

# Sun-Herald

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## Time to let port reach its potential

One of the best economic developments that could happen for Mississippi took place in Washington late last week when U.S. District Court Judge James Robertson dismissed a lawsuit that threatened to hamper progress at the Port of Gulfport.

The judge ruled that the plaintiffs did not show how they would be personally harmed if federal recovery money was spent on the port rather than on housing. Therefore, the plaintiffs have no “standing” in the matter.

The plaintiffs, a coalition of housing advocates, had contended in their suit that \$570 million allocated to the port by the state was “diverted” from meeting the needs of “Hurricane Katrina victims in Mississippi who remain displaced or are living in damaged housing,” according to Larry Schoen, one of the plaintiffs’ attorneys.

State officials have argued that the money was not specifically earmarked for housing, and that it will be much better spent on enhancing the economy by expanding the port’s facilities and capabilities.

We have long recognized that the funds were not specifically earmarked for housing, and that by investing in the Port of Gulfport, the funds would provide jobs and opportunity for all of the people of South Mississippi, and assure that our recovery is both successful and permanent.

Rather than appealing the ruling, we hope the plaintiffs will work through the exceptional housing programs that are already in place to assist those who were displaced or damaged by Katrina.

*The editorial above represents the views of the Sun Herald editorial board, which consists of President-Publisher Glen Nardi, Vice President and Executive Editor Stan Tiner, Opinion Page Editor B. Marie Harris, Associate Editor Tony Biffle, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Flora S. Point and Marketing Services Director John McFarland.*