

May 4, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid

Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell

Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Boehner

Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20543

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi

Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20543

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Speaker Boehner, and Minority Leaders McConnell and Pelosi:

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters, we are writing to respectfully ask that you take urgent action this year to support restoration that helps the ecosystems, economies and communities of the Gulf region.

The *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill began a year ago, and while the nation's attention is no longer captivated daily by oil-covered birds and turtles, the ecosystems, communities and economy of the region are still suffering – some more than others. President Obama made clear in an Executive Order that the long-term degradation of the Gulf, combined with the oil spill, has left the region in peril. **This is a make or break moment for the Gulf, and we need your leadership.**

In line with recommendations from the National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling, we ask that **penalties paid by BP under the Clean Water Act (CWA) be directed back to the region that has suffered from decades of degradation with the BP disaster serving as the most recent and dramatic example. This action is critical to the recovery of the environment, economies, communities and cultural resources of the region.**

The nation needs a healthy Gulf. The region is the backbone of our economy – and the financial strength of the region is intrinsically tied to its environmental well-being:

- The Gulf currently supports a \$34 billion a year tourism industry, and its fisheries support an estimated \$22.6 billion in seafood and commercial and recreational fishing related activity.
- The Gulf produces 40 percent of all the seafood in the lower 48 states.
- The region is home to 10 of our nation's 14 largest ports by tonnage. More than 25 percent of the nation's waterborne exports pass through Louisiana ports alone.

BP and the other parties responsible for the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill are liable under the CWA for penalties for each barrel of oil spilled – fines that could provide essential resources for Gulf restoration. Without Congressional action, the fines for violating the Oil Spill Pollution Act and CWA will be deposited in the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund and Federal Treasury, respectively, creating an unacceptable windfall for the federal government, instead of supporting the impacted communities. Given the massive size of this disaster, **we respectfully urge you to take action to ensure that the Clean Water Act penalties are used for ecosystem restoration in the Gulf region now.**

Without this investment in restoration, the Gulf's already vulnerable communities, local economies and ecosystems – including fish and wildlife habitats – remain even more susceptible to future disasters. With your leadership, we can help local Gulf businesses to grow and create new, good-paying jobs that position the region and its firms and research institutions as a hubs of innovation in restoration science and technology while creating new opportunities for dislocated and disadvantaged workers.

We look forward to working with you toward a healthier and more vibrant future for the Gulf of Mexico and our nation. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Signed,

Action Communication and Education Reform
Advocates for Environmental Human Rights
Alabama Coastal Foundation
Alabama Rivers Alliance
Alachua Audubon Society
Albornoz and Associates
America's WETLAND Foundation
American Rivers
American Sportfishing Association
Anderson Brothers Deep Sea Fishing
Anglers for Conservation
Apalachee Audubon Society
Apalachicola Riverkeeper
Artist Boat
Asian Americans for Change
Audubon Mississippi
Audubon of Florida
Audubon Texas
Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program
Baton Rouge Audubon Society
Bayou Grace Community Service
Bayou Industrial Group
Bayou Interfaith Shared Community Organizing
Bayou Land Conservancy
Bayou Preservation Association
Bayou Rebirth
Bayouland
Berkley Conservation Institute, Pure Fishing
BFA Environmental
Bonfish and Tarpon Trust
Bud n Alley's Restaurant
Cajun Fishing Adventures
CallingDucks.com
Careco TV
Catholic Charities – Archdiocese of New Orleans
Center for Planning Excellence
Central Florida Offshore Anglers
Central Texas Audubon Society
Century 21 Beggins Beach Properties
Charter Fishermen's Association
Choctawhatchee Audubon Society
Citrus County Audubon Society
City of Bayou La Batre
City of Gulf Shores
City of New Orleans
City of Orange Beach
Clearwater Audubon Society
Coalition Against Widening the Industrial Canal
Coast Builders Coalition
Coastal Angler Magazine

