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APPROPRIATIONS  
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AND FORESTRY  
COMMITTEE ON  
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ADMINISTRATION

August 24, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

In 2005 Hurricane Katrina struck the Mississippi Gulf Coast, devastating our communities and changing our lives forever. Today, as I reflect on how the Gulf States have recovered in the 10 years since Katrina, I am compelled to write this letter of recommendation for Jon Mabry, who led Mississippi's successful recovery, and IEM, the company for which he now serves as Vice President of CDBG Disaster Recovery.

Mississippi's response to Hurricane Katrina under Jon Mabry's leadership should be used as a model for disaster recovery. Other state and local governments have been faced with delays, fraud, and federal pressure to pay back millions in improperly disbursed or managed funds. Mississippi had none of these problems.

After Katrina, my role as Mississippi's Senior Senator was to lead efforts in Congress for passage of federal recovery funds, including an unprecedented \$5.4 billion CDBG package for the State. Many were, understandably, concerned that Mississippi didn't have the resources to ensure these funds were distributed timely, fairly, and accurately.

Governor Barbour and the rest of our state's leaders alleviated those fears, creating a hand-picked team dedicated to recovery. Composed of professionals from both the private and public sector, the Mississippi Development Authority Disaster Recovery Division (DRD) was chartered specifically to ensure Mississippi's CDBG funds were administered efficiently and effectively.

Chosen to lead this group was Jon Mabry, a Fortune 10 executive, certified internal auditor, and former U.S. Marine. Under Jon's direction the DRD repaired or reconstructed 40,000 housing units, created or retained 7,275 jobs through economic development programs, and completed 200 brick-and-mortar public facilities projects through community revitalization programs—all with an



unprecedented, virtually non-existent fraud level of less than one-tenth of one percent.

Drawing on Fortune 10 best practices, Jon and the DRD created monitoring and compliance programs based on performance goals and accountability. These were applied to his own team as well to as outside contractors. The systems Jon put in place have been lauded by HUD as a best practices model, and helped propel him to become Vice President of CDBG Disaster Recovery for IEM, the largest woman-owned homeland security and disaster management firm in the U.S. Celebrating 30 years of success in disaster management this year, IEM has been involved in recovery for every major disaster since Hurricane Katrina. Together, Jon and IEM have successfully managed billions in both FEMA and CDBG recovery dollars, including managing the State of New York's \$1 billion Disaster Housing Recovery program.

If you are faced with the task of providing relief to your citizens quickly and in compliance with all federal requirements, I highly recommend the successful recovery model implemented by Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina. Jon's management plan is rooted in the well-founded philosophy that CDBG funds are long-term investments which are as much about preparing for the next disaster as recovering from the immediate one. Jon's approach provides the steady, secure hand public officials and policy makers need to ensure laws are followed, and it provides the visionary planning and execution that taxpayers deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thad Cochran".

Thad Cochran  
United States Senator