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Slow Response to Oil Spill a Katrina-like Disaster

LaFonta says panic growing in New Orleans community as whole industries put at risk by poor government response to oil spill

“Governor Jindal slow to react.”

NEW ORLEANS– (April 29, 2010) –State Representative Juan LaFonta today said the slow response by the state government to a Gulf of Mexico oil spill is a “Katrina-like disaster in the making.”

“Governor Jindal and his subordinates were slow to react to the oil spill and didn’t declare a state of emergency for four long days after the disaster,” LaFonta said today. “As the oil creeps toward our coastline whole industries are at risk. Our fisheries and estuaries could be impacted for years. I’ve been told in recent days this might even have an impact on our drinking water.”

Today, LaFonta toured the area today with Byron Encalade, President of the Louisiana Oysterman’s Association and the South Plaquemines United Fishery Co-Op.

LaFonta will hold a press conference today at 4:00 p.m. at the Empire Fishing Docks along with Encalade and other officials and concerned parties.

“I am calling on Congress to open an immediate investigation into Governor Jindal’s slow reaction to this disaster,” LaFonta said.

“I saw clear evidence that wildlife are already being adversely affected,” LaFonta said. “Having lived through Katrina and studied the government’s slow response in that instance, this is a Katrina-like disaster in the making. I have been told that we had warehouses of oil booms that lay idle while the oil began to spread around the damaged oil rig. I am laying this at the feet of Governor Bobby Jindal.”

“I have a news flash for Governor Jindal,” LaFonta said. “We drill oil and harvest fish, shrimp and oysters in Louisiana and the two don’t mix. Protecting these core industries requires diligence and vigilance. Governor Jindal has let us down and now the families and small businesses are going to have to pay the price.”

“Because of Governor Jindal’s slow response, we are now behind the curve. State and federal officials are battling to catch up but the damage may have been done in the early hours of the tragedy,” LaFonta said. “I am calling on Governor Jindal to pull out all the stops to protect our precious coastline. We don’t have a moment to spare.”

LaFonta and his family were heavily impacted by Hurricane Katrina as were hundreds of thousands of people in the Greater New Orleans area.

“We are only just now beginning to recover from Hurricane Katrina and now Governor Jindal’s slow response to this disaster will add insult to injury,” LaFonta said. “There is growing panic among businesses that depend on our fisheries as the oil creeps closer to the shore.”

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