Coastal Community Consulting
Coastal Conservation Association
Coastal Women for Change
Cocodrie Inside Charters at Sportsman's Paradise
Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism
Common Ground Relief
Community Advocacy Research and Education,
Inc.
Conservancy of Southwest Florida
Dallas Safari Club
Decoy Outdoors
Defenders of Wildlife
Delta Waterfowl
Diez Products
Diez Signs LLC
Ducks Unlimited
Duval, Funderburk, Sundbery, Lovell & Watkins
Eastern Surf Magazine
Environment America
Environmental Defense Fund
Equity and Inclusion
Federation of Fly Fishers
Fishbuzz TV
Florida Fishing Radio
Florida Guides Association
Florida Keys Fishing Guides Association
Florida Sports Fishing Association
Florida Sportsman
Florida Wildlife Federation
Florida Sport Fishing Magazine
Fly Fishing in Salt Waters Magazine
For the Bayou
Ford Press, Inc.
Four Rivers Audubon Society
Fowl Play Game Calls
FowlNation.Com
Galveston Bay Foundation
Galveston Baykeepers
Global Green
Global Manufacturing Corp
Grand Isle Port Commission
Greater Lafourche Port Commission
Greater New Orleans, Inc.
Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute
Gulf Coast Bird Observatory
Gulf Coast Heritage Trails Partnership
Gulf Coast Waterfowl Festival
Gulf Fishermen's Association
Gulf Intercoastal Canal Association
Gulf Islands Conservancy, Inc.

Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance
Gulf Regional Planning Commission
Gulf Restoration Network
Guy Harvey Foundation
Halifax Audubon Society
Hands Across the Sand
Hardcore Decoys
HDR, Inc.
Hernando Audubon Society
Holy Cross Neighborhood Association
Hope Haven Children's Services
Houma-Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce
Houston Audubon Society
Houston Wilderness
HuntDucks.com
IDEAS (Intellectual Decisions on Environmental Awareness Solutions)
Immaculate Heart CDC
Indian River Keeper
International Gamefish Association
Islamorada Fishing and Conservation Trust
Islamorada Fishing Club
Izaak Walton League of America
Jackson Audubon Society
Jefferson Parish
Jefferson Parish Economic Development Council
Kissimmee Valley Audubon Society
Ladies Let's Go Fishing
Lafourche Chamber of Commerce
Lake Charles Harbor
Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation
LeDez Industries
Legacy Institute for Nature & Culture
Levees.org
Lighthouse Community Development Corporation
Limitless Vistas, Inc.
Louisiana Bucket Brigade
Louisiana Environmental Action Network
Louisiana Property Acquisition Company, LLC
Louisiana Wildlife Federation
Louisiana Chapter of American Society of Landscape Architects
Louisiana Outside Radio
Louisiana Sea Grant
Lower 9th Ward CSED
Lower Mississippi Riverkeeper
LSU AgCenter
Manatee County Audubon Society
Marion County Audubon Society
Marlin Magazine
Mary Queen of Vietnam CDC
McKibbin Hotel Management

Mercy Housing & Human Development
Mississippi Coalition for Vietnamese-American Fisherfolks and Families
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
Mississippi NAACP, Biloxi Branch
Mississippi Renaissance Garden Foundation, Inc.
Mississippi River Maritime Association
Mississippi Wildlife Federation
Mobile Bay Kayak Fishing Association
Mobile Baykeeper
Mosquito Creek Outdoors
Mississippi Hospitality and Restaurant Association
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Audubon Society
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Capital Development, Inc.
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Nook Industries
NXT Generation
Ocean Conservancy
Oceana
Oktibbeha Audubon Society
Orange County Audubon Society
Orlando Kayak Fishing Club
Orleans Audubon Society
Outdoorsman Extreme, LLC
Oxfam America
Paradise Louisiana Television
Parishes Against Coastal Erosion
Pax Christi New Orleans
Peace River Audubon Society
Pine Woods Audubon Society
Port of Iberia
RecycledFish.com
Reef Relief
Representative Reed Henderson, Louisiana House of Representatives
Restore America's Estuaries
Restore or Retreat
Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation
Santa Fe Audubon Society
Sarasota Bay Watch
Save Our Seabirds, Inc.
Save Our Shores! Florida
Save the Manatee Club
Sebastian Inlet Sportfishing Association
Senator A.G. Crowe, Louisiana State Senate
Sierra Club
Skinny Water Culture
Snook Foundation

