

WE ARE ALL RESILIENT BUT WE ARE NOT ALL RECOVERED



RECOVERY & RESILIENCY: THE PEOPLE'S STORY

Ten years ago, the brunt of Hurricane Katrina's massive force made landfall on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

The story of recovery, however, was not the same for all communities. Permanent displacements, interrupted progress and lost opportunities left previous states of being far out of reach.

Instead, many of our neighbors had to find ways to reinvent themselves. Those who were able to recover their pre-Storm status or carve out a new pathway beat many odds. Many who lived on the Coast have now endured a decade of making things work the best they can.

We have heard the story of the first responders and the architects of recovery. We have heard that we pulled ourselves up from the scattered pieces of our former home and put it all back together.

While we were all resilient in the aftermath, the reality is that we are not all recovered. While we all picked up the pieces following the devastation, the recovery of our homes, our economic status and our community was a process designed by decision-makers and guided by their interests.

In the aftermath of Katrina, the prioritization of billions in public funds did not include the needs of those with the least access to resources of recovery. As housing recovery funds began flowing to the Coast, the first to get assistance were often high-income homes with access to resources that many lacked. Three years passed before recovery funds were designated for damage to low-income homes.

Some homes fell entirely through the cracks and did not receive assistance until this year, as we mark the tenth anniversary. Promises of redevelopment continue to fall short of the community's most critical needs. More than a half billion was diverted from housing funds to redevelop the Port of Gulfport, which has lagged in meeting project goals and creating jobs.

Katrina unleashed a wave of setbacks that was made worse with the impact of the Great Recession and the BP Oil Spill, setting in motion an unforgiving series of obstacles.

Many Nonprofit organizations were created or expanded to assist with recovery for low-income families. Existing non-profits repaired their infrastructure while working to mobilize quickly and offer assistance. Local community faith based and civic leaders responded to the devastation facing their communities and worked tirelessly to make up for the failures, neglect, and competing priorities of the local, state, and federal government officials and agencies. Local churches and non-profit organizations, such as the Red Cross and Salvation Army, provided the much-needed services of food and shelter. People all across the country gave their time, money, and resources to help rebuild the coast. Local people were driven to return to sense of normalcy, to restore their homes, workplaces, educational and recreational facilities, and their places of worship. Dr. James Patterson Smith writes in his book, *Katrina The Mississippi Story*, "Hundreds of testimonials document the unexpected heroism that emerged in people of every age, race, and class at the time of Katrina. They speak of amazing problem solving in the midst of horror. They speak of compassion and of courage. They speak of strengths of spirit in ordinary people that touched friends and neighbors and bred hope in the midst of ruin." These qualities were ones shared by so many residents living along the coast, those that have been able to rebound and those that are still recovering ten years later.

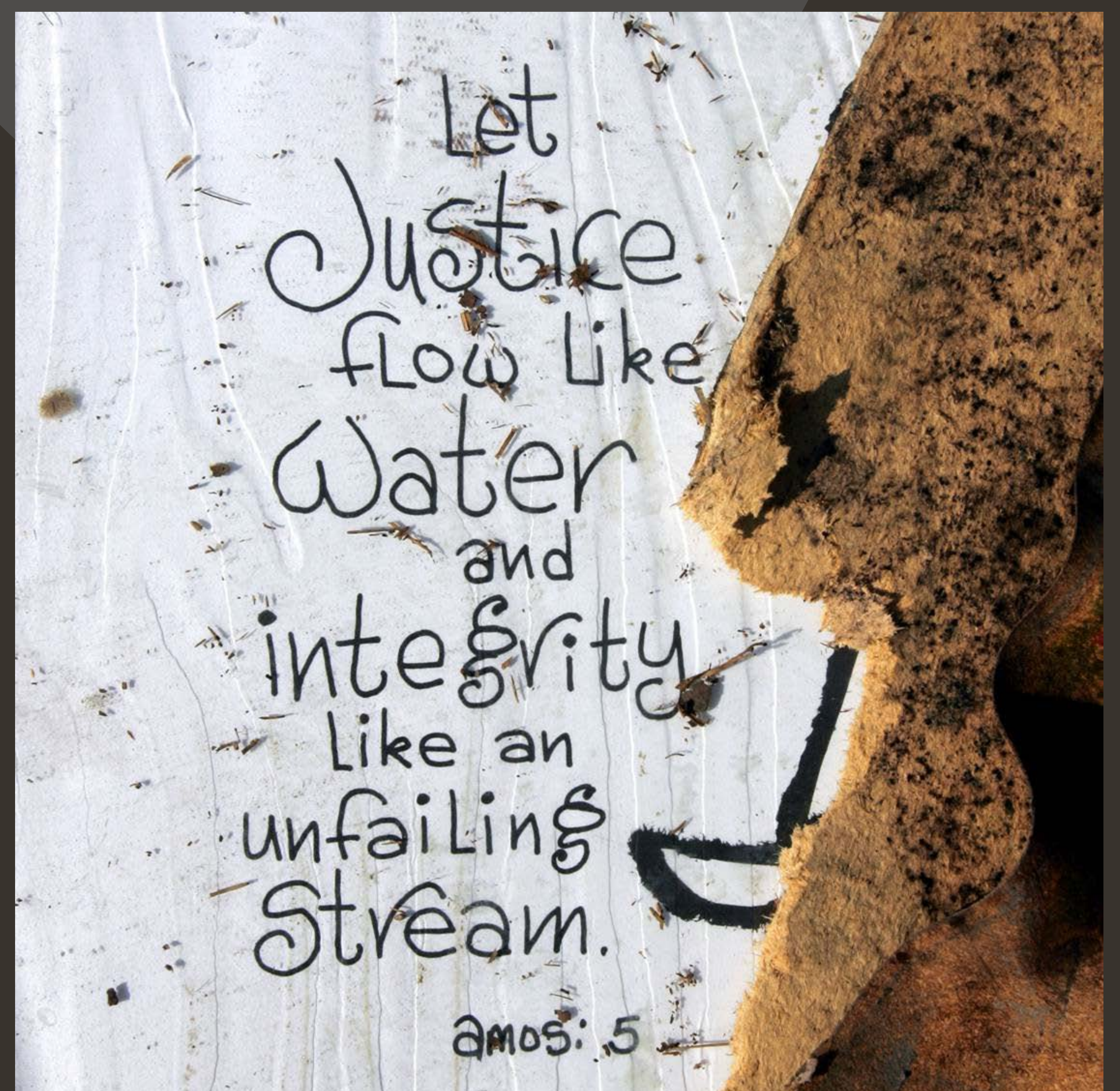
For most, the support of others and the government assistance to rebuild eventually set them back on the path they were on before Katrina, but for many low-income and minority communities, the goodwill and charity of others was not enough to restore their path, leaving the people with the least means to push forward as they rebuilt and continue to take on the worst of Katrina's longterm effects.

The Gulf Coast's 10th commemoration of the storm must not leave out the peoples' experience: which is the story of resilience, of reinvention and of the ongoing process of recovery.

- Jennifer Crosslin
STEPS Coalition

In Harrison and Jackson County, there are 3,727 more African Americans living in poverty than before Katrina, a 15% increase in the number of impoverished African Americans since 2005.

- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey



In Harrison and Jackson County, median monthly housing costs for all households are \$164 more than before Katrina on average, an increase of 19% since 2005.

- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey



GROWING RISKS RAISE THE URGENCY FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE

These growing risks make it ever more urgent that we adopt a more protective, science-based approach to planning for the future, one that includes the perspectives of frontline communities and their first-hand experience of climate impacts.

What about preparing before disaster strikes? A recent GAO report found that despite numerous expert recommendations highlighting the value of pre-disaster mitigation efforts, we tend to spend much more on post-disaster recovery:

For example, from fiscal years 2011-2014, FEMA obligated more than \$3.2 billion for HMGP post disaster hazard mitigation while the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program obligated approximately \$222 million.

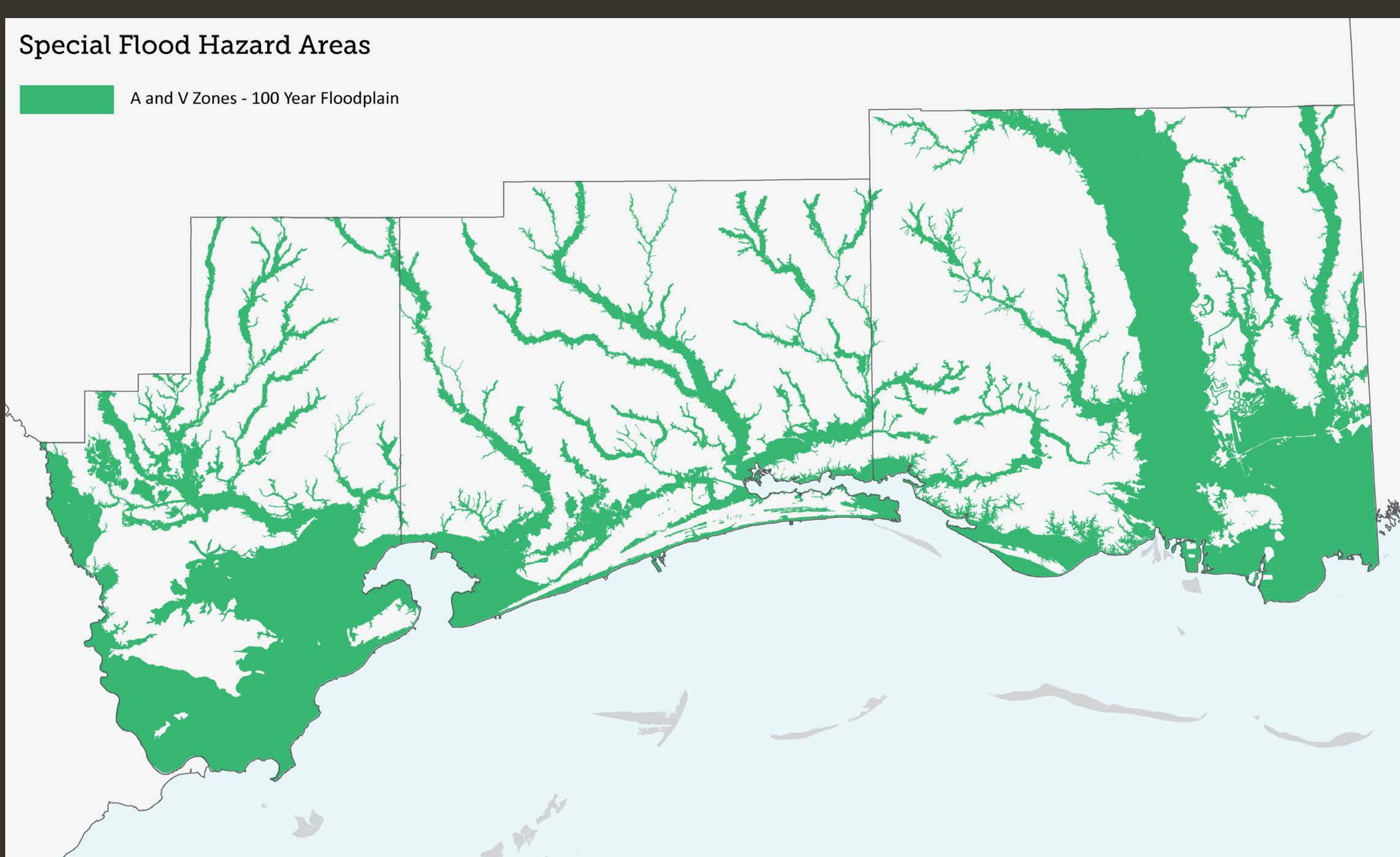
And a 2014 report from the Office of the Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security found that:

Over 8 years since Hurricane Katrina, FEMA has not obligated approximately \$812 million of the \$2.16 billion in authorized mitigation funds... This \$812 million represents missed or delayed opportunities to protect lives and property from future disasters.

