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## THE LOUISIANA WAY LIVES!

### *The Blanco Administration Selects ICF International Inc. as the Road Home Administrator*

**BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA** --Only in Louisiana would the Governor select and pay a firm to design a "Solicitation for Offers" (SFO) for the largest non-construction contract in Louisiana history, and then turn around and ignore obvious ethical conflicts and award the contract to the same company.

ICF had an existing three-year contract with the State through the Office of Community Development (OCD). On April 10, 2006, OCD issued an SFO drafted under the "Action Plan" developed by ICF. On page 24 of the Action Plan submitted by ICF to the ethics commission in connection with the existing consulting contract, the following observations were made:

"The State is in the process of developing a Request for Proposal to provide program management services for the home owner and rental programs detailed in this Action Plan amendment. The proposal will seek the best available management firm to assist in the implementation of these programs."

In a letter to Ethics Board members, R. Gray Sexton, Executive Director of the Louisiana Ethics Commission wrote the following:

"I have grave concerns over whether or not ICF can enter into a contract for the performance of these described services without the occurrence of manifest violations of Section 1112 of the Code."

Without regard to Mr. Sexton's misgivings, the contract was awarded to the firm that helped write it anyway.

Is this what the Governor meant in her opening address about the need for “accountability and transparency” in dealing with the recovery? We don’t think so.

This sham process was obviously designed to give cover to the Administration to pick their favored administrator. According to an article published June 10, 2006, in *The Advocate*, it appears only after the selection of the contractor will the Administration and the contractor sit down and decide on a price to charge the State. Is it safe to say that a firm was selected for the largest non-construction contract in history without weight being given to the cost of their service? Is that the way the Road Home Program is going to be run?

Who is this firm? Who made the selection for the State? What qualifications did they exhibit that made them the most attractive, in spite of their ethical shortcomings? These questions should be answered to the full satisfaction of the people of this State. The selection of a firm with such obvious conflicts is disheartening and enraging. If these questions cannot be answered, the selection should be thrown out and a process which truly is transparent and accountable be implemented as quickly as possible.

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