Sojourners
South Coast Paddling Company
South Florida Audubon Society
South Louisiana Wetlands Discovery Center
South Lafourche Levee District
South Wings
Southeast Volusia Audubon Society
Southern Energy Network
Space Coast Audubon Society
Sporting Dog Adventures
Sportsman's Paradise
Sportsmen for Kids
St. Bernard Economic Development Commission
St. Bernard Parish
St. Bernard Wetlands Foundation
St. Lucie Audubon Society
St. Lucie County Conservation Alliance
St. Petersburg Audubon Society
Steps Coalition
Suite Hospitality Resort Management
Surfer Magazine
Surfing Magazine
Surfrider Foundation
Tarpon Coast Fly Fishers
Team Real Duck
Terminal District
Terrebonne Parish -- Jane Arnette, Economic
Development Authority, Interim CEO
Terrebonne Parish -- Michel Claudet, President
Terrebonne Parish -- Nick Matherne, Director of
Coastal Protection and Restoration
Terrebonne Parish -- Patrick Gordon, Sr., Director
of Planning & Zoning
Terrebonne Parish Council -- Clayton Voisin, Sr.,
Chairman
Terrebonne Readiness & Assistance Coalition
Texas Coastal Partners
Texas Conservation Alliance
Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services
Texas Land Conservancy
Texas Waterfowl Association
The Air Alliance of Houston
The Alchemy Group
The Bayou
The Billfish Foundation
The Florida Aquarium
The Nature Conservancy
The Vindez Corporation
The World of Outfitting
Tierra Resources, LLC
Tradewinds Resorts
Travis Audubon Society

U.S. Climate Action Network
Underwater Journal
United Houma Nation
Venice Area Audubon Society
Waterkeeper Alliance
WeAreDuckHunters.com
West Marine
West Pasco Audubon Society
West Volusia Audubon Society
Wicked Gear Fishing
WILDCOAST/COSTASALVAjE
Williams Architects, LLC
Wolf Bay Watershed Watch
Women of the Storm
Zion Community Travelers

February 15, 2012

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Reid and McConnell,

As faith leaders, almost two years after the largest oil spill in our nation's history, we continue to lament lost jobs and food security, and the on-going physical and mental health challenges facing so many of our brothers and sisters across America's Gulf Coast. God's creation groans from the oil and chemical contaminants that still permeate the beaches, wetlands and waters upon which so many rely for survival. Now more than ever, we need the leadership of the U.S. Congress to ensure that Gulf Coast communities, economies and God's creation do not undertake this recovery unaided. We are writing in support of the legislation before the U.S. Senate, the RESTORE Act, S. 1400, a bipartisan response which we believe is rooted in the values of peace, economic fairness, and stewardship of creation.

The parties responsible for the oil spill will be liable for up to \$21 billion in fines under the Clean Water Act, but those fines will not go back to the most impacted ecosystems and communities in the Gulf region unless Congress acts. The RESTORE Act would bring back eighty percent of these fines to restore Gulf States economies, communities and God's creation.

Faith-based organizations have worked tirelessly to support those most impacted by the oil spill – living out the words of Deuteronomy 15 that demand: "If there is a needy person among you...do not harden your heart and shut your hand against your kin. Rather, you must open your hand and lend whatever is sufficient." Yet, our efforts alone will not be enough to meet these needs and most especially will not be enough to restore a region that has suffered from decades of degradation with the BP disaster serving as the most recent and dramatic example. We need legislation like the RESTORE the Gulf Coast States Act to build a better future for the Gulf along with the collaboration of local communities, state and federal governments to move this effort forward.

Restoration projects that would be funded under this bill can help to protect communities, restore ecosystems, revive the tourism and fishing industries, and create tens of thousands of jobs as residents rebuild and diversify their economy. This bill encourages policies to help Gulf Coast workers and businesses compete for economic opportunities and funds training programs which could help families impacted by the spill to find good paying livelihood opportunities in ecosystem restoration, helping families maintain economic self sufficiency, while protecting our precious resources and environment for all Americans.

Responding to this disaster is not a partisan issue but an issue of protecting Creation and pursuing economic fairness for those coastal communities facing the greatest impacts.

While many issues of concern remain, especially the need for those most impacted to have a voice in the future of the Gulf, this legislation represents a significant, bi-partisan and achievable step toward justice for Gulf Coast communities and ecosystems.

