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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2805

September 13, 2005

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The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush:

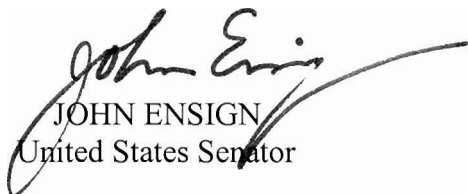
In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, we have witnessed in the Gulf Coast region devastation rarely experienced in our nation's history. It will take months just to begin to grasp the loss of human life, property damage, and environmental harm that was caused by the storm.

An urgent concern that has arisen from the destruction in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama has been the large number of pets left behind. These animals represent not only an emotional concern, but also a significant public health hazard. These animals must be rescued and transported from the region as quickly as possible to avert the potential for diseases, such as salmonella and E. coli, as well as injury to rescue workers and citizens. As we write you, Mr. President, thousands of pets remain abandoned in the streets of New Orleans and throughout the Gulf Coast region threatening the welfare of rescue workers and citizens still in the area.

The federal government must provide the tools necessary to quickly and safely collect and transport abandoned animals from the disaster area to shelters and homes around the country. We urge you to designate an individual to not only coordinate the federal government's response to this emergency, but also the efforts of private rescue groups. We believe that this federal leadership is necessary to ensure a timely and orderly animal rescue operation before the threat to public health becomes a reality.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and your understanding the time sensitive nature of this request. We are ready to provide any aid or support needed to ensure that we avoid a possible health crisis by allowing these animals to roam freely in a region already devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

Sincerely,


JOHN ENSIGN
United States Senator


RICK SANTORUM
United States Senator