Investing adequate resources in preparing communities ahead of the next disaster is critical. It's a smarter, more cost-effective way to use limited taxpayer dollars, and can help us plan ahead instead of merely being in an emergency response framework.

What's more, FEMA and HUD need to do more to proactively engage with frontline communities, understand their needs, and build working relationships **before** a storm hits. That will make recovery efforts more effective and more in line with what a community wants.

- Rachel Cleetus, Union of Concerned Scientists Climate Justice: Why Vulnerable Communities Need Resilience Investments



SCIENTISTS PROJECT SEA LEVEL RISE

When sea levels rise rapidly, as they have been doing, even a small increase can have devastating effects on coastal habitats. As seawater reaches farther inland, it can cause destructive erosion, flooding of wetlands, contamination of aquifers and agricultural soils, and lost habitat for fish, birds, and plants.

When large storms hit land, higher sea levels mean bigger, more powerful storm surges that can strip away everything in their path.

In addition, hundreds of millions of people live in areas that will become increasingly vulnerable to flooding. Higher sea levels would force them to abandon their homes and relocate. Low-lying islands could be submerged completely.

Scientist project sea level rise of 19 inches by 2050 in Mississippi.

Los científicos proyectan que el nivel del mar en Mississippi aumentara 19 pulgadas para el 2050.

Mức nước biển dự án khoa học tăng 19 inch vào năm 2050 ở Mississippi. Nguồn: Tạp Chí,

GULF RESTORATION NETWORK WORKING TO PROTECT COASTAL WETLANDS

Money spent in haste by state and local governments after Katrina was often also spent wrongly and in violation of laws. Gulf Restoration Network was involved in coastal Mississippi in the first two years after Hurricane Katrina when we recognized that some of the recovery and restoration money flowing into Mississippi for storm recovery was being spent irresponsibly and in clear violation of Federal laws. The state's Gulf Utility Plan began in 2007 with \$700 million in grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to build a variety of sewage infrastructure projects. Out of 30 sewer plant projects, GRN identified nine that were being conducted without having Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) prepared for them. In their haste, HUD and the state violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Some of the sewage treatment plant construction was clearly designed to facilitate and support new subdivision development and not to repair existing storm-damaged sewer systems. Gulf Restoration Network and the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic took action against HUD and the State of Mississippi with a 2009 notice of violation letter under the Clean Water Act citizen lawsuit provisions.

Sewage plant construction in one location, well north of I-10, was in violation of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) because it threatened wetlands and the sole surviving wild population of the listed (threatened) Mississippi Gopher frog. GRN's 2009 legal action over wrongly spent HUD grant money began a long effort to protect the Gopher frog. The journey involved many players and in 2014, after a decade of negotiation and through the use of new settlement money from Sierra Club lawsuits against Mississippi Power Company, the Gopher frog's habitat was purchased and will be restored and protected.

In the decade since Katrina, because of flooding in Gulfport neighborhoods, Gulf Restoration Network has been concerned with the fate of 1000 acres of wetlands on the "Butch Ward" property along Turkey Creek near I-10 and U.S. Hwy 49. We, along with local citizen's groups, the Mississippi Center for Justice, Steps Coalition, and Sierra Club have twice provided technical comments on Army Corp of Engineers wetland fill permits written by the Ward Company that would open these wetlands for development into industrial commercial and retail use. The "Domain at Prime Center" project in 2013 and a new 2015 joint Ward Investments/City of Gulfport project both sought permits to add enough fill material to raise over 400 acres of the property by 3 feet. This is like building an island in a bathtub. In this very flat and wet area, most of the land is classified as wetlands. Losing so much stormwater storage through the filling of these wetlands leaves everyone and everything in the Turkey Creek floodplain at increased risk for flooding. So far, GRN and its partners have been successful in keeping these wetlands intact.

- Andrew Whitehurst
Gulf Restoration Network

The rapid loss of Mississippi coastal wetlands due to growing development and industrial activity is simultaneously reducing natural protections against storm surges and flooding and worsening their impacts.

La rápida pérdida de pantanos en Mississippi debido al desarrollo y la actividad industrial está reduciendo las protecciones naturales contra las tormentas y las inundaciones lo cual esta empeoramiento los impactos de tormentas.

Bạn có biết: Sự mất mát nhanh chóng của vùng đất ngập nước ven biển, vì sự phát triển và các hoạt động công nghiệp, giảm đồng thời bảo vệ tự nhiên chống lại các cơn bão, lũ lụt và làm ảnh hưởng cơn bão tối tệ.

8 million gallons of oil spilled in the Gulf of Mexico during Hurricane Katrina, making it the largest oil spill since the Exxon Valdez in 1989

Tám triệu gallon tràn dầu ở Vịnh Mexico trong cơn bão Katrina, là tràn dầu lớn nhất kể từ khi 1989 Tràn Dầu Exxon Valdez.

8 millones de galones de petróleo se derramaron en el Golfo de México durante el huracán Katrina, convirtiéndolo en el mayor derrame de petróleo desde Exxon Valdez en 1989.

There were 7,515 business establishments on the Gulf Coast in 2005, and by 2013, the number was several hundred shy of the pre-Katrina level at 7,041.

- U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns

SIERRA CLUB'S FORMALDEHYDE CAMPAIGN

In 2006, Sierra Club launched a campaign to expose the risk of exposure to formaldehyde found in FEMA trailers and called congressional investigation of the potential health hazards posed by the trailers. Despite the Sierra Club tests that detected formaldehyde levels at FEMA trailer holding stations 50 times the EPA's "elevated" level – FEMA insisted the trailers were safe. Those living in the trailers reported they experiencing health problems ranging from headaches and runny noses to chronic respiratory problems and nosebleeds as soon as they moved in. "It's simply wrong that the government would spend billions of dollars to poison people in these toxic tin cans," Gillette said.

Victories for the Formaldehyde Campaign

Katrina, Rita Victims get \$42.6 million in toxic FEMA trailer suit

Associated Press

Roughly 55,000 residents of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Texas will be eligible for shares of \$37.5 million paid by more than two dozen manufacturers. They also can get shares of a separate \$5.1 million settlement with FEMA contractors that installed and maintained the units

President Obama Signs Landmark Formaldehyde Legislation Enacting National Standards

Sierra Club Press Release, July 9, 2010

The Sierra Club applauds President Obama and the bipartisan members of Congress who delivered legislation that will protect consumers by enacting national standards for formaldehyde in composite wood products. "Without the action of Congress, better regulation of formaldehyde could have taken many years longer," said Becky Gillette, Formaldehyde Campaign Director for the Sierra Club. "This doesn't make up for the illnesses of tens of thousands of families housed in Katrina trailers with high formaldehyde levels. But it is encouraging to see that sometimes our government works for the people instead of for the profits of big corporations. **Congress has taken a major step to protect people from unsafe levels of formaldehyde.**"

Latest News: EPA regulation of formaldehyde will be weakened after sustained opposition

Eric Lipton and Rachel Abrams, New York Times

An unusual assortment of players, including furniture makers, the Chinese government, Republicans from states with a large base of furniture manufacturing and even some Democrats who championed early regulatory efforts, have questioned the E.P.A. proposal. The sustained opposition has held sway, as the agency is now preparing to ease key testing requirements before it releases the landmark federal health standard.

The E.P.A.'s five-year effort to adopt this rule offers another example of how industry opposition can delay and hamper attempts by the federal government to issue regulations, even to control substances known to be harmful to human health.

- Mike Brunner, NBC News
Are FEMA trailers toxic tin cans?



STEPS FOR A JUST TRANSITION TOWARD CLEAN ENERGY BEGIN WITH NET METERING POLICY

The oil spills during Katrina and the BP oil spill disaster should remind us all of the necessity of moving away from extractive oil and gas energy toward renewable clean energy. Mississippi is one of three states without renewable energy standard, net metering policy, or interconnection standards, making it the smallest producers of renewable energy in the Southeast. Recently, however, the Public Service Commission announced it will be considering a net metering policy in the coming months.

What is net metering? Net metering policy incentivizes homeowners, businesses and leasers to install rooftop solar and send their excess solar-generated electricity back to the electric grid. In other words, customers like you and me will not only save on our own electric bill but can also become energy suppliers and receive credit for the clean power we create.

Benefits of net metering: The Public Service Commission's own study determined net metering could deliver a financial benefit to all Mississippians. Strong and fair net metering rules will lower electricity rates for all (even those without rooftop solar panels), reduce operating costs for public and private sectors, improve air quality and public health, reduce greenhouse emissions, and create a new sector in our state's economy – providing thousands of new, good-paying jobs for Mississippians.

-Howard Page
STEPS Coalition

EPA Clean Power Rule Reduces Carbon Emission by 30% by 2030

President Obama released the final EPA Clean Power Plan. This rule is the first ever attempt to cut carbon emissions. Carbon emissions accounts for about 82% of all greenhouse gases from human activity contributing to climate change. The largest sources of CO2 emissions are electricity (37%) and transportation (31%). Under the Clean Power Plan, states are required to submit implementation plans that outline how they will cut carbon emission from power sources in 30% by 2030. Though the EPA plan provides a framework for how states should make changes to achieve this goal, states have control over what they will do to cut emissions. Mississippi Governor, Phil Bryant and MDEQ Executive Director, Gary Rikard, spoke out against the rule stating that it not be achievable in Mississippi and place an undue burden on industry. However, Mississippi is already on their way to reaching the first target goal for 2022 because of the recent legal settlement requiring one of Mississippi's four power plants, Plant Jack Watson, to be converted to gas powered plant. Gas powered plants release less harmful toxins and less CO2 than coal fired plants, and is among the recommended steps in the EPA Clean Power Plan for the states to reduce carbon emissions. Also, included are conversions and/or expansions of renewable energies. All states are required to submit their plans by 2016. It is not clear whether Mississippi has even begun to write a plan. However, if the state does not comply, the federal government will write it for them.

