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GENERAL HONORÉ
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I am writing to express my unequivocal support for the Swift Water Training for Operation and Rescue Missions (STORM) Ranch, a state-of-the-art swiftwater rescue training facility being developed by Calibre-S2O in Houston, Texas. As a nation, we face an escalating threat from flooding, the number one weather-related killer in Texas and a growing challenge across the United States. With intensifying storms and urban growth increasing flood risks, facilities like STORM Ranch are not just beneficial—they are mission-critical for saving lives.

The STORM Ranch, with its 27-acre site, \$65 million investment, and cutting-edge features like a swift-water channel, urban flood simulator, and low-head dam training area, represents a quantum leap in preparing first responders for the real-world challenges of flood response. This facility's ability to simulate flooded streets, submerged vehicles, and high-ropes rescues in a controlled environment eliminates the dangerous reliance on unpredictable natural waterways for training. As someone who led Joint Task Force Katrina in 2005, I can attest that preparation is the backbone of effective disaster response. The ability to train up to 6,000 personnel annually in realistic scenarios—ranging from immersed vehicles to urban flood environments—will ensure our responders are not just ready but battle-tested for the next hurricane.

Organizations like the United Cajun Navy (www.thecajunnavy.org), a leading disaster response nonprofit, stand to gain immensely from this facility. The Cajun Navy's volunteers have been on the front lines of flood rescues across the Gulf Coast, often deploying boats and personal watercraft in chaotic, high-risk environments like those seen during Hurricanes Harvey, Ida, and countless other storms. Access to STORM Ranch would allow their teams to hone critical skills—such as swiftwater navigation, rope rescue techniques, and urban flood extraction—in a controlled setting. For example, their responders could practice extracting victims from flooded buildings or vehicles, a scenario they frequently encounter, without risking lives during training. This hands-on experience would enhance their ability to operate efficiently and safely, reducing response times and improving outcomes in real-world missions. The Cajun Navy's recent efforts in Texas Hill Country, where they deployed for over a month, as well as the 1,000 rescues during Hurricane Harvey in 2017, underscore the urgent need for such advanced training to scale their impact.

We cannot afford to be reactive in the face of nature's fury. Facilities like STORM Ranch empower our first responders and volunteer organizations with the tools to act decisively and effectively. This is not just an investment in infrastructure; it's an investment in human lives, in community resilience, and in our collective ability to face the storms ahead. I urge all stakeholders—government, private sector, and community leaders—to rally behind this initiative and ensure its success.

Respectfully,

Lt. Gen Russel L. Honoré, U.S. Army (Ret.)