

From: Robert latham
To: Mayo, Lee; RENICK, BILL; RILEY, KELLY; Sewell, John
Date: 4/12/03 12:08PM
Subject: Summary and Status of I59 Plan

This is a summary of the events leading up to the current status of the I59 Evacuation Plan.

October 9, 2002: Governor Musgrove notifies Governor Foster by letter that "Robert Latham will represent the State of Mississippi in developing a comprehensive evacuation plan between the States of Mississippi and Louisiana".

February 10, 2003: Meeting in Baton Rouge, La between MEMA Staff (Robert Latham-Director, Leon Shaifer-Deputy Director, Mike Womack-R&R Bureau Director) and Louisiana Office of Emergency Preparedness (General Landreneau-TAG & director of LOEP, Col Mike Brown-Dep Director LOEP). Meeting resulted in the following: (1) agreement between the two states in principal on a concept to support an evacuation of southeast Louisiana, including the greater New Orleans area, in the event that a major hurricane threatens the Gulf Coast, (2) agreement that contra flow would be a last resort and implemented only upon the agreement and direction of the two lead law enforcement agencies of the two states (3) agreement to task the La State Police and the Mississippi Highway Patrol with developing a plan to support the agreed upon concept with an initial meeting within the next 2-3 weeks (4) agreement that the LSP on scene troopers would determine, based on traffic counts, whether or not contra flow should be recommended to the Governor of Louisiana (5) agreement to a timeline of completion of this plan prior to the National Hurricane Conference and (4) agreement that the two Governors would make a joint announcement on or about April 15, 2003 that the two states have developed a plan to support an evacuation along I-59.

February 11, 2003: Provided information to Commissioner Huggins via email on the results of the meeting on February 10, 2003. Specific responsibilities included the following: MHP will develop a plan for supporting the primary reverse laning evacuation route to MM 21 just south of Poplarville, Ms. LSP would be responsible for the protocols and plan with Louisiana to include what would "trigger" to request contra flow (reverse lane).

February 14, 2003: Follow-up email to Col Carlton Hayes to be sure they had received my email on February 11. Reminded him that the LSP and MHP had to meet before the end of February. Reminded him that the joint announcement of the two Governors would be on April 15, 2003. Received a reply to my email from Commissioner Huggins stating that MHP and LSP met January 22, 2003 in Baton Rouge and began the process of developing a plan.

February 17, 2003: Provided a summary of the meeting in Louisiana to the Governor's Office via email.

March 26, 2003: Received a copy of the updated MDOT Transportation Plan that incorporated the changes made by Carlton Hayes (MHP) and Bob Chapman (MDOT) to support the plan agreed upon on February 10, 2003. Informed Col Hayes that I had received a copy of the plan and indicated that we also had to make sure that we included the assignment of additional MHP

units to the county where the termini would be to assist local law enforcement outside the I59 ROW. Also told him that we needed to change the title of the plan to reflect that it was a "multi-agency plan and not an MDOT plan and asked for his thoughts. Received a reply from Col Hayes indicating that he and Bob Chapman would meet in the next couple of days to iron out the details of the changes, including additional manpower near the termini.

March 26, 2003: There appears to be a continuing concern that LSP and MHP want to keep this plan close hold. I believe that La is afraid of the uproar they will have from New Orleans.

April 9, 2003: Contacted LOEP about a coordinated press release for the two governors. MEMA drafted two press releases (one for Gov Musgrove and one for Gov Foster) announcing the agreed upon plan and provided this to LOEP and Gov Musgrove's Office for comment. Expected comments from Louisiana by mid afternoon.

April 10, 2003: According to Governor Foster's communication director they are not happy with the release. We have been asked to provide a "white paper" describing the details of the plan. MEMA prepares a one and a half page summary of the "Mississippi version" of the plan. I am informed late in the afternoon that LSP has contacted Gov Foster to express their opposition to making joint statement because they have not completed their plan. Commissioner Huggins contacts Robert Latham late that afternoon that LSP has talked to Gov Foster and expressed their opposition to making the announcement about the plan because they do not have their portion of the plan complete. Gov Foster directs that the press release be held.

April 11, 2002: Robert Latham contacts Gen Landreneau and informs him of the information he received regarding Gov Foster's direction to hold the press release. Gen Landreneau is not aware of this and informs Latham that he will check into it and get back to him. Mid-afternoon Latham receives a call from Gen Landreneau confirming that the information regarding the press release is correct. Gen Landreneau expresses his regrets for the lack of coordination but believes this may actually "energize" LSP to complete their portion of the plan. LSP agrees to provide Gen Landreneau with a timeline for completion of the plan (SOON). Robert Latham and Gen Landreneau agree that this MUST be completed by the start of Hurricane Season, which is June 1. They also agree that the two Governors MUST publish a joint statement of the agreement.

April 11, 2003: Robert Latham talks to Governor Musgrove and informs him of the problems and they agree that a statement must be released before May 15th.

BOTTOM LINE: Louisiana State Police do not want to do a plan because they have not intention of ever implementing contra flow. They believe that if they have a plan and make it public they will be pressured to implement it. They would rather react at the time of the event.

May 12, 2003: Attempted to contact General Landreneau to follow-up on the status of joint press release. Left message for him to call but never returned my call.

May 14, 2003: Talked at length with Chris Beaudaux, La State Police, about the status of the plan. I reinforced with him the need to be proactive on a joint release prior to the start of hurricane season.

May 15, 2003: Conducted a joint meeting between myself, LSP Captain Chris Beaudau (spelling ?) and county EMA representatives from the coast and the I59 corridor. LSP discussed in detail the La position that contra flow would only be a last resort and would not be considered as the primary method of evacuation. All county representatives were appreciative of the meeting hearing the Louisiana position from the agency responsible for public safety.

May 16, 2003: Conducted two press interviews with Louisiana media regarding the I59 issue. They had been at a meeting in New Orleans on Thursday during which time I59 contra flow had been discussed. The Director of EM in New Orleans as quoted as saying that Mississippi had agreed to contra flow to Poplarville, Ms. I refused to confirm the details of the agreement but only said that the plan addressed the issues of both states satisfactorily.

May 19, 2003: Attempted to contact General Landreneau. Secretary asked if he had not called me back from the previous call last week. I told her that I had not heard from anyone.

May 19, 2003: Received a call from Mike Brown, Deputy Director for LOEP. He said that Gen. Landreneau was out of town but was returning my call. He indicated that Gen. Landreneau recognized the urgency for the issue and he too was shooting for a press release this week. We both agree that this must be completed prior to the start of Hurricane Season which in June 1.

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