
  - e. Shelters for the homeless
  - f. Flood and drainage improvements
3. Special projects directed to the removal of material and architectural barriers which restrict the mobility and accessibility of elderly and handicapped persons.
4. Clearance, demolition, removal of buildings and improvements, and movement of structures and other sites.
5. Rehabilitation, preservation and restoration of historic properties, provided such activities meet a national objective.
6. Rehabilitation of commercial or industrial buildings, provided rehabilitation meets a national objective. However, the rehabilitation of a commercial or industrial building owned by a private for-profit business may qualify under the rehabilitation category only if the rehabilitation is limited to improvements to the exterior of the building and correction of code violations.

### **Application Process**

Based on MDA's long-standing project review process, local governments seeking funding through the Go Zone Revitalization Grants must submit an application. Based upon an initial review of the application, MDA may require a meeting with relevant parties to discuss the project.

### **Maps**

A general project area map, showing the general location of the proposed project, with a more detailed insert (detailing project location), is required to be submitted with the application.

### **Site Visits and Inspections**

At the site visit and inspection, applicants must provide a signed HUD Disclosure form, 504 ADA Assessment and Environmental Checklist.

### **Application Scoring For Go Zone Revitalization Grants**

The selection process for these projects will be based of the following rating factors:

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Documentation of need and how the project will assist the long-term recovery from damage caused by Hurricane Katrina or how the project is needed because of the growth the community is experiencing caused by the influx of evacuees to the community | <b>50 Points</b>         |
| 2. Financial Participation   | <b>30 Points</b>         |
| 3. Cost Benefit  | <b>20 Points</b>         |
| 4. Is this project covered in the Community Plan?  | <b>20 Points</b>         |
| 5. Low/moderate income benefit   | <b>20 Points</b>         |
| 6. Project readiness   | <b>10 Points</b>         |
| Total  | <b><u>150 Points</u></b> |

**Applications must demonstrate that threshold requirements are met and the activity is eligible to be rated and considered for funding.**

### **Explanation of Rating Factors for Go Zone Revitalization Grants**

1. Documentation of need:

MDA will review each applicant's explanation as to the need for the project and shall measure the impact of the program on the identifiable need in relation to the

*Mississippi Economic Development Program  
Amendment 4 Modification 1  
August 20, 2007*

amount of funds requested. The following factors will be used to help determine the need for each project:

- a. Extent and seriousness of the identifiable needs as they relate to the consequences of Hurricane Katrina;
- b. Local efforts taken to resolve the project; and
- c. Number of persons benefiting, given the type project.

**POINTS SHALL BE AWARDED AS FOLLOWS:**

Critical Need Documentation	50 Points
Substantial Documentation	25 Points
Moderate Documentation	10 Points

**2. Financial Participation:**

Applicants will be compared in terms of the ratio of all other funds committed to the project to CDBG Katrina funds. The applicant will receive points as follows:

Any ratio over 100% 30 Points

Any ratio less than 100% will be calculated by applying that percentage times the maximum number of 30 points.

Example:

\$100,000	CDBG funds requested
<u>20,000</u>	Local funds
\$120,000	Total Project

$$\$20,000/\$100,000 = 0.20 \times 30 = 6 \text{ Points}$$

**3. Cost Benefit:**

MDA will review each applicant's cost benefit ratio. The cost benefit ratio is defined as the total CDBG request divided by the number of beneficiaries. Points shall be awarded on the following basis:

\$1 -- \$1,000	20 Points
\$ 1,001 -- \$2,000	15 Points
\$ 2,001 -- \$3,000	10 Points
\$3,001 -- \$4,000	5 Points
\$4,001 or more	0 Points



4. Project covered by a local plan:

Does the application show that the project is consistent with officially adopted local plans?

Examples:

- a. Comprehensive Plan
- b. Main street Plans
- c. Water and sewer Plans
- d. Neighborhood Plans
- e. Other similar Plans 20 Points

No Local Plan Covering project 5 Points

5. Low/Moderate benefit:

MDA will review each project's low/moderate percentage. Points will be awarded as follows:

Example:

100 %	low/mod	20 Points
99 -- 75%	low /mod	15 Points
74 -- 65%	low/mod	10 Points
64 -- 51%	low/mod	5 Points
Below 51%	low/mod	0 Points

6. Project readiness:

When will the project be ready to go to bid?

