



Chertoff: FEMA to cover hotel costs

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by The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS - Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff says hotel bills for people who fled Hurricane Gustav will be paid by the Federal Emergency Management Agency if those people register for assistance.

Chertoff made the announcement today at a news conference in Baton Rouge with Gov. Bobby Jindal. It was unclear whether bills of people who have already checked out of hotels following a brief evacuation would be covered.

Chertoff said the hotel aid was designed "to make sure that people don't feel economic pressure to return home prematurely, before it's safe."

It was unclear whether other evacuation costs, such as fuel and food, would also be covered under a recent presidential disaster declaration. FEMA spokesman Manuel Broussard said that while such a determination is being made, evacuees should save receipts for gasoline and other expenses and they should register with FEMA by calling (800) 621-FEMA or goig online to www.fema.gov. •