**OFFICE OF PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

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December 6, 2005

Mr. R. David Paulison, Acting Director
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Mr. Paulison:

On behalf of the Broward County Board of County Commissioners, I am writing to request your assistance in urging FEMA to grant the governments of South Florida the reimbursement rate of 100% for expenses incurred as a result of Hurricane Wilma.

During the past 15 months, Broward County was forced to activate its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) seven times and implement protective measures as the County monitored storms. In addition, Broward County was not included in the presidential disaster declaration for Hurricanes Ivan in 2004 and Dennis in 2005, forcing us to bear the entire cost of protective measures, an amount in excess of \$200,000.

In late August 2005, Hurricane Katrina impacted the state of Florida. Eleven counties were declared eligible for public assistance at the 75% reimbursement level. In mid-September 2005, Tropical Storm Rita impacted Collier, Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. Those counties were again only eligible for public assistance at the 75% reimbursement level.

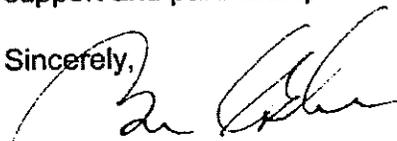
Hurricane Wilma, a Category 3 storm swept through Broward County in late October, causing widespread devastation. To date, twenty counties in the state have been included in the presidential declaration. Both Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the insurance industry predict that Hurricane Wilma will become the third most costly storm in history behind only Hurricanes Andrew and Katrina. The cost to Broward County alone may reach \$1 billion dollars. If the County is reimbursed at the 75% rate, it would equate to local share costs of approximately \$125 million dollars. When the cumulative effects of three storms in three months are taken into consideration, Broward County simply cannot afford this severe impact on local taxpayers.

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The Stafford Act requires that FEMA participate in presidential declared disasters with a minimum 75% reimbursement rate to local government, but FEMA has the discretion to reimburse at a higher level. That discretion was exercised after Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf States this year. Further, after the attacks of September 11, 2001, New York was reimbursed at the 100% level. California received 90% reimbursement after the Northridge earthquakes. After Hurricanes Charley, Frances and Jeanne, FEMA also authorized 90% federal reimbursement rate with a 5% state match. The precedent clearly exists for FEMA reimbursements at greater than 75% federal share when warranted.

We respectfully request reimbursement at 100% for Hurricane Wilma, and thank you very much for your favorable consideration of this request. We welcome the opportunity to provide any additional information you require to support our request, and we appreciate your continued support and partnership with Broward County.

Sincerely,



Ben Graber
Mayor

BG:pl

C: Broward County Board of County Commissioners
Bertha Henry, Interim County Administrator
Zack Williams, Assistant County Administrator
Pamela Madison, Director, Office of Public & Governmental Relations
Tony Carper, Director, Broward Emergency Management Agency
✓ Broward County Congressional Delegation
Craig Fugate, Director, Florida Division of Emergency Management
George Burgess, County Manager, Miami-Dade County
Robert Weisman, County Administrator, Palm Beach County