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OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE  
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** GOVERNOR  
**FROM:** RILEY  
**SUBJECT:** I-59 REVERSE LANING: BULLET POINTS OF DEVELOPMENTS FOR MEDIA AT 5/22/02  
HURRICANE EVACUATION EXERCISE ON MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST  
**DATE** 5/13/02  
**CC:** RENICK, KINNEY, MAYO, SEWELL

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### Local Meetings

- MEMA conducted 7 public meetings (Poplarville, Lumberton, Hattiesburg, Meridian, Laurel, Wiggins and Biloxi) at your direction April 8-10 to offer local officials the opportunity to have a voice in the process. MEMA received input from approximately 250 local officials.
- Local officials expressed the following concerns:
  1. In every case, the potential financial burden placed on local governments was an issue. Who will reimburse local governments? What if a major hurricane hits New Orleans and evacuees remain in Mississippi for an extended amount of time? In addition, Mississippi will not receive any federal funds to cover expenses if the storm does not hit Mississippi and we do not receive a federal declaration of disaster.
  2. The shortage of local resources (law enforcement, fire services and emergency management agency) will be compounded by I-59 reverse laning. Where will additional resources to support local governments come from if state agencies (DPS, MEMA, DOT) are supporting I-59 reverse laning?
  3. Shortage of shelter space and personnel to staff the shelters will be compounded by I-59 reverse laning. New Orleans typically evacuates 72 hours in advance of a storm, while the Mississippi Gulf Coast does not evacuate until approximately 24-36 hours in advance. Thus, Louisiana evacuees reach shelters first. In addition, many of our schools serve as shelters and such schools would still be open and in operation 72 hours in advance.

### Recent Developments

- FEMA hosted a meeting for the first time on May 2, 2002, in Denton, TX, with federal and state officials to address the issue of reverse laning into Mississippi. FEMA now understands that this issue is of national proportion and that providing protection for residents of New Orleans cannot be accomplished without resolving the issues created by massive evacuations into Mississippi.
- The Louisiana Office of Emergency Preparedness is now considering a partial evacuation that would only require reverse laning from Louisiana to Pearl River County where MDOT has constructed a crossover. This poses a much more workable solution for the 2002 hurricane season.
- Louisiana's Governor, rather than its Department of Transportation, would now authorize reverse laning of I-59 within Louisiana. Our office can work with his to coordinate evacuation.