

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE WM. LACY CLAY
Before
The Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit
“Hurricane Katrina: The Financial Institutions Response”
September 14, 2005

Good morning Chairman Bachus, Ranking Member Sanders, Members of the committee, and witnesses.

We are here today in the aftermath of our country’s gravest natural disaster of modern history. We probably never imagined a complete flooding and subsequent evacuation of a major American city. Furthermore, let us remember that a three state region suffered this complete devastation. We now know that this situation was foreseen as a possibility and plans were suggested to guard against such a happening. The suggested remedies, inclusive of fortifying levees, were never implemented. However, I will not spend my time talking about what was not done, rather, let us deal with what we will do now that the situation is upon us.

The American people have responded both as individuals and as organizations to this tragedy without hesitation and have opened their homes, wallets and their hearts to those who have lost everything of material value because of this storm. I applaud our people and gain strength by seeing those that are constantly giving of themselves to get remedies in place. Our people have limited themselves in their efforts and neither will we.

The role that this committee will play in concert with the whole of the financial community is key to revival of the affected region. The financial community has responded to this hurricane by making adjustments to accommodate the needs of the victims. We have to commend you for reacting more quickly and efficiently than our government in several areas of concern. I thank you for that and I applaud you for stepping up your efforts even more. This is a huge undertaking, nevertheless, it is not insurmountable; we, working together, will get it done. Both the immediate and long term needs of the region will be addressed and necessary plans will be implemented.

I look forward to the testimonies of the witnesses who are all actively involved in this restoration of our country. I yield back the balance of my time.