1 – 6 months	10 Points
7 – 12 months	5 Points
Over 12 months	0 Points

**Waivers**

MDA requests that waivers received from the original Economic Development Program Amendment 4 be considered effective for the \$75 million modification to grants for the lower six counties. MDA also requests that the waivers be extended to include the \$75 million for Go Zone Revitalization Grants. These include waiving the 50% low/mod participation requirement and restrictions on the repair or reconstruction of buildings used for the general conduct of government at 42 USC 5035(a)(2) and 24 CFR 570.207(a)(i).

*Mississippi Economic Development Program  
Amendment 4 Modification 1  
August 20, 2007*

Provided below is the low/mod data for the forty-three counties eligible for Go Zone Revitalization Grants:

COUNTYNAME	UNIVERSE	LOW/MOD	LOW/MOD%
Adams County	33852	15934	47.1
Amite County	13575	5998	44.2
Attala County	19283	8785	45.6
Choctaw County	9429	4065	43.1
Claiborne County	10038	5008	49.9
Clarke County	17775	7444	41.9
Copiah County	27573	16318	59.2
Covington County	19111	8457	44.3
Forrest County	29941	11868	39.6
Franklin County	8353	3792	45.4
Greene County	11084	4527	40.8
Hinds County	63783	21148	33.2
Holmes County	21008	12747	60.7
Humphreys County	11110	6624	59.6
Jackson County	88834	30346	34.2
Jasper County	17984	8398	46.7
Jefferson County	9105	5262	57.8
Jefferson Davis County	13858	7163	51.7
Jones County	63249	26030	41.2
Kemper County	10053	4735	47.1
Lamar County	36406	12394	34.0
Lauderdale County	74749	31437	42.1
Lawrence County	13164	5844	44.4
Leake County	20179	8866	43.9
Lincoln County	32533	13654	42.0
Lowndes County	59665	24856	41.7
Madison County	72555	24549	33.8
Marion County	24662	11619	47.1
Neshoba County	28081	11908	42.4
Newton County	21100	8826	41.8
Noxubee County	12368	6294	50.9
Oktibbeha County	38526	18807	48.8
Perry County	12018	5894	49.0
Pike County	38070	18164	47.7
Rankin County	110455	37789	34.2
Scott County	28105	12616	44.9
Simpson County	26674	11176	41.9
Smith County	16051	6358	39.6
Walthall County	14974	7501	50.1
Warren County	49043	20692	42.2
Wayne County	21013	9781	46.5
Wilkinson County	9274	5359	57.8

*Mississippi Economic Development Program  
Amendment 4 Modification 1  
August 20, 2007*

Winston County	19595	8222	42.0
Yazoo County	25757	12969	50.4

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of this activity is to assist local governments affected by Hurricane Katrina provide infrastructure to support economic development. The funds will be given in the form of grants and loans that will be used for economic development purposes. Tourism Industry Restoration Grants are added as an activity within Economic Development. The original allocation of \$340 million remains with \$5 million of this allocated to the Tourism Restoration Grants. The amount allocated to Community Revitalization is \$300 million. The objectives, program eligibility, and eligible cost sections for the Economic Development grants/loan activity remain the same.

## TOURISM INDUSTRY RESTORATION GRANT

This modification provides for the South Mississippi Tourism Industry Restoration Grant Program. This program will be funded with monies currently allocated in the approved Action Plan for the Economic Development Program.

### Tourism Background

In Fiscal Year 2005, the State of Mississippi hosted 30 million visitors, of which 75 percent were from outside the State. Those 30 million visitors spent \$6.35 billion in the State and contributed \$479 million in tourism tax revenues. Out-of-state tourists come to Mississippi as a result of the marketing and promotion of Mississippi's many cultural and natural assets, family recreation destinations, and various special events that occur in the State each year. South Mississippi is one of the largest areas for the State's tourism and convention business. The devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina on South Mississippi and the Mississippi Gulf Coast resulted in a significant loss of interest in tourism, which in turn has decreased dramatically the number of tourism-related jobs and revenues.