- Jeremy Richardson
Union of Concerned Citizens/ EPA.gov/ David Henry, The Hill

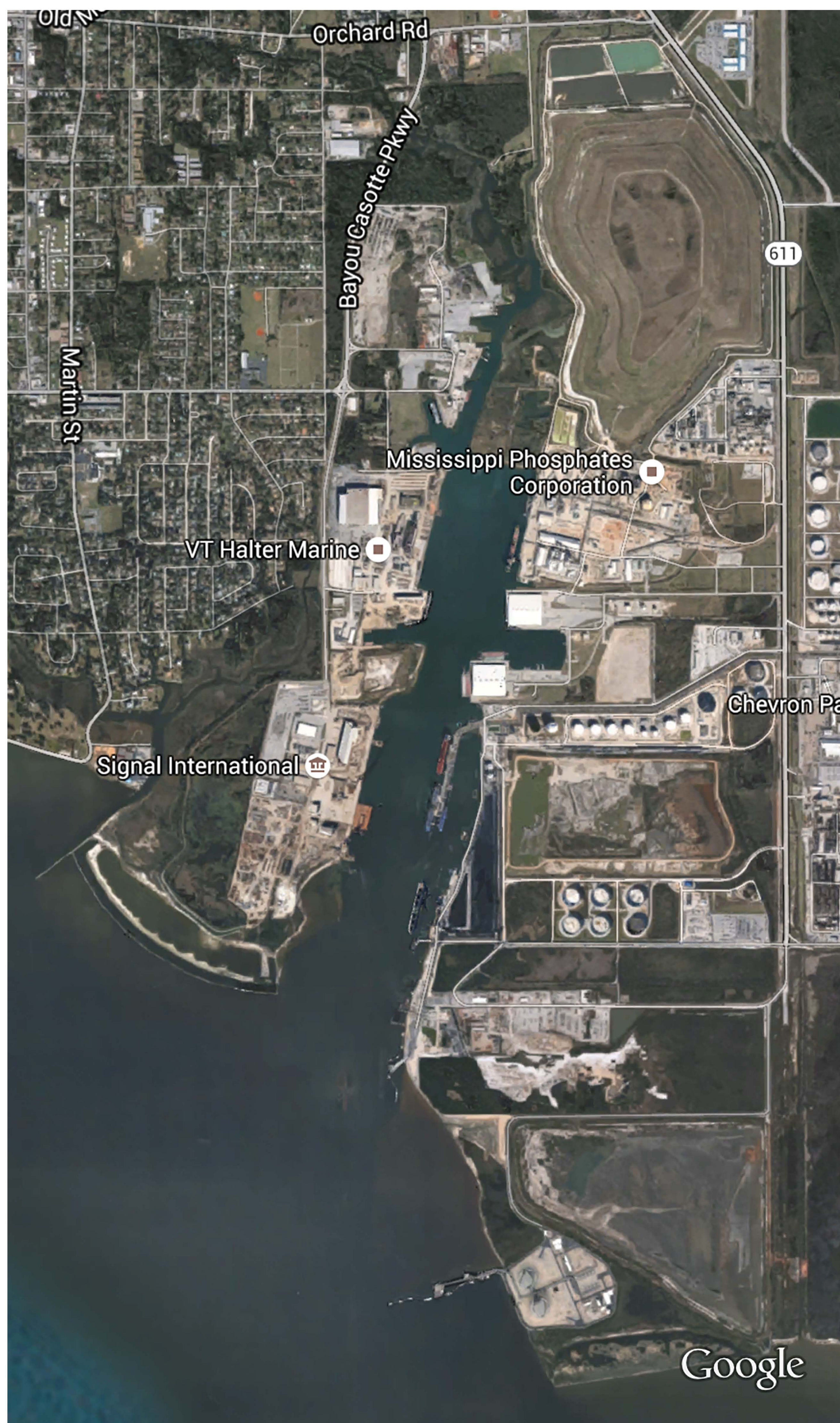
After Hurricane Katrina and Rita, more than 141,000 families were placed into FEMA trailers with high formaldehyde levels resulting in many people becoming sick

Después del huracán Katrina y Rita, más de 141.000 familias fueron colocados en remolques de FEMA con altos niveles de formaldehído lo cual resulto en que muchas personas se enfermaran Katrina

Bạn có biết: Sau cơn bão Katrina và Rita, hơn 141,000 gia đình ở trong FEMA trailers với chất hóa học formaldehyde cao làm nhiều người bị bệnh.

The Gulf Coast had nearly 800 fewer paid employees in 2013 compared to 2005.

- U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns



THE BURDEN OF POTENTIAL EXPOSURE TO TOXINS AS A RESULT OF KATRINA FELL TO RESIDENTS LIVING NEAR THE PASCAGOULA INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

Cherokee Forest subdivision is located within a one mile radius of the large Pascagoula industrial complex that houses among others the largest Chevron refinery in the world, two chemical plants (MS Phosphates and First Chemical), and two large shipbuilding operations (VT Halter and Signal International). Each of facilities is currently operating under consent decrees for serious air and/or water violations. In 2014, the residents of the neighborhood have organized and formed the Cherokee Concerned Citizens (CCC) to call attention to health impacts they believe to be caused by the air and water pollution of nearby industry.

After speaking with one of the members of the CCC about her experience post-Katrina, I learned that she did not recall any officials from federal or state agencies, the city, county, or industry visiting the area to make sure that she and her neighbors were not in danger of being exposed to any toxic oil or chemical spills that may have resulted during Katrina.

Like many other residents living near water or in low-lying areas, her home was destroyed and covered in sludge. Luckily, she recalls, the foundation was in tack, but she and her husband worked tirelessly scrapping the sludge off the wall and floors of her home. She recalls smelling a strong oily odor and seeing oily residue on her belongings. Everything inside her home had to be replaced except the few clothes she could eventually wash clean. She and many others in the neighborhood had (need to add) on their properties. She recalled that it took more than nine months for the Army Corps of Engineers to remove these drums.

After speaking with her, I spent hours searching for any reports of industrial spills in Pascagoula as a result of Katrina. I found three. In a press release, Chevron reported very little damage. The Congressional Research Service report in 2006, included the following about potential chemical and oil spills in the area:

"Authorities were concerned that the hurricane and related flooding may have caused releases of hazardous substances at these types of facilities. In coordination with the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, EPA Region IV analyzed soil and sediment samples at certain facilities in the storm surge impact zone. EPA concluded, based on test results, none of the sites were affected by Hurricane Katrina. All oil and hazardous substance releases throughout the Hurricane Katrina area have not been determined or assessed. EPA expects that it will take some time before we know the full extent of the impacts of oil spills resulting from Hurricane Katrina. The CDC/EPA joint taskforce report stated that the potential for toxic chemical exposure of returning residents is highly uncertain."

- Jennifer Crosslin,
STEPS Coalition

HOW YOU CAN HELP KEEP TOXINS OUT OF YOUR WATER

Household products such as detergent, floor and furniture polish, paints, and various cleaning products for glass, wood, metal, ovens, toilets, and drains may contain hazardous chemicals such as ammonia, sulfuric and phosphoric acids, lye, chlorine, formaldehyde, and phenol. These chemicals often end up contaminating floodwaters. We can reduce the pollution of floodwater by reducing the use of harmful products and using healthier substitutes. We can also store these products in places less vulnerable to flooding, such as removing cleaners from under the sink and storing them in sealed containers in overhead cabinets.

Children are often more vulnerable than adults to the harmful effects of chemical pollutants because they are growing and developing rapidly. In addition, children's behavior, including increased hand to mouth activity, a tendency to crawl and play in spaces that could be contaminated, and a lack of awareness about proper safety and sanitary habits, all put children at a higher risk.

- Howard Page
STEPS Coalition

Unemployment more than doubled in the 3 coastal counties following Hurricane Katrina and remains three percentage points higher than pre-Katrina levels.

- Mississippi Department of Employment Security



Sử dụng sản phẩm gia dụng, không có chất hóa học, có thể giúp giảm ô nhiễm của nước lụt.

El uso de productos para el hogar sin productos químicos y tóxicos puede ayudar a reducir la contaminación del agua durante inundaciones

Using household products free of toxic chemicals can help reduce pollution of floodwater

In Harrison and Jackson County, there are 13,658 more people living in poverty than before Katrina, a 21% increase in the number of impoverished people since 2005.

- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

GULF SOUTH RISING: THE SEAS ARE RISING AND SO ARE WE

Gulf South Rising (GSR) is a coordinated regional movement created to highlight the impact of the global climate crisis on the Gulf South region (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida). Through collaborative actions and events around strategic dates in 2015, like the 5-year commemoration of the BP Oil Crisis and the 10-year commemoration of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, GSR demands a just transition away from extractive industries, discriminatory policies, and unjust practices that hinder equitable disaster recovery and impede the development of sustainable communities.

Our year long initiative will:

Build regional movement infrastructure
Convene frontline communities around collective healing and ecological equity
Advance regional efforts of indigenous tribal and land sovereignty
Shift the regional narrative from resilience to resistance

Our Message:

Displaced, Misplaced, Replaced: We have a right to return

We have a human right to return and a right to the return of social and public services; return of opportunities for those here pre-Katrina

Gone But Not forgotten: We will not be forgotten

1800 dead, not all accounted for

Our Land and Culture are Under Siege: We value the people, protect the land

We're resilient, but no safer now than we were 10 years ago. We have less land and more contamination.

Not for Sale: my home, my land, my culture: Recovery must be with us, for us and by us.

We expect economic justice in recovery, reject commodification of our culture and privatization of public institutions (jails, schools, hospitals). We fight for charity hospital, public housing and corporate accountability.

The illusion of recovery is not progress: We Belong Here

Population numbers does not equal the return of displaced people. Money in certain areas is not progress for all communities. Thank you recovery volunteers! You made a difference.

- www.gulfsoutherising.org



Of the \$3.7 billion for the 46 million cubic yards of debris removed in MS, only \$129 million went to MS owned contractors (3.45%).