We urge you to do what is best for the Gulf Coast – and for all Americans - by working to guarantee that the oil spill response effort is comprehensive, effective, and just, meeting the needs of those suffering today while laying a foundation for long-term restoration and renewal.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Geoffrey A. Black
General Minister and President
United Church of Christ

Carol Blythe
President
Alliance of Baptists

Rev. Kim Bobo
Executive Director
Interfaith Worker Justice (IL)

Dr. Randy Brinson
Founder, Redeem the Vote
President, Christian Coalition of Alabama

Rev. Jennifer Butler
Executive Director
Faith in Public Life

Simone Campbell, SSS
Executive Director
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

The Rev. Canon Peg Chamberlin
Executive Director
Minnesota Council of Churches

Rev. Mari Castellano,
United Church of Christ
Justice and Witness Ministries

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United Methodist Pastor

Rev. Terence Ellen
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Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

Deborah Fikes
Executive Advisor to the UN
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Founder
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Prodigal Child Project

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Director
Center for Theology and Public Life

Rabbi Steve Gutow
President
Jewish Council of Public Affairs

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President and CEO
The Evangelical Environmental Network

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Senior Pastor
Northland- A Church Distributed

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JustFaith Ministries (KY)

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Fellowship of Reconciliation (NY)

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National Council of Jewish Women

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Director
Disciples Justice Action Network

Sung-ok Lee
Assistant General Secretary, Christian social Action
United Methodist Women, United Methodist Church

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Congregation Justice Coordinator
Sisters of the Holy Cross

Jean Stokan
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Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

Rabbi David Saperstein
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Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

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CEO and President
Sojourners

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Director, Office of Peace and Justice

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United Church of Christ (LA)

Rev. Polk Culpepper (IN)

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Rev. John DeForest (TX)

Rev. Peter Degree

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Greater Birmingham Ministries (AL)

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Conference Minister

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Nehirim (CA)

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Executive Director and Founder

Zion Travelers Cooperative Center (LA)

Rev. Dawn Flowers

Pastor

Union United Methodist Church (MS)

Rev. James B. Flowers

Rector

All Saints Episcopal Church, AL

Rev. Susan C. Gaffney

UCC Minister (HI)

Rev. Prince Howard Garrett

Pastor

Prince Garrett Ministries Inc. & Triumph Whole
Gospel Ministries (MS)

Pastor Phil Garrison

St. Andrew United Church of Christ (FL)

Sharon Gauthé

Executive Director

Bayou Interfaith Shared Community Organizing (LA)

Maggid Andrew Gold

Congregation Kol HaLev (NM)

Rabbi Mark N. Goldman

Temple Bet Yam (FL)

Robert D. Gorman

Director

Catholic Charities Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux (LA)

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Executive Director

Mississippi Coast Interfaith Disaster Task Force (MS)

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St. David of Wales Episcopal Church (OR)

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Associate Pastor for Congregational Life
Calvary Baptist Church (DC)

Suzie Harvey

Director of Camp Victor Ministries
Lutheran Episcopal Services of Mississippi (MS)

Rev. Daniel L. Hatch (CA)

Obery M. Hendricks, Jr., Ph.D.

New York Theological Seminary (NY)

Sharon Hanshaw

Executive Director
Coastal Women for Change (MS)

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Princeton Theological Seminary (NJ)

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Founder
Progressive Faith Foundation (CA)

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United Methodist Church (AL)

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Professor of Theology
Drew University (NJ)

Rabbi Douglas E. Krantz

Congregation B'nai Yisrael (NY)

Rabbi Donald M. Kunstadt

Springhill Avenue Temple (AL)

Alexander Levering Kern

Protestant Chaplain
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Executive Director
Mercy Housing & Human Development (MS)

Rabbi Robert H. Loewy

Congregation Gates of Prayer (LA)

Rev. Dr. Theodore W. Loder

UMC Pastor (PA)

Rev. Kyle Ann Lovett

Church of the Crossroads UCC (HI)

Rev. Dr. Arvin R. Luchs

United Methodist Church (OR)

Rabbi Paula Marcus (CA)

Rev. Gail E. Mengel

Community of Christ (MO)

Rev. George N. Miller

Emmanuel United Church of Christ (FL)

Rev. Delbert K. Miller

Epiphany United Church of Christ (MO)

Rev. Eugene M. Mitchell

Pastor
First Pilgrims Baptist Church (LA)

Rev. Dr. Randle R. Mixon

Pastor
First Baptist Church (CA)

Bob Miyake-Stoner

Pastor
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Rabbi Jack Moline

Agudas Achim Congregation Alexandria, VA

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The United Methodist Church (AL)

Rev. Melanie Morel-Ensmiger

First Unitarian Universalist Church of New Orleans

Rev. Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock

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Faith Voices for the Common Good (CA)

