

Houston, TX

Nobody asked but ...

As usual, when some kind of catastrophe strikes — Hurricane Harvey in this instance — anti-market types will pipe up with “I’ll tell you so” shots such as “Who will save the people of Houston now? The market?” My response is “Exactly!” If the market doesn’t arise in Houston post-Harvey, Houston will remain a wrecked city *ad infinitum*. Any adherent of Henry Hazlitt’s *Economics in One Lesson* knows that in any event, there is always a short term and a long term. Certainly, the market **must** cause the long term recovery of Houston. This is not to say that government has no role, but it is just one of the methods of allocation of resources that a market provides. The state is not a replacement for the market, it is a mechanism of the market. And the market is not constrained to use the state in any element of its phenomena. But what about the short term, the statist cries? To be sure, the Coast Guard is doing good work, but it is outnumbered by a wide margin with both formal and informal volunteers. And all rescue workers must use resources provided by the market. Where does the bottled water come from? The parts and fuel for the helicopters? The food for the victims? The cots? The clothes? Government doesn’t have the time it takes to assemble these resources. The market has been assembling resources since the dawn of man.

— Kilgore Forelle