
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: I-59 CONTRAFLOW: BUTCH BROWN'S LETTER AND COMMENTS
DATE 9/7/01
CC: RENICK

You'll remember that we sent a letter to Butch Brown, MDOT Executive Director, requesting MDOT's assistance and cooperation in analyzing Louisiana's proposal to contraflow I-59. Your letter to Brown crossed in the mail with the attached letter and editorial from Brown.

Brown called me after receiving your letter. He basically said that, because MDOT has reportedly not received any cooperation from our emergency response agencies, MDOT is moving forward with the plan of contraflowing I-59 to Hattiesburg because MDOT has the resources to do this alone. Brown said that if other agencies would cooperate, resources would exist to contraflow to Laurel.

I asked if he meant totally blocking all exits as far north as Hattiesburg and he said yes. I then asked how he plans on handling people running out of gas on I-59 because they can't exit, as well as the need to get ambulances and other emergency response vehicles on and off in the event of an accident. Commissioner Huggins said that you cannot block all of the exits for this exact reason. Brown said that would be MEMA and DPS' responsibility and that is why they need to be involved.

I again explained that we want to help our fellow man, but 1) we have to have the impact analysis info to prepare for an effective and efficient operation; 2) our first priority is to Mississippians; and 3) this will impact more than the transportation infrastructure and will take cooperation and coordination between all agencies. Brown's position is that our executive agencies are giving us bad information and won't talk to his people. He said that he needs a list of their concerns. I told him that this office and our agencies are trying to cooperate with his agency because this will largely impact more than roads.

I emailed Commissioner Huggins, Mr. Latham and General Lipscomb this morning and asked them to address a letter to Brown of their concerns, but to provide the letter to me by next Friday so that I can deliver the info to Brown and he can't make allegations that he didn't receive any cooperation or information.

Please advise as to the next action you want me to take on this matter.