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Phyllis Nitzkin

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National Council of Jewish Women, Greater New Orleans Section (LA)

Diem Nguyen

Executive Director
Mary Queen of Viet Nam CDC (LA)

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Naples United Church of Christ (FL)

Dr. Lavette R. Paige

Pastor
Martin Luther King Baptist Church (PA)

Minister Ronald M. Patterson

Naples United Church of Christ (FL)

Jeffery W. Perkins

Executive Director
Friends Fiduciary Corporation (PA)

Glenda Perryman

Executive Director
Immaculate Heart CDC (MS)

Rev. Kristina J. Peterson

Pastor
Bayou Blue Presbyterian Church (LA)

Rev. Linn Possell

Hope Unites UCC (FL)

Rev. Sharon Prestemon

Executive Director
Back Bay Mission (MS)

Rev. Jim Rapp

Church of the Isles (FL)

Jim Reilly

Deltona United Church of Christ (FL)

Sister Jane F. Remson

Executive Director
Bread for the World New Orleans

Rev. Barbara Grace Ripple

UMC (HI)

Rev. Pat Ritchie

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church (TX)

Rev. Cally Rogers-Witte

Executive Minister, Wider Church Ministries
United Church of Christ (OH)

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New York Annual Conference, UMC (MA)

Rev. Terry Schmitt

United Church of Christ (CT)

Minister Kent J. Siladi

United Church of Christ (FL)

Rev. Jean M. Simpson

Gulf Coast Regional Conference Minister
United Church of Christ (FL)

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Chair, Commission Stewardship of the Environment
Louisiana Interchurch Conference

Rabbi Samuel M. Stahl

Emeritus, Temple Beth-El (TX)

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The Quest for Social Justice (AL)

Bill Stallworth

Executive Director
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Laurie Sweigard

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Central Baptist Church (PA)

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Director, Disaster Preparedness and Response
Louisiana Annual Conference of the UMC

Carolyn Thompson

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Tri-Coastal Community Outreach, Inc. (AL)

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Government Street Presbyterian Church (AL)

Jessica Vermilyea

Chair, LA Interfaith Disaster Recovery Network
State Director, Lutheran Social Services Disaster Response

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Thao Vu

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Aiea UMC (HI)

Rev. Brooke Wickliffe Fisher

United Church of Christ (FL)

Rev. Joyce M. Wilkinson (TX)

Rev. Carol Winn Crawford

Pastor
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Rev. Dr. J. Philip Wogaman

Pastor, Retired
Foundry UMC Church (NE)



Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell
317 Russell Senate Office Building
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Speaker John Boehner
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Majority Leader Eric Cantor
H-329, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Minority Whip Steny Hoyer
1705 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Doc Hastings
Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Ed Markey
Committee on Natural Resources
1329 Longworth House Office Building
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Chairman John Mica
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Nick Rahall
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

November 9, 2011

Re: Support for S. 1400 and H.R. 3096, the RESTORE Act

Dear Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, Speaker John Boehner, Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Majority Leader Eric Cantor, Minority Whip Steny Hoyer, Chairman Doc Hastings, Ranking Member Ed Markey, Chairman John Mica, and Ranking Member Nick Rahall:

The undersigned organizations enthusiastically support S. 1400 and H.R. 3096, also known as the RESTORE Act, authored by Senator Mary Landrieu, Senator Thad Cochran, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Senator Bill Nelson, Senator Marco Rubio, Senator Jeff Sessions, Senator Richard Shelby, Senator David Vitter, Senator Roger Wicker, Congressman Steve Scalise, Congressman Jo Bonner, Congressman Jeff Miller, Congressman Steve Southerland, Congressman Steven Palazzo, Congressman Pete Olson, and other Gulf Coast members. While we recognize that the bills have minor differences, the concept of dedicating at least 80% of penalties paid by the responsible parties under the Clean Water Act to Gulf Coast states to invest in the long-term health of the coastal ecosystem and its economies provides targeted environmental and economic recovery to the region affected most by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.

The penalties that will be assessed exist because of damage inflicted on the Gulf Coast states by the responsible parties. When these penalties and the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund were created years ago, a spill the magnitude of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill could not have been anticipated. It only makes sense that the majority of the fines that will be assessed should be directed to the Gulf Coast to help these states recover as they deal with the long-term impacts of the oil spill.