

Committee on Ways and Means

For Immediate Release
September 9, 2005

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Committee Looks to Further Assist Hurricane Recovery *Thomas and Rangel Join Louisiana Congressmen McCrery and Jefferson in Aiding Affected States*

WASHINGTON – Today, Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Thomas (R-CA) and Ranking Member Charles Rangel (D-NY) joined Committee Members from the Louisiana delegation Jim McCrery (R-Shreveport) and William Jefferson (D-New Orleans) in the following joint statement:

“We are working together on measures to provide relief and recovery assistance to the people and communities struck by Hurricane Katrina.

“We began this effort yesterday with legislation, H.R. 3672, that will provide immediate federal support for families and communities affected by this disaster. H.R. 3672 will give the affected states immediate access to \$4 billion in welfare funds that otherwise would not be available for weeks. All states will be able to seek up to \$2 billion in reimbursement for their immediate costs in helping the victims of this devastating hurricane. But this is only the beginning of our efforts.

“In coming weeks, we will develop additional proposals focusing on the short- and long-term needs of our fellow Americans in the disaster area. These measures will include tax relief for individuals and families affected by the disaster. We will make common-sense changes to unemployment, child support and foster care so individuals and families can continue to depend on those needed benefits and services.

“Future legislation will also include appropriate tax relief for businesses, states and local governments to help rebuild and rehabilitate damaged property and infrastructure as quickly as possible. Congress provided similar tax relief to assist with the New York City revitalization efforts after the September 11 terrorist attacks. These provisions will help revitalize business activity and employment in the affected areas, restore the states’ ports and trade capacity and rebuild energy infrastructure, which has an important impact on the nation’s energy supply.

“We look forward to working with local leaders in developing helpful responses. We need to take a series of steps for this region that is integral to our country’s economic health and help speed the recovery of our friends and neighbors who have endured so much.”

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