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Commissioner Donelon Encourages Louisiana Residents to Prepare for Hurricane Season

Commissioner of Insurance Jim Donelon is conducting his annual statewide public awareness campaign to encourage preparations for the upcoming hurricane season and remind citizens that now is the time for property owners to review their insurance policies and make plans to protect their property and family.

“Louisiana was fortunate to have a mild hurricane season last year, and while we hope for a mild season as forecast this year, by no means should we become complacent,” says Commissioner Donelon. “You may recall that Hurricane Isaac in 2012 was only a Category 1 storm, but the losses in southeast Louisiana amounted to insurers paying out about \$750 million in homeowners claims with another \$330 million in flood claims being paid by the National Flood Insurance Program.”

Commissioner Donelon advises property owners to take the following three steps to prepare for hurricane season:

- 1.) Review your insurance coverage and deductibles.** Generally windstorm damage is covered under your homeowners policy with a separate wind and hail, named-storm or hurricane deductible which typically ranges from two to five percent of the insured value of a property. The single season hurricane deductible law enacted after Hurricanes Gustav and Ike struck Louisiana back to back in 2008 lessens the impact the policyholder must bear when multiple storms cause damage to an insured property during a single storm season or calendar year. But policyholders should be prepared for the expenses they will have to pay out of pocket in the event that their properties experience storm damage.
- 2.) If you don't already have it, look into flood insurance.** Losses due to flooding are not covered under typical homeowners and business insurance policies. If you do have flood insurance, check for any limitations on your flood coverage. And remember, properties that are not located in high-risk areas can also flood. According to FEMA, approximately 25 percent of all flood insurance claims in Louisiana come from low risk flood zones. Find out your flood risk now by entering your address at www.FloodSmart.gov, and click on the “Flood Risk Profile.” Your insurance provider can also help you check your risk.

3.) Take a home inventory. Make a list of your assets in the event you have to file a claim. Take pictures and video of the contents of your home. You can also download the free smart phone app, myHOMEscr.APP.book, provided by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners to help you document your valuables and store the information on your phone. If you do have to evacuate, take copies of your insurance policies with you along with your agent's contact information.

Donelon also encourages policyholders to take steps to mitigate their property. "Homeowners should also be aware of storm mitigation efforts that can go a long way in protecting their homes from storm damage and provide insurance premium discounts as well," said Donelon.

Insurance premium discounts are available for building or retrofitting a home to comply with the Louisiana State Uniform Construction Code. Qualifying elements include particular roof designs, shingles, windows, shutters, and hurricane straps incorporated in the framing process. These discounts apply to one or two-family owner occupied homes and modular homes and are generally about 20 percent of your premium cost. A certified wind mitigation surveyor must inspect your property and file a report that qualifies you for the insurance premium discounts.

For more information on insurance during hurricane season, you can go to the [Hurricane Resource Center](#) on the LDI's website www.ldi.la.gov or call 1-800-259-5300. For more information on flood insurance, please visit the National Flood Insurance Program's website at www.floodsmart.gov or call 1-800-427-2419.

About the Louisiana Department of Insurance: *The Louisiana Department of Insurance works to improve competition in the state's insurance market while assisting individuals and businesses with the information and resources they need to be informed consumers of insurance. As a regulator, the LDI enforces the laws that provide a fair and stable marketplace and makes certain that insurers comply with the laws in place to protect policyholders. You can contact the LDI by calling 1-800-259-5300 or visiting www.ldi.la.gov.*