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**SUPERVISOR RIDLEY-THOMAS CALLS FOR PLAN TO
EXPAND CONTRIBUTIONS OF COUNTY EMPLOYEES
IN HAITI RESCUE AND RECOVERY EFFORTS**

LOS ANGELES – While lauding the courageous efforts of the County’s 72-member Firefighter Urban Search and Rescue Team in earthquake-ravaged Haiti, Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas called on County officials today to prepare a report on other measures County employees can take to contribute to the rescue and recovery efforts.

At the Supervisor’s request, the Board of the Supervisors directed the County’s Chief Executive Officer to report back within 10 days, including options on how the Office of Charitable Giving can work with County employees and agency partners to help the people of Haiti.

The motion also calls for the County to address requests by medical personnel who want to travel to Haiti to provide their services and to work with the Office of Emergency Management on a campaign to remind County residents to be prepared for a major disaster.

“We must examine what further efforts the County can undertake, not only to assist the residents of Haiti, but to also send and reinforce the message of domestic emergency preparedness should a disaster strike again in Los Angeles,” Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said.

The Supervisor requested that the County post on its website information on how residents can provide assistance to the people of Haiti, similar to what is presented on the White House website.

He also urged the Chief Executive Officer to prepare a five-signature letter thanking President Obama for his leadership and swift decisive action in aiding the people of Haiti.

“We must recognize, acknowledge, and commend what has already been done for the people of Haiti at the national and local level,” Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said. “President Obama swiftly mobilized our forces and resources to assist the people of Haiti.”

The Supervisor also noted that Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano announced that the Obama administration would temporarily grant legal status to the tens of thousands of Haitian immigrants who were living in the U.S. illegally before the tragedy hit, and has also granted humanitarian parole for orphans who are eligible for adoption in the United States.

He praised the mobilization of the 72- member Urban Search and Rescue Team, which at the request of the U.S. Agency for International Development is currently in Haiti assisting with the rescue and recovery efforts. To date, the team has participated in nine successful rescues.

In addition to the Urban Search and Rescue Team, a team of 11 volunteer faculty and staff from the Keck School of Medicine, the L.A.-County-USC Medical Center, and the Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, arrived in Haiti on Sunday to provide emergency medical services.

“These local hometown heroes have gained international notoriety and recognition, and they are to be commended for their bravery and hard work. Their families should be recognized for their sacrifices as well,” the Supervisor said.

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