Trong số \$3.7 tỷ, để mảnh vỡ loại bỏ 46 triệu cubic yards trong Mississippi, chỉ có \$129 triệu đã được trao cho các công ty thầu trong Mississippi. a contratistas del estado (3.45%).

De los \$3.7 billones otorgados para limpiar 46 millones de yardas cúbicas de escombros en Mississippi, solamente \$129 millones fueron otorgados

In Harrison and Jackson County, median income of white households has increased \$6,254 since Katrina, or an increase of 13%, outpacing growth in median income of African American households, which increased \$1,844 since Katrina, or an increase of 6%.

- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

CITIZENS OVERPAID FOR CLEANUP EFFORTS

No Bid Contracts

Local officials had two choices: turn over cleanup to FEMA and Army Corp of Engineers or bid the debris themselves. For some the choice to let FEMA and Army Corp of Engineers handle cleanup came down to the fact that the city/county had limited capacity to navigate the federal regulations and reporting requirements and the freedom from worry about potential paybacks to the federal government.

Out-of- State no-bid contracts vs. local contract

Local contracting saved taxpayers money. Federal government paid \$23 cubic yard. Local governments paid an average of \$17 cubic yard.

Locally bid contracts put more local people to work and paid higher wages. Companies, such as AshBritt, subcontracted the federal bid out to several companies who then in turn subcontracted again and again. By the time the money spent for the clean-up reached those actually doing the work, they were being paid \$3- \$6 cubic yard leaving the majority of money paid directly to large out of state firms.

Local contractors worked at a greater speed. Local contractors cleaned up 50% of debris versus 39% by December 2005.

Governor Hailey Barbour's questionable relationship to AshBritt

AshBritt Corporation of Pompano Beach, FL received a half billion-dollar contract without going through a bidding process. AshBritt was a client of Barbour, Griffith, and Rogers, a Washington lobbying firm founded by Governor Barbour. In 2005, Barbour's lobbying firm received \$40,000 to help secure the federal contract. After winning the election in 2004, Governor Barbour cut ties with the firm and put his assets in a blind trust. Sources reported that Governor Barbour received \$25,000 per month from unreported source. The Mississippi Ethics Commission launched an investigation and cleared the governor of any wrongdoing. However, the terms of the trust were confidential and not subject to more strict disclosure requirements, and thus, it cannot be known for sure whether Barbour was still profiting from the shares of the lobbying firm.

- Dr. James Patterson Smith
Hurricane Katrina: The Mississippi Story

ACCORDING TO THE US DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD) OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL 2013 AUDIT REPORT....

"As the State's Program administrator, the Department of Environmental Quality, was responsible for developing the Gulf Region Water and Wastewater Plan. The Department of Environmental Quality engaged the Mississippi Engineering Group to assist in the development of the Plan, which included but was not limited to the projection of demographic changes to determine future service needs. The Mississippi Engineering Group entered into a sub-consultant agreement with Angelou Economics to assist in preparing the population projections detailed in the Plan.

The Plan, finalized on January 9, 2007, identified the most critical infrastructure needs to accommodate the 64 percent projected population growth that the Mississippi Engineering Group expected to occur in the six counties over the next 20 years. The Plan prioritized those 3 projects, using more than \$653 million for 67 infrastructure projects located in the six1 coastal Mississippi counties. **On August 24, 2007, the State received from HUD a waiver of the requirement that at least 50 percent of the supplemental CDBG grant funds provided primarily benefit persons of low and moderate income.** As of June 30, 2013, the State had expended \$597.5 million (91 percent) of its Program funding."

The report found that "the State allowed unsupported changes to the population projections, which resulted in increases to population growth levels in amounts that were significantly higher than those supported by other population sources."

The State approved more than \$653 million was to construct 67 facilities that were to either too small, excessive, or not needed at all. Of those projects, more than \$9.6 million of disaster funds were approved for a facility based on an emergency requirement when the facility did not meet the definition of an emergency requirement.

East Biloxi gets infrastructure replacement, work to take three years

BILOXI, MS (WLOX) – January 26, 2015

Nearly a decade after Hurricane Katrina, \$117 million worth of work to replaced old and damaged infrastructure is finally underway in East Biloxi and officials said there are even more improvements ahead for that area. While work has started on installing the new water, sewer and drainage lines, it will be a while before some residents see the full impact of the overhaul.

- Howard Page
STEPS Coalition

Some of the water and sewage construction after Katrina went to new development rather than repairing existing storm damaged systems. Many of these new systems are not currently being used while established systems are still in need of repair.

Sau Bão Katrina, quan chức xây dựng một số cống nước & hệ thống nước thải mới hơn là sửa chữa hệ thống công nước hư hỏng. Hiện nay, nhiều hệ thống cống nước mới không sử dụng trong khi hệ thống cống nước đã thành lập vẫn cần sửa chữa.

Después de Katrina, parte del dinero para reconstruir las alcantarillas fue usado en nuevos desarrollos en lugar de la reparación de los sistemas dañados a causa de la tormenta. Muchos de estos nuevos sistemas ni siquiera son utilizados mientras que los sistemas de alcantarillas dañados por Katrina aún se encuentran en necesidad de reparación.



STEPS COALITION, MISSISSIPPI CENTER FOR JUSTICE & GULFPORT COMMUNITIES ORGANIZING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AROUND THE "PORT OF THE FUTURE"

Seven years after Hurricane Katrina, Mississippi sat on more than \$1 billion dollars in unspent federal disaster aid, half of which was slated for a massive project known as the "Port of the Future." The State of Mississippi proposed to transform Gulfport, a niche banana port, into a super-sized facility to persuade jumbo Asian freighters to bypass west coast ports in favor of coastal Mississippi. Cargo headed to and from the port would travel on a beefed-up truck and rail corridor that would cut directly through and pollute local African American communities.

In 2009 the Steps Coalition launched the **Partners for a Safe and Health Port Campaign** by hosting informational meetings to discuss the "Port of the Future" and its impact on communities' health, environment, housing, economy, and historic neighborhood and ensure residents impacted by the expansion were engaged in the planning process.

By December 2011, members of the Partners for a Safe and Healthy Port Campaign formalized as the **Port Campaign Coalition (PCC)** with key community stakeholders signing an operating agreement that provides a formal structure for decision making and gives community leaders access to attorney-client privileged documents.

In partnership with the PCC, the Mississippi Center for Justice (the Center) and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (LCCRUL) filed a lawsuit, Governor Barbour and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) settled with the Center in 2010 for a \$132 million housing program, but the port expansion issues on jobs and environmental justice were left unresolved.

Representing the PCC, the Center and LCCRUL pressed for accountability on jobs and environmental justice. Beginning in the summer of 2012, support for the Port of the Future began to unravel:

- The City of Gulfport voted to demand that the Port pay for an environmental justice air pollution study.
- The Port warned the public that mega-ships from the Panama Canal would not come to Gulfport.
- The Port admitted it had no current requests to deepen the ship channel to accommodate larger ships; in fact, the channel was silting in.
- The Port revised its permanent jobs target down from 5,400, as Barbour promised in 2011, to just 2,500.
- The Center wrote HUD to assert that the Port is not in compliance with low-income construction hiring requirements.
- A federal court invalidated the state department of transportation's wetlands permit for the port connector road.
- The Center continues to collaborate with the PCC to push state officials to negotiate a community benefits agreement that adequately meets the public health, community wellbeing, and job training needs of local residents to better serve the people of Mississippi. At the same time, the Center and its litigation partners prepare the groundwork for any necessary legal challenges.

- Howard Page
STEPS COALITION

\$1.4 billion, or 26% of post-Katrina Community Development Block Grant funds were appropriated for economic development projects.

\$1.4 billones, o 26% de los fondos de ayuda para desarrollo comunitario después de Katrina fueron asignados para proyectos de desarrollo económico.

Sau cơn bão Katrina, \$1,4 tỷ, hoặc 26% của quỹ tài trợ liên bang, Phát Triển Cộng Đồng, đã dùng cho các dự án phát triển kinh tế.

By 2008, 40,000 disaster-damaged homes were still not liveable, and 7,203 families were still living in FEMA trailers or Katrina cottages.

Trong năm 2008, 40,000 ngôi nhà bị hư hại nặng & không ở được, và 7,203 gia đình vẫn sống trong FEMA trailers hoặc nhà tranh Katrina.

Para 2008, 40.000 viviendas dañadas por el desastre aún no eran habitables, y 7,203 familias aún vivían en remolques de FEMA o cabañas de Katrina.

In Harrison and Jackson County, there are 5,581 more cost-burdened rental households than before Katrina, or households spending more than 30% of income on rent, an increase of 26.5% in the number of cost-burdened rental households since 2005.

- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

HURRICANES, OIL SPILLS, AND DISCRIMINATION, OH MY: THE STORY OF THE MISSISSIPPI COTTAGE

The public generally supports the concept of affordable housing, but when it comes to siting, there is often a collective resistance. In the aftermath of the hurricane, local governments across the Gulf Coast engaged in exclusionary zoning practices, passing ordinances that limited the ability of people to find appropriate housing.

These ordinances, supported by community resistance to affordable housing, have exacerbated the problem of scarce affordable housing over the last five years. While communities acknowledge the need for affordable housing, and in many cases mention it in their community plans, there has been a failure on the part of local governments to enact ordinances that support the siting of affordable housing. One of the most significant affordable housing challenges has related to the Mississippi Cottage program, which at its peak provided free housing to nearly 3,000 families.

Five years after Hurricane Katrina, local governments are still working to enact discriminatory ordinances that leave the most socially and economically vulnerable residents without a permanent housing solution. The federal evaluation of the Cottage program reported that an astonishing 43% of Cottages were housing at least one person with a disability. Thus, anti-Cottage ordinances appear to have a disparate impact on persons with disabilities.

MEMA was ultimately able to convince every local government on the Coast to accept Cottages on a temporary basis. In exchange, MEMA promised to remove the units at the end of March 2009. The cities also imposed a variety of conditions upon the residents, such as the following:

The City of Moss Point permitted units only on private residential lots (no group sites or commercial lots) and initially restricted occupancy to one year.

The City of Pascagoula gave blanket approval to place Park Model units (1 bedroom) wherever a travel trailer existed, but individual approval was required for placement of the larger Cottages. The agreement also defined MEMA's responsibility for the cost of installation maintenance, demobilization, and reasonable site restoration.

Several jurisdictions (Gulfport, Bay St. Louis, Pascagoula, and Gautier) required applicants to provide specific evidence that they were rebuilding a permanent unit in order to obtain a permit for placement of the Cottages.

