

# MATSUI QUESTIONS FEDERAL RESPONSE TO HURRICANE KATRINA

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September 8, 2005

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Washington, DC &ndash; Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-5) expressed frustration and outrage with the federal response to Hurricane Katrina in the following statement.

&ldquo;As Hurricane Katrina passed through the Gulf States leaving devastation and a flooded New Orleans in her wake, the federal government showed itself as being totally unprepared for a disaster. Reporters on the ground had more information than our federal officials.

&ldquo;With nearly four years since September 11th, we should have been better prepared to respond. Sadly this was not the case and I share the frustration of so many with the inadequate early response of our government to this crisis. While the conditions under which the relief workers are functioning are catastrophic we can and must do better.

&ldquo;I am pleased that Congress has acted quickly to ensure that our relief agencies are not hindered by a lack of funds. However, we must ensure those dollars are being used in a timely and effective manner. And Congress has a responsibility to assess our response efforts.

&ldquo;And any review of our response to Katrina must also include an examination of those most adversely affected by the hurricane. As we saw, those in low-income areas were all too often among the individuals left behind in the septic waters of New Orleans. The situation in New Orleans raised sobering questions about class, race and economic justice in this country that has for too long been overlooked.

&ldquo;On so many levels this is a moment of national sorrow. Sorrow at not preventing the preventable and sorrow for the tragic circumstances that came to be. Yet it is also a moment of remarkable heroism and generosity.

&ldquo;I send my thoughts and prayers to all those affected by Hurricane Katrina and I thank all those brave and giving Americans who are working to bring assistance and relief to the region. The outpouring of generosity from Americans across the country makes us all proud.&rdquo;

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