

JUSTICE FOR THE GULF COAST:

A Unified Message for Long-Term Economic, Environmental and Human Recovery

On April 20, 2010, the tragic explosion of the Deepwater Horizon took the lives of 11 men and unleashed an uncontrolled flow of oil and gas into the Gulf of Mexico that fundamentally threatens the economic and environmental sustainability of America's working coast. We must fight for justice for Gulf Coast Region in the wake of this disaster and focus on several critical policy issues in the coming weeks:

★ ***Lift the Moratorium on Deepwater Drilling and Get the Gulf Back to Work***

- A prolonged deepwater drilling moratorium is a short- and long-term job killer resulting in the loss of thousands of jobs and driving hundreds of small businesses from the Gulf Coast. We must take quick and decisive action to lift the moratorium to save our businesses, our economy and our way of life.
- Halting offshore energy production off our shores and increasing foreign imports of oil puts our nation at greater risk, both in terms of the environment and national security.

★ ***Secure a Permanent, Dedicated and Immediate Source of Revenue for Gulf Coast Recovery***

- Accelerate the Domenici-Landrieu Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006, which dedicated 37.5% of new offshore oil and gas revenues to coastal protection and restoration in the four Gulf energy-producing states. Under the RESPOND Act, the flow of revenue would begin immediately instead of 2017.
- No less than 80% of the civil and criminal penalties charged to BP under the Clean Water Act should be returned to the Gulf Coast for long-term economic and environmental recovery.

★ ***Start Construction Now on Coastal Restoration Projects funded by NRDA***

- The Natural Resources Damages Assessment (NRDA) authorizes federal and state agencies to recover damages for injuries to the environment from BP, and to use the money to restore areas damaged by the spill.
- The clear intent and flexibility of this statute provides a real opportunity to fully fund the coastal restoration projects authorized by the Water Resource Development Act (WRDA) in 2007.

★ ***Cut the Red Tape and Establish a New Governance Model for Coastal Protection and Restoration***

- The current Federal process for addressing coastal protection and restoration is woefully inadequate and painfully slow, held up by the interminable process of planning, authorizations, complex regulations and insufficient and unreliable funding.
- A new approach that will expedite coastal protection and restoration in Louisiana, and the Gulf Coast, by establishing a governing entity or institute with this singular focus.

★ ***Set New Polluter Liability Provisions with Balanced Accountability and Economic Development***

- The Landrieu Compromise would eliminate liability caps on oil companies, while facilitating a mutual insurance system to fairly spread the risk among offshore operators.
- This plan will preserve the ability of smaller independent operators to develop oil and gas offshore, while ensuring that taxpayers never have to pick up the tab for an oil spill.

★ ***Supply a Fair, Swift and Transparent Claims Process Supported by the \$20 billion Fund Established by the President and BP***

- The long-term economic recovery demands the immediate and fair compensation for those individuals, businesses and communities who have suffered damages and losses, both directly and indirectly, as a result of this disaster. To ensure a fair and thorough claims process, many coastal residents and business owners need technical assistance to effectively secure compensation for damages.

★ ***Provide a Full and Just Restitution for the Families of those who lost their lives***

- Federal law should be amendment to ensure that the victims of this disaster on the high seas receive the same rights to a full and just recovery as those injured in similar incidents on land.

★ ***Continue Reforming the Stafford Act to Improve and Disaster Response and Recovery***

- We are in the peak of hurricane season and should move swiftly to increase advanced funding and community disaster loans, improve mental health services, provide better rental repair authority, and enhance case management and interagency coordination.