

SENATOR  
**John Kerry**

REPRESENTING THE BIRTHPLACE OF AMERICA



Press Office



## RESULTS

10/16/2007

### **Senators Commend Gulf Coast Rebuilding Project**

#### ***Massachusetts Firm Wins Another Key Flood Protection Contract***

BOSTON – Today Senators John Kerry (D-Mass.) and Mary Landrieu (D-La.) announced that Bioengineering Group, a Salem, Mass.-based engineering firm, has been awarded a \$50 million contract to help rebuild Louisiana’s coastal flood protection system destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. The small company, which received a \$150 million contract from the Army Corps of Engineers earlier this year, will evaluate and redesign Louisiana’s levies and pumps, and restore damaged coastland. Kerry and Landrieu hailed the contract as a step forward for Louisiana, and a model for other Katrina rebuilding efforts.

“Just as the levee system is the foundation for New Orleans, contracts with small businesses should be the bedrock of the plan to revitalize and rebuild the Gulf Coast,” said Senator Kerry, Chairman of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship. “We must work to make sure that more small companies have the opportunity to compete for these types of projects. Small businesses like Bioengineering Group drive our economy nationally, and I’m glad to see that this power is being harnessed for the renaissance of New Orleans.”

“I want to congratulate Bioengineering Group on their contract to do coastal restoration and flood protection work in Louisiana. As our state recovers from the devastating 2005 Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, there is perhaps no more important task than helping to protect our coast. Small businesses are the backbone of America’s economy, and I thank Chairman Kerry for working to ensure small businesses have the opportunity to compete for the vast amount of work still required along the Gulf Coast.”

Bioengineering Group, a woman owned, 8(a) company, employs 30 Massachusetts residents and 8 highly skilled staffers in Louisiana -- with plans to hire 6 more before the year's end. In September, Wendi Goldsmith, the firm's president, testified before Congress on the need for increasing opportunities for women in the federal contracting arena.

The 8(a) program run by the Small Business Administration (SBA), provides business development assistance to small disadvantaged firms which helps them compete for federal contracts. Senator Kerry will introduce legislation in the coming weeks that will strengthen opportunities for small businesses to access federal contracts and hold the Bush Administration accountable for failing to meet mandated small business goals.

Kerry and Landrieu have also been spearheading efforts to improve disaster assistance for businesses and residents devastated by disasters. In August, the Senate unanimously passed their bipartisan disaster relief bill (S. 163). However, Republicans in the Senate are blocking the bill from moving to the President's desk by refusing to appoint members to a conference committee to negotiate differences with a disaster assistance bill passed by the House of Representatives.