Harrison County and Pass Christian authorized the placement of Cottages only where local zoning allowed modular and manufactured homes, and required applicants to follow the normal process for obtaining a zoning variance if they wished to place a unit elsewhere in the jurisdiction. Pass Christian's agreement further specified that "no person will be allowed to purchase the units from the state of Mississippi" at the end of their occupancy and reminded the State that "time is of the essence" in the removal of units.

Waveland forced prospective Cottage residents to sign a waiver certifying that they would not, and could not, seek permanency in the Cottage. In 2009, Cottage residents sued Waveland over the city's restrictions, and the waiver became a minor issue in the litigation.

- Jennifer Evans-Cowley and Andrew Canter



3,000 houses in one neighborhood in Biloxi were totally destroyed, mainly African American and Vietnamese families and 44% of lots in East Biloxi remained vacant in 2010

3,000 nhà trong một khu phố ở phía Đông Biloxi đã hoàn toàn bị phá hủy, gia đình chủ yếu là người Mỹ Đen và Việt Nam. Trong năm 2010, 44% các lô đất ở Đông Biloxi vẫn còn trống.

3.000 casas en un vecindario en Biloxi fueron totalmente destruidas, la mayoría de los habitantes eran Áfrico Americanos y Vietnamitas, y 44% de los lotes en el este de Biloxi siguen vacantes.



THE NEED TO REBUILD HOMES TEN YEARS LATER IS STILL GREAT... BACK BAY MISSION IS DOING WHAT THEY CAN TO HELP

After Katrina, it is with great pride, we say, "Back Bay Mission is still here, serving the community as it has since 1922." Katrina devastated the Back Bay Mission campus and left the staff in disarray. Back Bay Mission was desperate to rebuild and get their "doors" re-opened to help out our community. In the time of disarray, Back Bay Mission worked out of 2 construction trailers and began emergency services and case management services on October 24, 2005. By the end of November, we had already assisted nearly 400 individuals. People were desperate for help after loss of jobs, homes and their way of life. We at Back Bay Mission served the community as we worked to rebuild our campus. Today, the campus is bigger and better than before. We lost a community thrift store but added a homeless day center, the Micah Day Center. On the land where the thrift store stood, is Homeport I and Homeport II which houses previously homeless veterans, another blessing and sign of recovery. Today our housing rehabilitation is still working on recovery from Katrina. We have homeowners in need of help with home repairs and some cases rehabs. Unfortunately, several homes on the Coast were not repaired properly. These owners who have suffered through Katrina and the rebuilding of their Coast now are enduring their houses falling down around them. Back Bay Mission has a waiting list that consists of seniors on fixed incomes, the poverty stricken and disabled. The need is great! Back Bay Mission is struggling to keep up with the demand, but Back Bay Mission will keep working one project at a time. Back Bay Mission continues to help our community rebuild. We know our community is strong and resilient. Back Bay Mission is here to help those in need. Back Bay Mission and the Mississippi Gulf Coast are truly an example of resiliency.

- Laura Payne
Back Bay Mission

In the 3 coastal counties, average median market rent for 2 bedroom apartments has increased 15% and average median market rate for 3 bedroom apartments has increased 14% since Katrina.

- Gulf Regional Planning Commission,
2004 and 2014 Loper Apartment Surveys

Five years after the storm, Mississippi misses its 2010 affordable housing goal by over 2,500

En 2010, cinco años después de la tormenta, Mississippi aún necesitaba 2,500 viviendas más para alcanzar su meta de número de casas a costo bajo.

Năm năm sau cơn Bão Katrina, Mississippi bỏ lỡ mục tiêu nhà ở giá rẻ của 2010, đơn vị nhà ở giá rẻ trên 2,500.

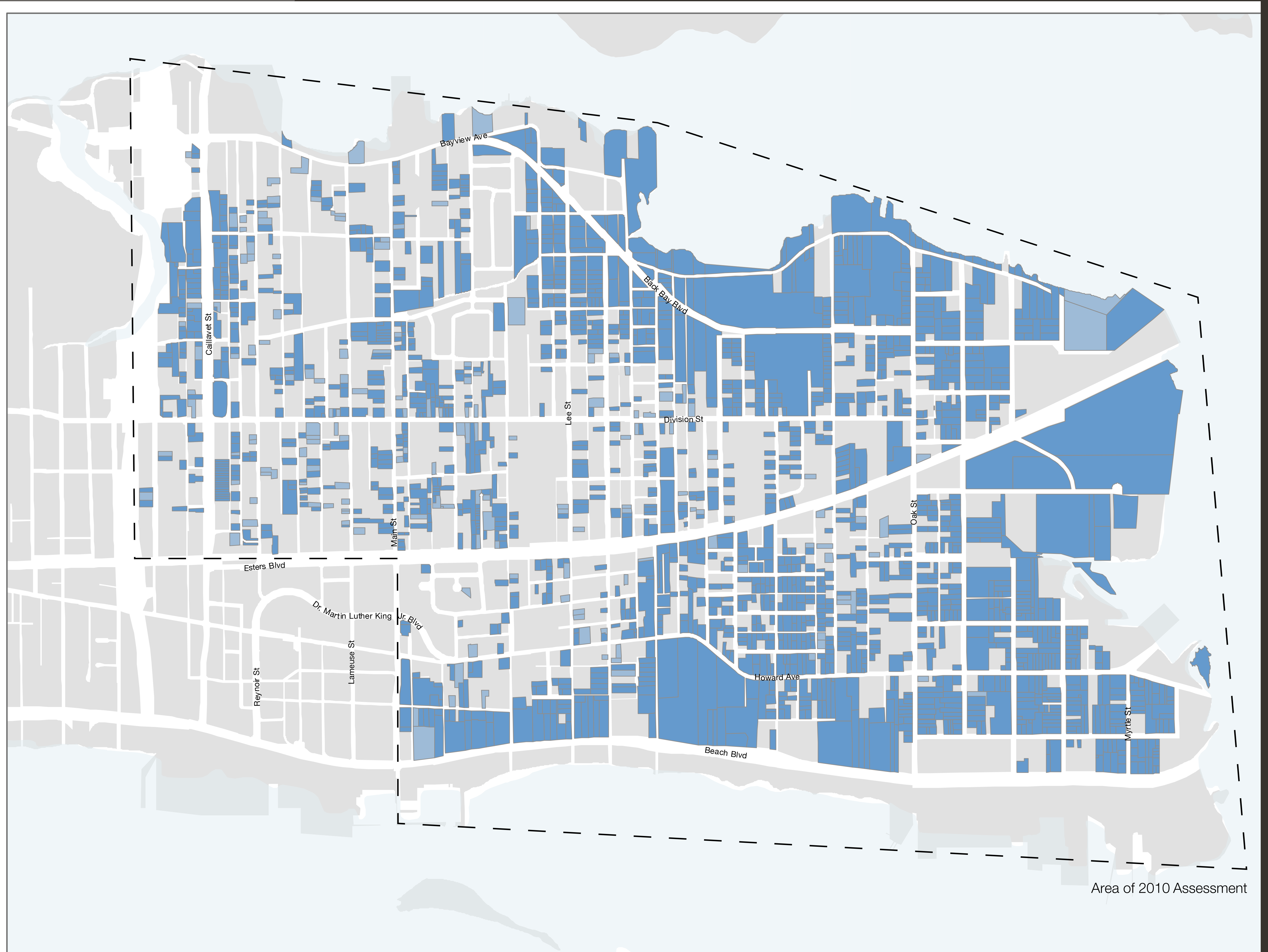
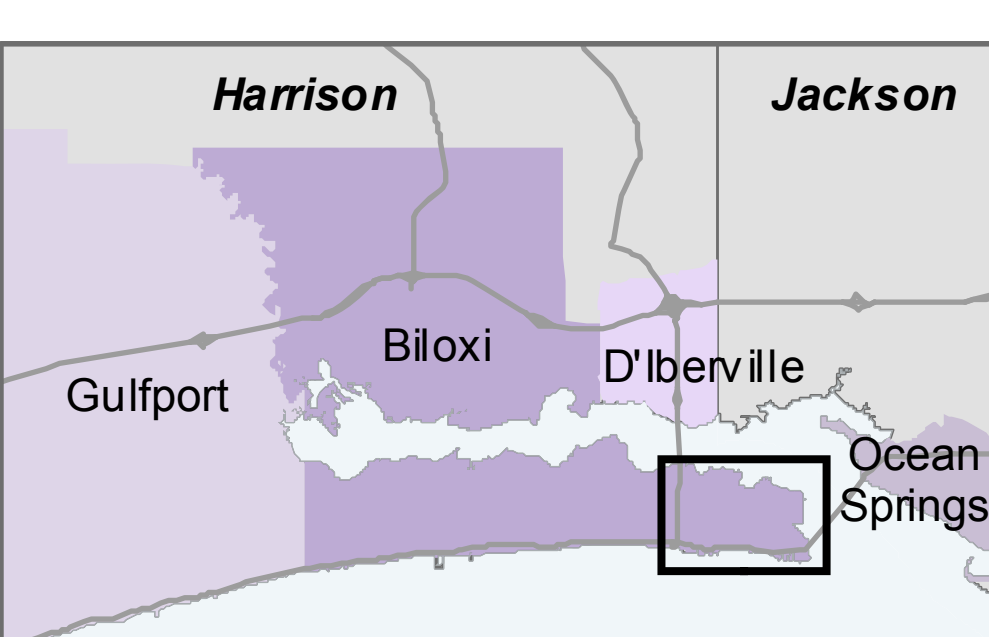
Vacant Lots and Damaged Vacant Buildings in East Biloxi Spring 2010

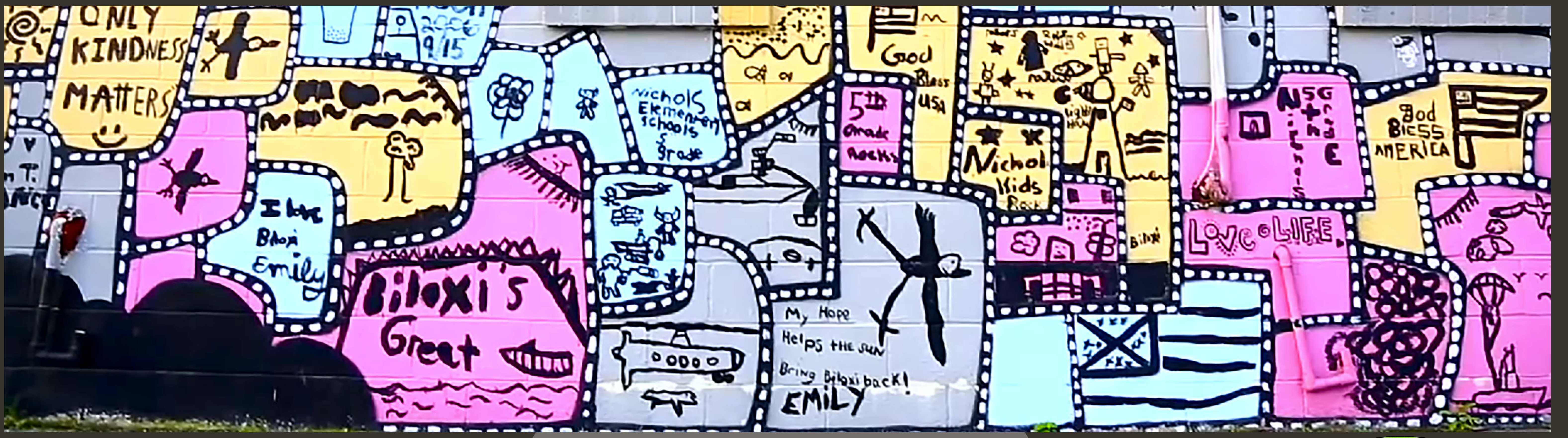
Year	2006	2007	2008	2010
Vacant Bldgs	1,504	169	280	159
Vacant Lots	1,504	1,642	1,698	1,816
TOTAL	1,504	1,811	1,978	1,975

TOTAL VACANT PROPERTIES: 1,975
 - Vacant building - 159 buildings
 - Vacant lot - 1,816 lots

0 0.1 0.2 0.4 Miles

Sources: Land Use: GCCDS Spring 2010 East Biloxi Land Use Survey; Parcels: Harrison County Tax Assessor, 2009 Land Roll.





