

U.S. Representative Gene Taylor

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I deeply regret that I am not able to join you today as you celebrate the opening of the new bridge across the Bay of St. Louis. Although my duties in the House of Representatives prevent me from participating in this wonderful event, please know that I wish I were here with you on this very special day.

The old bridge that once spanned the Bay of St. Louis opened in August 1953, the month before I was born. It never occurred to me, through all the years that the bridge stood and after my countless trips across and under it, that one day I would still be standing and it wouldn't. Sadly, as we learned, things that were simply unimaginable became our new reality on August 29, 2005. To read more [CLICK HERE](#).

Since that fateful day, however, collectively and individually we have made significant strides in our recovery. While much work remains to be done, the rebuilding of this bridge is certainly one of the most significant achievements in our recovery to date. As important as this bridge will be to restoring our local economy and to improving our quality of life, it is also an important symbol of our resurgence.

This new bridge represents our future—constructed better, higher, and stronger. It will be here, as a vital link between the citizens of Hancock and Harrison counties and those who come to visit us, for generations to come.

This great day would not be possible without the strong support of Mississippi's Congressional delegation in Washington—Senators Lott and Cochran and my colleagues in the House. In particular, I am grateful to Senator Thad Cochran—who as chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee—put together the legislation that provided the funds for the rebuilding of the bridge and so many other projects that are vital to our region's recovery from the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina.

I'd also wish to express my deep gratitude to my former congressional colleague and recently retired Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta for personally coming down to the Mississippi Coast and pledging the support of his agency to see that not only that the bridge was rebuilt but that we also had a temporary ferry service across the Bay in the interim.

Additionally, I'd like to recognize the efforts of Southern District Highway Commissioner Wayne Brown and Butch Brown of the Mississippi Department of Transportation for their tireless efforts to take the federal funds provided to them and working with their partner Granite Archer Western reconnect these two communities divided by this catastrophe.

Finally, I'd like to thank all of the officials at the local, state, and federal levels who have worked with my staff and me to see that rubble from the old bridge was used for coastal enhancement projects such as square handkerchief reef. Thank you.