

MOTION

NO. M-26-285

CITY HALL: July 23, 2026

BY: COUNCILMEMBER MORRELL

SECONDED BY:

A MOTION recognizing the anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, one of the worst man-made disasters in our nation's history that caused inconceivable devastation and immense hardship and heartbreak here in New Orleans and throughout the Gulf Coast region.

WHEREAS, on August 23, 2005, a tropical depression formed southeast of the Bahamas and became Tropical Storm Katrina on August 24, 2005, the 11th tropical storm of the season and the third strongest hurricane to hit the United States in its history at the time; and

WHEREAS, by the evening of August 25, when Katrina made landfall north of the Broward-Miami-Dade County line, it had intensified to a Category 1 hurricane, but after passing over Florida, the storm again weakened and was reclassified as a tropical storm; as it moved over the Gulf of Mexico, the storm increased in strength and on August 28, the storm was upgraded to a Category 5 hurricane, with maximum sustained wind speeds ultimately reaching 175 miles per hour; and

WHEREAS, on the morning of August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall southeast of New Orleans in Buras, Louisiana, destroying the coastline with estimated storm surges of 15 to 19 feet from New Orleans East to St. Bernard and Plaquemines parishes; though downgraded to a Category 3, the storm's relatively slow forward movement covered the region with significant rainfall; and

WHEREAS, in the early morning hours on August 29, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers received a report that water had broken through the concrete flood wall between the 17th Street Canal and the city, with the Industrial Canal later breaching and flooding the Lower Ninth Ward; in 2006, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, responsible for the design of the levee system in New Orleans, acknowledged that outdated and faulty engineering practices used to build the levees led to a majority of the flooding that occurred due to Katrina; and

WHEREAS, by late afternoon, the breaching of the London Avenue Canal levees caused 80% of New Orleans' neighborhoods to be inundated with rising floodwaters, reaching upwards of 15 feet in depth; and

WHEREAS, roughly 100,000 people were tragically trapped in the city when the storm hit—due in large part to late evacuation notices and lack of transportation—with many taking refuge in the New Orleans Superdome and the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center; and

WHEREAS, this man-made disaster resulted in the deaths of 1,833 people regionally and left millions homeless in New Orleans and along the Gulf Coast of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama; according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Katrina is the costliest U.S. hurricane on record, inflicting upwards of \$160 billion in total damages; and

WHEREAS, Hurricane Katrina had an overwhelming impact on the City of New Orleans and our people; the mass exodus from New Orleans and the Gulf Coast during and after Katrina represented one of the largest and most sudden relocations of people in U.S. history with an estimated 1.2 million Louisianans being displaced for months or even years, and thousands never returning to their homes; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the tragic loss of life and abundant displacement, the storm caused severe damage to businesses, infrastructure, and housing and left behind standing water, oil pollution, sewage, and other environmental hazards; and

WHEREAS, the storm further exposed major gaps in the U.S. emergency management response and highlighted the importance of infrastructure resilience with storm impacts continuing to be felt in New Orleans as ongoing efforts to rebuild and recover continue even twenty years later; and

WHEREAS, the storm serves as a stark and chilling reminder of the destructive power of extreme weather events and the importance of disaster preparedness; nevertheless, our city remains united in compassion for the victims and in resolve to overcome the tremendous impacts through perseverance and thoughtful action to address systemic failures; and

WHEREAS, the City Council adopted Motion No. M-25-505 on September 25, 2025, establishing the 2026 Holiday schedule for City Government; and

WHEREAS, the Council desires to amend this schedule to include a Day of Remembrance acknowledging the devastating impacts and loss of life resulting from Hurricane Katrina to be recognized on August 28, 2026, without adverse impact on the City budget or ability to provide services to the public; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT MOVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, That the holiday schedule for City Government for the year 2026 is hereby amended to include the following additional holiday:

<u>HOLIDAYS</u>	<u>DATE OF OBSERVANCE</u>	<u>DAY OF THE WEEK</u>
Hurricane Katrina Remembrance	August 28, 2026	Friday

THE FOREGOING MOTION WAS READ IN FULL, THE ROLL WAS CALLED ON THE ADOPTION THEREOF, AND RESULTED AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS:

NAYS

ABSENT:

AND THE MOTION WAS ADOPTED.