WHERE DID ALL THE MONEY GO?

The Department of Housing and Urban Development gave Mississippi \$5.5 billion of which the governor used half for economic development projects.

While many of the projects are located directly on the Gulf Coast with a significant portion set aside for the Port of Gulfport, many projects that received funding were far from Katrina's direct impact. So far, only 57% of obligated economic development funds have been expended.

\$8 million went to build a parking garage for a hotel-convention center complex in the City of Starkville; while the \$3 million forgivable loan program for business in Hancock County had more applicants than money.

Though HUD requires economic projects to create a certain number of jobs with at least half offered to low or moderate income people, \$234 million was spent on projects that did not create a single job.

- Ryan Kornowski
Climate Progress

Here a just a few examples of the 38 economic projects funded outside the disaster impact area:

West Rankin County Utility Authority received \$12.5 million for predevelopment sewer improvements

Natchez received \$3.9 million to build an access road and to make sewer and water improvements for the Corrections Corporation of America

City of Natchez in Adams County received \$4.7 million for a project located in the Adams County Port/Industrial Park for the rehabilitation of an existing sewer lagoon system to benefit Elevance Natchez, Inc.

City of Purvis in Lamar County received \$1.2 million for public improvements to support the location of the Lowe's Distribution Center

Lauderdale County received \$3.5 million for infrastructure improvements to support Handy Hardware's new distribution center in the Lauderdale County Industrial Park

Gloster in Amite County received \$2.6 million for infrastructure improvements to benefit Amite BioEnergy, LLC

City of Hattiesburg received \$5 million for the purchase of wastewater pre-treatment equipment to benefit USA Yeast Company, LLC and the Hattiesburg Wastewater South Lagoon

Lowndes County received \$7.5 million for Infrastructure improvements to benefit the expansion of Severcorr, LLC

City of Starkville in Oktibbeha County received \$8 million for the construction of a three-bay, four-level concrete parking structure to provide parking for the CottonMill Marketplace development

- www.disasterrecovery.com

Ten years later, many individuals and families along the coast are still living in Katrina damaged homes.

Mười năm sau đó, nhiều cá nhân và gia đình dọc theo bờ biển vẫn sống trong những ngôi nhà bị hư hỏng Katrina.

Diez años después, muchas personas y familias a lo largo de la costa siguen viviendo en casas dañadas por Katrina

CLUSTERS OF UNMET NEED: FLAWS IN MISSISSIPPI'S HOMEOWNER GRANT PROGRAM

Mississippi households continue to need assistance to rebuild or repair their homes. First, grants were denied to 7,300 coastal Mississippi residences with major to severe wind damage, of which about 2,100 could not afford or did not obtain hazard insurance. Second, Mississippi's homeowner grant programs did not cover the household's needs, whether due to eligibility, duplication of benefits, or calculation of the loss. **The effects of these flaws fall heavily on lower-income residents all across southern Mississippi, but the concentration of wind-damaged households is unmistakable in African American neighborhoods immediately north of the railroad tracks in Gulfport and Moss Point.**

- Mississippi Center for Justice
Katrina Report 5th Anniversary



In Harrison and Jackson County, there are 8,135 more housing units being rented than before Katrina, an increase of 16% since 2005.

- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Mississippi Center for Justice filed suit on behalf of community groups and individuals against the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This suit resulted in a landmark settlement, in which Governor Haley Barbour agreed to set aside \$132 million dollars for low-income households in 9 Mississippi counties.

El Centro de Mississippi Para la Justicia presentó una demanda en nombre de los grupos de la comunidad y de los individuos contra el Departamento de Vivienda y Desarrollo Urbano de Estados Unidos. La demanda resulto en un acuerdo histórico, en el que el gobernador Haley Barbour accedió a apartar \$132, 000,000 dólares para construir hogares de bajos ingresos en 9 condados de Mississippi.

Hội Luật Pháp, Mississippi Center for Justice, nộp đơn tư pháp tua kiện cho nhóm cộng đồn và cá nhân chống lại U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (Liên Bang về Phát Triển Nhà Cửa). Vụ kiện này dẫn đến một bước ngoặt trong giải quyết mà Thống Đốc Haley Barbour đã đồng ý để dành \$ 132 triệu cho các gia đình có thu nhập thấp trong 9 quận Mississippi.

Trên \$100 triệu đã chi cho các dự án phát triển kinh tế cải thiện cơ sở hạ tầng kinh doanh được đặt bên ngoài ba quận ven biển.

Mas de 100 millones se gastaron en proyectos de desarrollo económico para mejorar la infraestructura de negocios ubicados fuera de los tres condados de la costa

Over \$100 million was spent on economic development projects for business infrastructure improvements were located outside the three coastal counties

There are 348 fewer market-rent apartments in the 3 coastal counties than before Katrina.

- Gulf Regional Planning Commission,
2004 and 2014 Loper Apartment Surveys

NEIGHBORHOOD HOME PROGRAM

The Most Vulnerable Received the Least Support after Katrina. When Hurricane Katrina devastated the southern half of Mississippi in 2005, more than 60 percent of single-family dwellings were destroyed or rendered uninhabitable. Those numbers increased for rental properties, which created even more displaced residents in a state where safe and affordable housing was already out of reach for so many low-income and minority residents. In the wake of this tragedy, Mississippi Center for Justice opened a new office in hard-hit Biloxi to offer legal services to the thousands of Gulf Coast area residents who needed an advocate to help them fight for a fair recovery. The Center has been at the forefront of federal and state policy battles to restore safe and affordable housing to Hurricane Katrina's most vulnerable survivors, including thousands of children. Through these efforts, a pattern emerged where many elderly, low income and minority communities were not being recognized by the state as Hurricane victims. As housing recovery funds began flowing to the Coast, the first to get assistance were often wealthier homes with access to resources that many lacked. Three years passed before recovery funds were designated for damage to low-income homes. Without adequate housing, some were forced to leave their dream of home ownership behind and live with friends and family. This anguish turned into outrage when nearly \$600 million of Mississippi's federal disaster grants were being reallocated to expand the state port at Gulfport. To help combat this decision, Mississippi Center for Justice filed suit on behalf of community groups and individuals against the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This suit resulted in a landmark settlement, in which Governor Haley Barbour agreed to set aside \$132 million dollars for low-income households in 9 Mississippi counties. The settlement established the Neighborhood Home Program to meet the unmet housing recovery needs of thousands of low to moderate income Mississippians who fell through the cracks in the state's initial housing recovery programs. After living with severe hurricane damage for years, nearly 5,000 Mississippians have received home repairs through NHP, some as late as this year, as we mark the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

Below is a before and after photo of an NHP Recipient whose home had severe wind damage from Hurricane Katrina. This photo was taken in 2011 as part of the repair cost evaluation. Below is the homeowner on her the porch of her rehabilitated home with law student volunteers with MCJ who worked on closing her case in 2014.

- Matt Williams
Mississippi Center for Justice



Las pólizas de seguro de vivienda han incrementado un 33% y las pólizas de seguro contra vientos han aumentado 90% desde Katrina

Homeowners insurance premiums have increased 33% and wind insurance premiums have increased 90% since Katrina

Bạn có biết: Bảo hiểm sở hữu nhà đã tăng lên 33% và bảo hiểm sức gió đã tăng 90% kể từ khi Bão Katrina

Despite increased levels of poverty and unemployment compared to pre-Katrina levels, the number of families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in the 3 coastal counties reduced nearly by half, from 1,488 before Katrina to 829 in 2014, or a decline of 44%.

-Mississippi Department of Human Services,
2004 and 2014 Annual Reports

HIGH COST OF INSURANCE

Mississippi homeowners have the fourth highest insurance premiums in the nation.

High cost of insurance is a challenge for the affordability of housing. For renters, the cost is built into their rent. The increase in insurance has led to a rise in rent. Hancock county rental properties increase an average of \$250.

HUD defines affordable housing as housing that costs less than 30% of residents' income. Households paying more are considered cost burdened. On the Mississippi Gulf Coast, cost burdened households are more likely to be 1) African American, Hispanic, or Asian descent; 2) Head of household under 25 or over 65 years old; 3) Renters

Small businesses also suffer as a result of high costs of insurance. Hancock County business reported increases three to four times higher after Katrina. Small businesses also faced labor shortages partly due to the lack of affordable housing.

STEPS TO REDUCE INSURANCE COSTS

Coastal Retrofit Mississippi

MEMA program that provides 90% grant when the homeowner pays 10% of retrofit costs. This program offers a source of support for homeowners who can afford to pay for 10% costs.

Clarity Act

The Clarity Act, passed in 2015, requires insurers operating in the state of Mississippi to submit rate info and other pricing details by policyholder zip code so the MID can perform a geographic comparison and market analysis of premiums and losses. It is expected that this information will help legislatures find a way to lower insurance rates for Mississippians.

- Plan for Opportunity/ Dr. James Smith Patterson



While the Small Rental Assistance Program provided much needed funding for recovery of private rental properties in 2007, the 5,000 units fell far below the FEMA reported need for 19,113 rental units

El Programa de Asistencia de Alquiler proporciona fondos para la recuperación de las propiedades de alquiler privado en 2007, FEMA proporciono 5,000 unidades lo cual fueron muy pocas porque FEMA reporto que se necesitaban 19,113 unidades de renta.

