

Governor's Office of Homeland Security And Emergency Preparedness State of Louisiana

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September 13, 2024

Honorable Representative Jay Galle'- Chairman, House Homeland Security Committee
Chairman Galle'

I appreciate the opportunity to testify as an element of the Louisiana House of Representatives hearing on COVID response and recovery. I have developed a packet of information that is relevant to this hearing. I would like to open this document with the current GOHSEP Vision and Mission (with some key highlights elements in red):

Vision: *To serve as an extension of the Office of the Governor and **provide sound leadership during crisis events while also enhancing the day-to-day state agency programs** servicing Louisiana residents, businesses and organizations.*

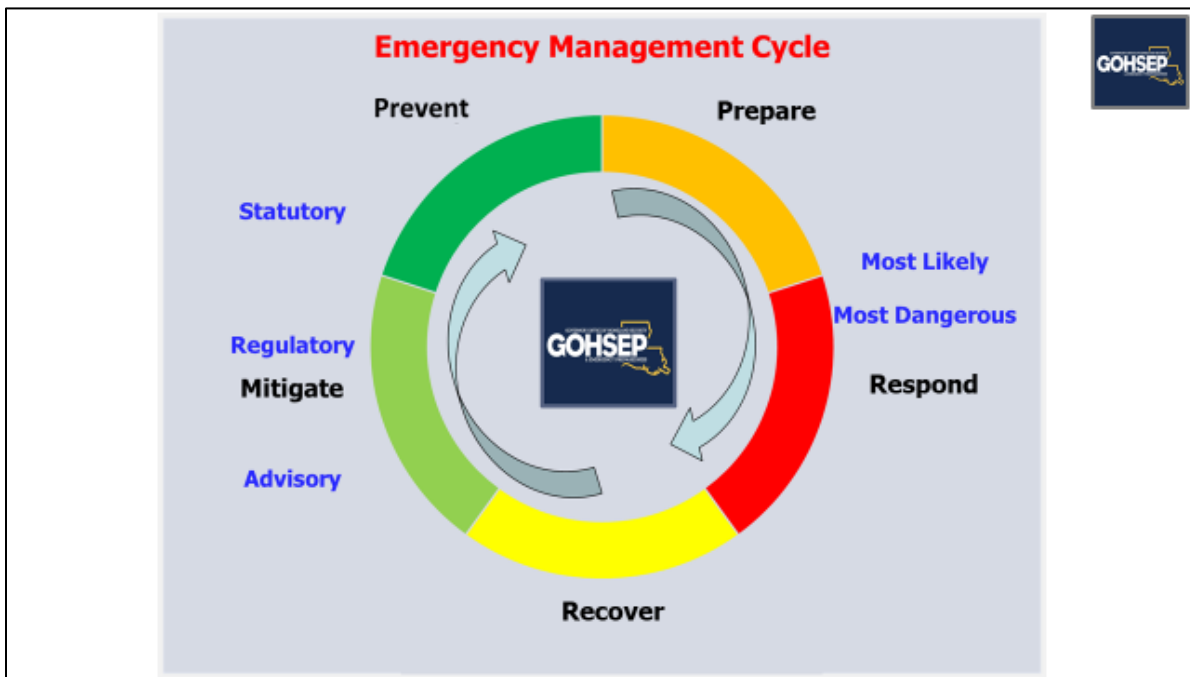
Mission: *The mission of GOHSEP is to utilize three priorities to **save lives, protect property and maintain infrastructure:***

- *Priority Number One: Ensure that GOHSEP serves as the emergency arm of the Governor and works hand in hand with all emergency support/recovery function agencies as part of the U.S. National Response Framework and the Louisiana Homeland Security, Emergency Assistance and Disaster Act in preparation, response, recovery, mitigation and prevention of crisis events.*
- *Priority Number Two: **Ensure that all Municipalities, Parishes/Parish Organizations, Sub-Recipients and State Agencies have a voice and an agency to champion for them** in obtaining maximum funds in all applicable federal and state programs in an expeditious manner.*
- *Priority Number Three: Consistently review internal best business practices and potential for Improvements. It is essential to review the actual mission and output of internal departments to ensure elite levels of support to all stakeholders in Louisiana.*

These statements above give a perspective into this document, the GOHSEP base testimony and the offer by GOHSEP to help this House Homeland Security Committee roll all the information into a comprehensive lessons learned document. We believe it will historically preserve the information on what happened, how the State responded and how the State should address global public health events in the future. It is important to note that the method of my testimony is to give my perspective as to where I was on February 17, 2020 when LDH began giving the first COVID statewide updates, where I was on March 11, 2020 (with Louisiana Emergency Declaration JBE-2020-25 (first COVID emergency declaration), where I was on May 26, 2021 with Louisiana Emergency Declaration JBE-2020-96 (last operational COVID emergency declaration) and where I am now today in this House Hearing. You will see documents in your packet with the abbreviation COT, which indicates the City of Thibodaux. During COVID, I was serving as the City of Thibodaux Director- Office of Emergency Preparedness/Special Projects. I will be able to give you a viewpoint of the impacts of COVID and Louisiana's actions as viewed from the local perspective.

I will also be able to give you the GOHSEP perspective based on the GOHSEP Response Phase AAR that was published in February 2021. Finally, I will be able to give you the perspective as the current GOHSEP Director with over four decades of public service/emergency management in four different agencies: U.S. Army-Louisiana National Guard (1984-2015), U.S. Marshals Service (1991-2019), City of Thibodaux (2019-2024) and GOHSEP (January 2024-Present).

It is imperative to understand how GOHSEP uses the current emergency management cycle and model to operate as an organization. On January 8, 2024 we simplified the emergency management cycle to address our application of the vision and mission towards our goals. The cycle starts at top left with prepare and then moves to respond. In these two phases, our focus is on what is most likely (what will we see) what is most dangerous (how it will hurt/kill people). Then the cycle moves to recover, mitigate and prevent. Our focus in these cycles is statutory (set by law), regulatory (set by policy) and advisory (set by SOPs). All five of the items in blue are always part of our focus every day, we just use them more when we are in a specific phase of emergency management.



As the House Committee Members hear testimony over the course of the hearing, this diagram and summary will be helpful to have printed out. It will help House Members in the development of questions directed towards the subject matter experts giving testimony.

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