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Today House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) officially announced that he and Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) will lead a bipartisan delegation to the Gulf Coast March 2-4. US Rep Charlie Melancon issued the following statement:

"Sometimes hard work really does pay off. After my letter to Speaker Hastert and Leader Pelosi and weeks of phone calls, we will finally have a delegation of House leadership that will see first hand the things I have been trying to explain in Washington for months: That the destruction along the gulf coast is not just another storm to clean up but a national tragedy. That, in many ways, rebuilding is a myth in South Louisiana. That the American citizens living on the gulf won't be able to put their lives back together without a long term commitment from their government. That people can't come home unless we help them have something to come home to.

"One of Louisiana's biggest hurdles in rebuilding is getting Congress to understand the problems we face. I am sincerely grateful to the Speaker and Minority Leader and hope that this trip is a tipping point for them and other House leaders."