Trong khi chương trình Small Rental Assistance Program (Hỗ Trợ Cho Thuê Nhà Nhỏ) cung cấp nhiều tài trợ cần thiết cho thu hồi tài sản cho thuê tư nhân trong 2007, đơn vị 5000 nhà ở giảm hơn nhiều so FEMA báo cáo cần thiết 19,113 đơn vị cho thuê).

Before and after the storm, Mississippi women lack access to affordable housing, better educational opportunities, livable wage-paying jobs, quality child care and sufficient health care.

Moore Community House was founded in 1924 to serve the children of immigrant workers in the seasonal fishing industry. Today MCH assists low-income neighbors with quality childcare, family services, and local economic development to improve their lives. Despite the devastation from Hurricane Katrina, the majority of Moore's previous programs are currently operating. In 2009, MCH expanded Early Head Start childcare services and new, improved facilities are meeting critical needs. Not only has Moore Community House made long-term investment in children's outcomes through affordable, quality childcare but also provides short-term work support for families.

Moore has also created new programs to serve east Biloxi and the greater Mississippi Gulf Coast region in response to community needs which have arisen in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. One such initiative is the Women in Construction Program, also known as WinC, a project to train low-income women for careers in the construction trades. The Women in Construction Program began in January of 2008. The mission of this program is to create a climate across the Gulf Coast enabling women to pursue careers which will earn wages to promote self-sufficiency within the construction field. Besides helping to provide well-paying jobs to the region's low-income women, it helps meet the industry's demand for a trained workforce on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. While the construction trades offer careers that provide self-sufficiency wages and good benefits, the Women in Construction Program is the only job-training program on the Gulf Coast that is tailored to prepare women for this work.

Initially the Women in Construction program focused our training only towards residential construction because of the great need to rebuild homes after Katrina. We found training women with general construction skills to be a solid fit for the Gulf Coast rebuilding effort, as there is a need for both commercial and residential industries. WinC uses industry recognized National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) Core Curriculum. Completing this curriculum gives the trainee the basic skills needed to continue education in any craft area he or she chooses. Students gain on-site hands-on experience through rebuilding homes that have been affected by Katrina. This is a win-win situation for both the community and women interested in gaining a trade.

Despite the great work of organizations like Moore Community House, the state needs to do more to improve the quality of life for women and families in the state of Mississippi. This is why Moore Community House joined the Making Mississippi Women More Secure Initiative that seeks to get necessary laws passed. Recently, Moore Community House hosted a successful town talk in Biloxi to hear first hand from women what their priorities for a statewide policy agenda. A statewide policy Summit will be held October 10, 2015 in Jackson, MS. Moore Community House is organizing a bus ride for women on the coast interested in attending this vitally important event.

- Julie Kuklinski
Women in Construction



Vietnamese immigrants in East Biloxi have experienced a long history of systemic, racial discrimination and these issues were amplified in Katrina and BP disaster recovery efforts.

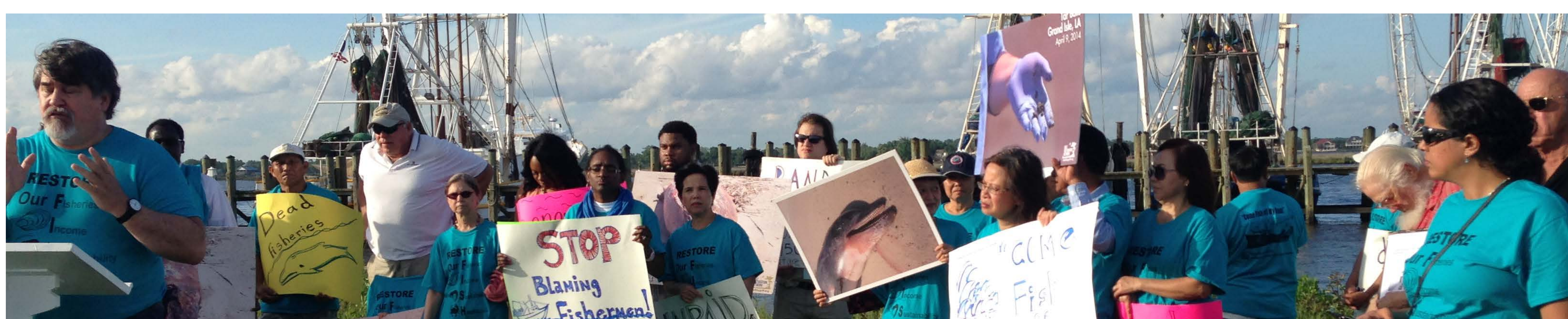
Beginning in the late 1970's, after the fall of Saigon during the Vietnam War, some Vietnamese immigrants settled on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, particularly East Biloxi. Many of these immigrants came from multi-generational families of fishermen in coastal, fishing towns and villages. The area's mild climate and well-known history and tradition of commercial fishing (East Biloxi was once the world's seafood capital) gave them an opportunity to continue their fishing livelihood. These immigrant families immediately began working to provide for and support their offspring. As a result, Vietnamese-American immigrants did not have an opportunity to enroll in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, nor did they have an opportunity to pursue a higher education. Thus, a significant percentage of today's Vietnamese-American population has Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and therefore requires language and application assistance, case-management, and intensive support navigating the social services system. Other early challenges included discrimination and cultural misunderstandings with Slavic and French descendant fishermen, the first ethnic groups in the maritime industry. Further, living in a state with a long history of systemic, racial discrimination, Vietnamese fisher folks faced other challenges similar to other underserved, minority populations (access challenges and adequate representation).

As of 2012, approximately six thousand (6,000) Vietnamese-Americans are believed to reside in the Mississippi Gulf Coast, including Harrison, Hancock and Jackson counties. Of these, 80% (4,800) are directly employed and/or highly dependent upon the commercial-fishing industry. Initially, males worked as deckhands and captains for small boats while wives worked in seafood processing plants. Through decades of hard work, savings, and multi-generational households pooling resources, these immigrants became successful, commercial fishermen/small business owners. They had a modest beginning as a deckhand, promoted to boat captain, became a small boat owner, larger boat owner and some eventually owned multiple, large freezer boats. According to the Center for American Progress (CAP), the fishing-related activity in which such workers are employed contributes twenty-two billion six hundred million dollars (\$22,600,000.00) to the Gulf Coast economy. Other occupations of South Mississippi Vietnamese-Americans include seafood plant workers, small business owners (cosmetology and convenience store owners) and the service/tourism industry (casino employees such as dealers, cooks, and housekeepers).

Further, more than seventy-five percent (75%) of the adult Vietnamese-American population are married and/or live in two adult households. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated East Biloxi, and greatly impacted the Vietnamese-American population. Hundreds of homes and businesses were destroyed and fishing infrastructure sustained heavy damage. As a result, there was population displacement, with significant households moving to North Biloxi. In 2009, Post Hurricane Katrina, there was one key opportunity for fisher folks to engage with other stakeholders (federal & State agencies, scientists and resource managers). Some were hired as part of a regional project to restore impacted fisheries and damaged habitats (oyster dredging/relay, and data collecting/fisheries monitoring).

Five years later, just as the fisher folks were starting to recover from Hurricane Katrina, in 2010, the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill devastated the fishing industry. Since then, closed fisheries, greatly reduced catches caused great financial hardship and economic insecurity. As a result, Vietnamese fisherfolks are greatly concerned about livelihood sustainability. In the past four years, due to Language Access needs and lack of knowledge regarding legal rights, they needed great assistance with the claims process. Further, in the past few years, Coastal Restoration through the Natural Resource (NRDA), RESTORE Act, and National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), penalties and settlements from responsible parties, should provide more inclusive coastal restoration opportunities for displaced fisher folks (hiring experienced fisher folks for fisheries restoration & monitoring projects, similar to post-Hurricane Katrina monitoring project), who possess "Traditional Ecological Knowledge" (TEK). There are ongoing efforts to bridge the gap between scientists, resource managers, and fisher folks.

- Thao Vu
Mississippi Coalition for Vietnamese Fisher Folk and Families



In Harrison and Jackson County, there are 6,896 more children under 18 years old living in poverty than before Katrina, a 28% increase in the number of impoverished children since 2005.

- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

ORGANIZING TO SAVE NICHOLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

After Communities Rebuild, New Challenges Emerged. Nichols Elementary emerged as a symbol of community recovery following Hurricane Katrina. For generations, countless East Biloxi residents shared the experience of attending Nichols. This historic community tradition was threatened after Hurricane Katrina swept it away. But when all felt lost, East Biloxi residents saw their crumbled community pillar come back to life fully rebuilt, updated and better-than-ever. After losing everything, the newly re-established Nichols Elementary was a symbol that life was finally getting back to normal in East Biloxi. As the pieces finally fell back in place, Nichols Elementary—one of East Biloxi's few symbols of recovery and one of the state's highest performing elementary schools—was selected for closure in April 2010 with little warning and confusing justification. As students walked out of Nichols for the last time, its legacy began to fade. No longer a place for education, fellowship and community engagement, Nichols Elementary became a pristine yet underused building. The disappearance of this tradition was a tear in the fabric of the East Biloxi community at a time of deep despair. The decision to close the doors of Nichols also closed the doors on a symbol of community pride. To East Biloxi residents who shared the tradition of Nichols for generations, a temporary post-disaster population decline did not grant a license to take away a vital piece of this community's identity.

In response, the Save Our Schools Coalition was formed and along with the Mississippi Center for Justice (MCJ) and the Biloxi branch of the NAACP, challenged the school district's decision to close Nichols. After the school board rejected \$1.5 million from the Kellogg Foundation to keep the doors open in December 2010, the Biloxi NAACP and MCJ filed suit in February 2011 to challenge the basis for rejecting the private funding. As difficult litigation efforts pressed on, a number of other strategies to reopen the school took form. After MCJ discovered a 1942 statute allowing closed schools to be reopened by a petition signed by 60% of registered voters in the district and attendance zone, a massive effort was organized. Scores of law student and NAACP volunteers put in 1600 hours getting signatures both in the Nichols attendance zone and all over the city of Biloxi. The inaccuracy of Harrison County voter rolls, however, stood in the way of achieving the required number of signatures, but the effort reenergized the community and educated many in Biloxi who were unaware of the fight. As litigation efforts pressed on for several years, the school district was forced to disclose the minimum cost of reopening Nichols Elementary. After four years of litigation, countless rallies, countless school board meetings and approximately one month after admitting the minimal cost of reopening Nichols, the school district announced that Nichols would reopen as part of the district with its own principal, pre-K, kindergarten and first grade classes in August 2015. The East Biloxi community can again look to Nichols as a symbol of community resilience as it recognizes the 10th anniversary of the storm that threatened to take it away.

