

Summary of H.R. 1227, Gulf Coast Hurricane Housing Recovery Act of 2007

H.R. 1227 is

intended to address the housing and community rebuilding needs of New Orleans and the gulf coast, and to remove some of the regulatory burdens that stand in the way of a more speedy recovery process for renters and homeowners. H.R. 1227 includes provisions that would:

- "Unlocks" FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant funding for use by the Road Home Program;
- Requires HUD to contract for an independent survey of public housing residents residing in Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) public housing at the time of the storm to determine whether they want to return to HANO public housing.
- Establishes a "right of return" for public housing residents residing in public housing prior to the hurricanes, and requires HANO to make available by August 1, 2007 the greater of 3,000 public housing units or a "sufficient number" of units to accommodate residents who have indicated they want to return.
- Prohibits HANO from demolishing or disposing of any public housing units unless a plan is in place to offset each lost unit ("one-for-one replacement").
- Extends the Disaster Voucher Program until January 1, 2008, and upon termination of DVP, DVP families would be provided Section 8 vouchers and required to meet Section 8 eligibility. (Once the family no longer meets eligibility requirements, the voucher disappears).
- Requires HUD to issue tenant replacement vouchers for public housing unit and assisted housing unit not brought back on line.
- Authorizes 4,500 new project based vouchers for seniors, disabled persons and homeless, including 3,000 in Louisiana.
- Reimburses landlords for damage done to apartments by Katrina evacuees who leased under the Section 403 program.

Republican View of H.R. 1227

While Committee Republicans support the goals of H.R. 1227, there is concern that the legislation goes far beyond the scope of the bill's stated intent. For example, the legislation seeks to turn what is currently a temporary disaster voucher program into a permanent voucher, and to require HUD to provide tenant replacement vouchers for all public housing units not brought back on line, including those slated for demolition prior to the storms. Further, in the 109th Congress, the Republican Majority committed more than \$110 billion to assist the hurricane-devastated Gulf Coast; yet to date; only a small portion has been committed and or distributed to those in need.

To address some of these concerns, during the markup Committee Republicans offered a total of 21 amendments to H.R. 1227 at markup - 10 of which passed on voice vote.