**RESOLUTION**

**NO. R-21-363**

**CITY HALL: October 7, 2021**

**BY: COUNCILMEMBERS MORENO, GLAPION, GIARRUSSO, BANKS, GISLESON**

**PALMER, BROSSETT AND NGUYEN**

 **A RESOLUTION** requesting much needed federal assistance in New Orleans and throughout Louisiana in support of our recovery from Hurricane Ida for power utility ratepayer relief and for long-term resilience upgrades to the transmission and distribution system; and

**WHEREAS,** as Hurricane Ida recovery efforts continue, it is imperative that our city, region, and state make investments to ensure that when it comes to our power grid, we Build Back Better; and

**WHEREAS,** just as the Federal Government assisted our region after Hurricane Katrina to fortify and upgrade our levee system, the same federal emphasis and efforts should be focused toward Louisiana’s power grid; and

**WHEREAS,** climate change continues to increase the rate and strength of storms; there is no time left to wait and our opportunity for upgrades is now; and

**WHEREAS,** in New Orleans, the power utility damage costs from Hurricane Ida are significant and the ratepayers cannot bear the costs of storm restoration and upgrades alone; for comparison purposes, Hurricane Ida is estimated to cost New Orleans ratepayers between $120-$150 million and since 2007 and prior to Hurricane Ida, New Orleans rate payers paid a total $180.9 million in storm-related costs. Hurricane Ida’s damage is comparable to the cost of more than 10 years of storms in New Orleans; and

 **WHEREAS,** heightening issues, pre-Hurricane Ida, COVID-19's economic impacts continued to be severe in New Orleans; as a predominately tourist-based economy, the city struggled to recover from the pandemic's impacts with the hospitality sector experiencing a 77% reduction in revenues and 69% of hospitality-related businesses not reopened with more than 17% of its population in poverty with a 10.3% unemployment rate; and

**WHEREAS,** utility payments are a tremendous burden to many working families in New Orleans, but COVID made circumstances much worse: while the New Orleans City Council established the Council Cares program that assured more than ten thousand ratepayers on unemployment could pay their bills, Entergy New Orleans remains in arrears between $38M-$39M from unpaid bills versus pre-COVID levels of around $6M; partly for this reason, the utility is currently asking for a $24/month rate but as the regulator of Entergy New Orleans, the Council is working to mitigate this proposal; **NOW THEREFORE**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS,** That the New Orleans City Council recognizes that federal assistance was essential to recovery after Hurricanes Katrina, Gustav, and Ike and collectively foresees grant funds being critical to offset the cost of necessary upgrades, not just repairs, to the distribution and transmission systems. The body respectfully requests assistance to secure significant federal aid for power restoration and grid improvements, including but not limited to Community Development Block Grants.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That the Clerk of Council transmit certified copies of this resolution to President Joseph R. Biden, Senior Advisor to the President Cedric Richmond, Congressman Troy Carter, Congressman Steve Scalise, Senator Bill Cassidy, Senator John Kennedy, Governor John Bel Edwards, Mayor LaToya Cantrell, and all members of the New Orleans delegation: Senator Karen Carter Peterson; Senator Gary Carter; Senator Sharon Hewitt; Senator Jimmy Harris; Senator Joseph Bouie; Representative Royce Duplessis; Representative Raymond E. Garofalo, Jr.; Representative Gary M. Carter; Representative Stephanie Hilferty; Representative Mandie Landry; Representative Aimee Adatto Freeman; Representative Matthew Willard; Representative Candace Newell; Representative Jason Hughes; and Representative Mack Cormier.

**THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION WAS READ IN FULL, THE ROLL WAS CALLED ON THE ADOPTION THEREOF, AND RESULTED AS FOLLOWS:**

**YEAS:**

**NAYS:**

**ABSENT:**

**AND THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**