The damage caused by Katrina to Mississippi's tourism sector has caused business and leisure travelers to choose other destinations. The result has been a significant loss in tourism revenues and the number of jobs in the industry. Specifically, Mississippi has experienced loss in the following areas:

<b>Direct Tourism Employment</b>	<u>FY 2005</u> 91,700	<u>FY 2006</u> 75,000	<u>Rate of Change</u> -18.2 %
<b>Tourist/Visitor Expenditures</b>	<u>FY 2005</u> \$6.35 billion	<u>FY 2006</u> \$5.35 billion	<u>Rate of Change</u> -15.7 %
<b>General Fund Tourism Revenues</b>	<u>FY 2005</u> \$376 million	<u>FY 2006</u> \$300 million	<u>Rate of Change</u> -20.2 %
<b>Total Hotel/Motel Rooms*</b>	<u>June 2005</u> 55,067	<u>June 2006</u> 46,326	<u>Rate of Change</u> -15.9 %
*These figures do not include condos/timeshares, cabins, or bed & breakfast rooms.			
<b>Overnight Leisure Person-Trips^</b>	<u>FY 2005</u> 11.5 million	<u>FY 2006</u> 9.0 million	<u>Rate of Change</u> -21.7 %
^Based on the number of persons, not households.			

(Sources: Mississippi Department of Employment Security, Labor Market Information; Mississippi Development Authority/Tourism Division; Mississippi Gaming Commission; Mississippi State Tax Commission; Smith Travel Research; D.K. Shifflet & Associates; TNS Travel & Transport, 2006).

This significant loss of tourists and tourism revenue means that small businesses and tourism related entities that make up the character of the Mississippi Gulf Coast region are at serious risk. Many of these businesses are very small retail and service businesses that employ low- to moderate-income workers. Tourism customers have not yet returned, and many of these local tourism entities do not have the means and/or confidence in the industry to spend advertising and promotional monies to attract visitors.

Tourism and the resulting visitor spending will boost the local economies, generating jobs and possibly creating additional tourism products. Without these jobs, many of the communities severely impacted by the storm cannot recover. As such, MDA proposes the South Mississippi Tourism Industry Restoration Grant Program to provide for an expansive advertising, promotions, and events marketing campaign to bring out-of-state travelers back to the Mississippi Gulf Coast region. This critical funding is needed to provide a powerful, positive impact on the large number of tourism-related jobs in the affected region—particularly Forrest, George, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Pearl River, and Stone counties.

### Primary Objective

The primary objective of the Tourism Restoration Grant Program is to increase the number of visitors to the impacted areas in order to recover and sustain the small businesses that rely on tourism, increase and sustain related jobs, and return the tax revenues to the communities in which these businesses reside. Furthermore, the program

*Mississippi Economic Development Program  
Amendment 4 Modification 1  
August 20, 2007*

will strengthen consumer confidence, which helps encourage visitors to return, citizens to rebuild, and businesses to invest in the communities.

This program will accomplish these objectives by providing grants to:

- Promote economic and community development through tourism events;
- Assist events in becoming more established and generating greater attendance and revenue; and
- Restore and enhance the image of Mississippi, its regions, and communities as tourism destinations.

### **National Objective**

This program is designed to be consistent with the national objective of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, by providing funds for local projects with activities that meet urgent needs. This program meets community development needs having a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community and no other financial resources are available to meet such needs.

### **Available Funds**

MDA will allocate \$5 million dollars over three years to the South Mississippi Tourism Industry Restoration Grant Program.

### **Eligibility**

Eligibility is limited to government and non-profit tourism entities involved in promoting and attracting visitors to the seven South Mississippi counties of Forrest, George, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Pearl River, and Stone. Advertising, promotion, and/or events marketing projects may be submitted by the tourism entity directly to MDA, through a designated tourism council or commission, or through established tourism councils with the primary objective of promoting tourism. If a coordinated event or advertising project for regaining visitors to the region is created between MDA's Tourism Division and tourism entities, the event is eligible for program assistance.

Grant funds may not be used for an organization's operating costs.

### **Grant Size**

An eligible project may receive 75 percent of the total advertising and promotion budget of the project. If the universe of eligible grants exceeds the total available dollars allocated, the grant percentage may be reduced to a lesser value.

*Mississippi Economic Development Program  
Amendment 4 Modification 1  
August 20, 2007*

### **Application Process**

MDA will solicit proposals from government and non-profit tourism entities through a uniform grant review process. Proposals received will be ranked based on the best return on investment in meeting four strategies:

1. Market South Mississippi and the Mississippi Gulf Coast region as a tourism destination—both nationally and internationally (10 points);
2. Highlight Mississippi's family attractions, festivals, and cultural assets unique to the areas most affected by the storm (10 points);
3. Market the most impacted areas to conventions, travel agents, and other related markets (10 points); and
4. Restore business investor confidence in the region (10 points).