- Matt Williams
Mississippi Center for Justice

REBUILDING THE CITY OF D'IBERVILLE

As the winds of Hurricane Katrina began to diminish, Ed Cake, Rusty Quave (mayor), and I met in the street and Rusty commented that we needed help to deal with the storm damage and asked Ed and me to help. We assured him we would, never dreaming what devastating damage our small town had sustained or how long it would take to recover.

As the first volunteers came to help, we knew we needed to organize the effort to be efficient and to make the volunteers' time and work worthwhile. Those first volunteers gave us hope and reminded of God's grace and love; shared our shock and offered their love and commitment to be with us through recovery; and brought much needed skills, materials, and tools to get us going!

It is, however, their determination to help us to restore this beloved small town that became the bedrock of our faith that the job could really be done and that our "population" would grow as these volunteers became colleagues, then friends, and finally, precious beloved family! How can I tell you how essential these volunteers were to our recovery? They lifted Ed and me with their support, love, and laughter that got us through the days, weeks, months, and years of sixteen to twenty hour work days and millions of details and challenges! They loved our citizens, hugged them, listened over and over again to their stories, gave them hope, and cared for them from afar until the next mission or school or scout trip to D'Iberville!

The 7500 volunteers, each of whom came to D'Iberville an average of three times, brought us light in the darkness and lifted us from the destruction to recovery. Many of them came more than 20 times! These volunteers believed in our use of the scientific model that begins with assessment, then collating the data to form a plan of response, identifying resources, working the plan, and reevaluating through reassessment of the city every six months so as not to miss anyone coming back and tweaking the plan where needed! They understood our commitment to working in all four quadrants of the city each week so that our citizens would not lose hope. They were willing to do anything they were assigned to do including assessment or the "Street Walkers" as they became known!

Many also served as listeners in teams of two whose role was to visit citizens and actively listen to them. As Ed often said "After you've told your story a hundred times it might begin to move from current events to past history." These listeners allowed us to respond appropriately to the level of need. As a psychologist and a counselor educator, one of my primary concerns was to help our citizens cope effectively with the traumatic events that were both a personal and community experience. Another goal was to debrief and support our volunteers so that they could own the joy of the difference they had made while still acknowledging the great need that continued to exist.

With a resolve to take no governmental monies so that we could help any person who lived in the city limits of D'Iberville on the day Hurricane Katrina came ashore, we were blessed with more than 450 partners who supplied the D'Iberville Volunteers Foundation with the resources to assist our citizens! How does one express the life-altering experience of being held in so many hands and hearts through to recovery? I suppose it is by continuing to live to make a difference and by always remembering that, in the darkness, each of us can be the light!

- Irene McIntosh, Ph.D.
D'Iberville Volunteers Foundation



Many Latino families traveled to Mississippi for work opportunities in the recovery efforts and stayed... Melinda Medina, Community Organizer for Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance (MIRA), recalls her family leaving Texas for Mississippi In February 2006.

My family left South Texas to follow my step father, Rodolfo Cardenas, to Mississippi. He had come to Mississippi right after Hurricane Katrina in search of work in construction. He found work with a construction company based out of New York but operating in Hattiesburg, MS named Anytime Anywhere. After working with them for a few months he asked my mother to join him. The company was looking for an Office Administrator that was preferably bilingual considering the fact that the majority of the people working for them were Latinos. With a job offer for her and her sons and a reunion with her husband she gathered her family and we headed to Mississippi.

Having never been involved in any kind of natural disaster we were unprepared for the devastation that we would encounter. Traveling through Louisiana to get to Mississippi was tragic. Vehicles that were swept up because of the water were under bridges and other sporadic areas. Neighborhoods that were once filled with children playing and laughing were now desolate ruins and tombs to those killed by the storm. Traveling along Interstate 10 we encountered trees that had been snapped by the powerful winds of Hurricane Katrina. In some places only the stumps remained. Further up into Hattiesburg we saw much of the same tragedy, houses without roofs, and piles of trash from demolitions, and wonderers who were left without homes.

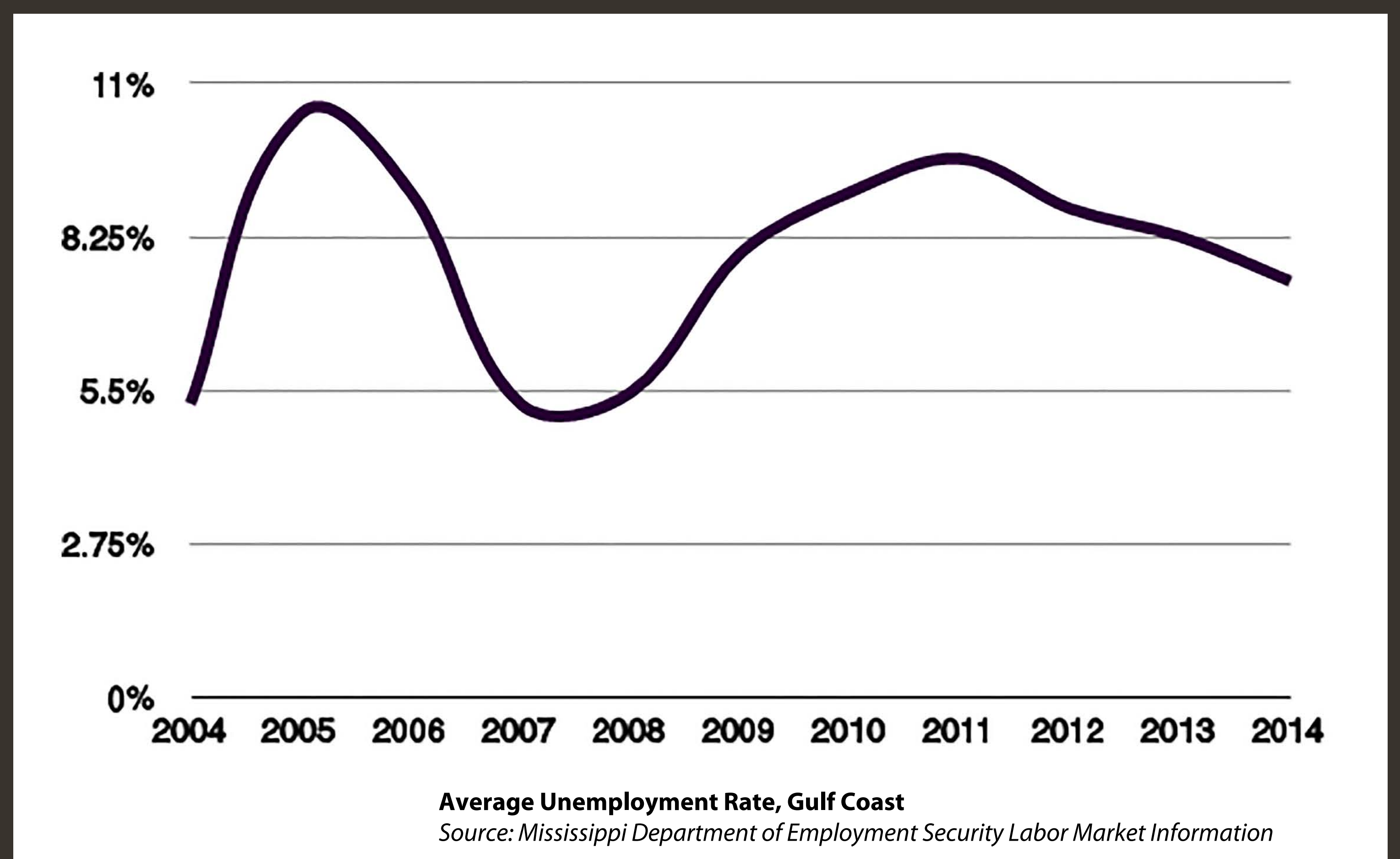
Although the company's office was located in Hattiesburg, most of their work was on the Gulf Coast. One Saturday I traveled with my mother to bring lunch to my step-father and brothers at the jobsite. It just so happened to be the now FEMA building behind the old Wal-Mart in Biloxi. The majority of the workers were Latinos from different countries such as Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico. They were working hard and I even saw women at the site working. My mother wanted to travel down highway 90 to see the coastline. It was horrific. There was beautiful to see. Trees and other debris filled the beaches. The beaches were closed and obviously uninhabitable. We saw debris from demolitions and slabs everywhere where businesses and homes once stood. It was hard to imagine that anything beautiful once decorated the coast. It was very sad to see.

Having lived here for 9 1/2 years I can see the beautiful change on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Gorgeous homes have been rebuilt, businesses are rebuilt and operating, and the beaches are now cleared. Many have told me stories of how the coast looked before Katrina. They paint vivid pictures of beauty in my head. The Coast will never be the same and the culprit of such mass destruction that changed the lives of many was a storm. Hurricane Katrina blew through here changing everything even diversity!

- Melinda Medina
Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance

In Harrison and Jackson County, there are 3,727 more African Americans living in poverty than before Katrina, a 15% increase in the number of impoverished African Americans since 2005.

- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey



There are 9,500 more Hispanic or Latino people living in the 3 coastal counties than before Katrina, an increase of 51% since 2005.

- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Despite the unmet housing needs across the coast, Mississippi governor Hailey Barbour used \$600 million of the \$1 billion unspent federal disaster aid in 2007 to support the "Port of the Future" with the promise of creating 1,300 jobs. Today there has been a net loss of about 300 jobs at the Port with no workable plan for achieving the original goal of job creation.

Mặc dù thiếu thốn nhà ở, năm 2007, Thống Đốc Hailey Barbour dùng \$600 triệu của \$1 tỷ quỹ tài trợ liên bang, để hỗ trợ "Port of the Future" (Cảng) ở Gulfport, MS, của với lời hứa tạo ra 1300 công ăn việc làm. Hiện nay, đã có 300 việc làm mất tại Cảng ở Gulfport, MS, và không có kế hoạch để mục tiêu tạo công ăn việc làm.

A pesar de la gran necesidad para reconstruir hogares después de Katrina, el gobernador de Mississippi Hailey Barbour decidió utilizar \$ 600 millones del fondo de \$1 billón para ayuda de desastre en 2007 para apoyar el "Puerto del Futuro", con la promesa de crear 1,300 puestos de trabajo. Hasta hoy se han perdido 300 puestos de trabajo en el puerto sin ningún plan para lograr el objetivo original de la creación de empleos.