MDA will use these four indicators to rank proposals and recommend eligible grantees. A project must receive at least 28 points to be considered eligible for grant funding. MDA will also use these indicators to track the impact of the grant awards.

### **Environmental**

In consultation with HUD, and due to the nature and design of the Tourism Industry Restoration Grant activity, MDA has determined through its environmental review that project level actions are categorically excluded and not subject to related laws.

### **Monitoring**

MDA will utilize monitoring processes to ensure program requirements are met. This will include processes and procedures to ensure non-duplication of benefits, provide for continual quality assurance, investigation, and internal audit functions.

### **WAIVER**

MDA has developed the South Mississippi Tourism Industry Restoration Program in order to provide disaster recovery grant assistance to support and restore the tourism industry and to promote travel to communities in the most disaster-impacted areas of the state. However, because tourism industry support, including a national consumer awareness advertising campaign for an area in general, is not normally eligible for CDBG assistance, MDA is requesting an eligibility waiver for such activities. Tourism industry support will be an important recovery tool for the damaged regional economy of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, which depends on tourism for many of its jobs and tax revenues. Congress made such tourism industry support eligible, within limits, for CDBG disaster recovery funds appropriated for recovery of Lower Manhattan in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and HUD has granted an eligibility waiver to Louisiana for similar activities.

*Mississippi Economic Development Program  
Amendment 4 Modification 1  
August 20, 2007*

As such, MDA requests that the provisions in 42 U.S.C. 5305(a) and 24 CFR 570.489(f) be waived to the extent necessary to make eligible the use of \$5 million for assistance for the tourism industry, including promotion of a community or communities in general, provided the assisted activities are designed to support tourism to the most impacted and distressed areas related to the effects of Hurricane Katrina.

Waivers received from the original action plan are considered effective for this modification.

### **INVESTIGATION AND MITIGATING OCCURRENCES OF FRAUD, ABUSE AND MISMANAGEMENT**

MDA will work with all Federal agencies to investigate and mitigate instances of fraud, abuse and/or mismanagement of any CDBG funds. The Auditor for the State of Mississippi has an investigative team assigned to investigate suspected instances of fraud.

### **COMPLAINT REFERRALS**

Complaints alleging a specific violation of a statutory or regulatory requirement, received by HUD at the Headquarters, Regional, or Field Office level will be forwarded to the appropriate State office for a response.

### **SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENTS**

MDA recognizes that any change which changes the nature, purpose, or scope of the programs contained herein will constitute a substantial amendment requiring public comment and approval by HUD. Additions or deletions of program activities or changes in eligible beneficiaries would also constitute the need for a program amendment requiring public comment and approval by HUD.

### **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

This proposed amendment—Amendment 4 Modification 1—was officially posted for public comment to the website [www.mississippi.org](http://www.mississippi.org) on June 21, 2007, with the public comment period ending on July 6, 2007. Comments on the plan could be sent via mail to MDA, Post Office Box 849, Jackson, MS 39205, Attention: Disaster Recovery, or sent via facsimile to (601)359-9280. Comments were also accepted via email at [actioned@mississippi.org](mailto:actioned@mississippi.org).

The following is a summary of the comments received and MDA's response to the comments:

*Mississippi Economic Development Program  
Amendment 4 Modification 1  
August 20, 2007*

**Comment:** Keep the process for Round 3 of the Community Revitalization Grants the same as it was for Rounds 1 and 2 for the local governments in the six coastal counties; do not eliminate the proposal step of the process.

- 11 comments

**Response:** The proposal process for the lower six coastal counties will not be eliminated.

**Comment:** Extend the submission date for applications to September 10, 2007.

- 1 comment

**Response:** The submission date has been changed to September 7, 2007.

**Comment:** Give more weight to the financial participation criteria in the application scoring process.

- 1 comment

**Response:** The financial participation criteria will not change.

**Comment:** Reduce the total points needed for eligibility from 100 to 70 for those local governments who classify as small governments

- 1 comment

**Response:** There is no longer a set number of points required for eligibility for the Go Zone Revitalization Grants.

**Comment:** Expressing support for the tourism restoration activity of this plan.

- 2 comments

**Response:** No response needed