

News Release



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Coalition visits Washington to encourage passage of RESTORE Act - Local officials from five states go to DC to lobby for fairness-

This week, twenty locally elected officials from across the Gulf Coast traveled to Washington DC to lobby Congress to pass the RESTORE Act. The RESTORE Act is a bill based on the fundamental principal that fines assessed to BP and the other responsible parties due to the massive and tragic DeepWater Horizon Oil Spill in 2010 should be directed to the region immediately impacted by this horrific event.

“The RESTORE Act is critical to ensuring the continued recovery from the Deepwater Horizon disaster, and it is only proper that Gulf Coast states, which are still dealing directly with the effects of the Deepwater Horizon disaster, should receive the lion’s share of the Clean Water Act fines,” Louisiana Congressman Steve Scalise said. “I appreciate our local officials coming to Washington and helping to inform and educate Members of Congress from other states about the need to quickly pass this bill.”

The bill is a vast collaborative effort crossing the borders of counties and parishes in five states, and has Democratic and Republican support in both the House and Senate. The Senate bill has nine bipartisan co sponsors and the House has 38, yet the bill continued to lag in the congressional process.

Santa Rosa County District 5 Commissioner Lane Lynchard stressed the need for the bill, "The five Gulf states have come together to support this bill, which would ensure that the fines assessed as a result of the DeepWater Horizon incident go to fully restore our Gulf Coast. The long term environmental and economic consequences of the oil spill may take years to determine, and this bill would ensure that the fine money would be directed to make the Gulf Coast whole."

While congressional sponsors lobbied leadership, local officials walked the halls speaking to senators and representatives imploring them to do the right and fair thing by directing these critical resources back to those areas directly impacted. It is estimated that close to five million barrels of oil poured into the Gulf of Mexico during the DeepWater spill, and the impacts of such an environmental catastrophe will not be fully realized for decades to come. Organizers hope that Congressional leaders in both the House and Senate along with the White House will see this not as a political chit to be traded and negotiated but the opportunity to restore the home, environment and economy for millions of Americans.

“Any dollars Washington received due to the DeepWater Oil spill should be sent to those that suffered and survived this horrific event and not lost into the National treasury to be spent on random pork belly projects,” Said Gulf County Commissioner Bill Williams and President-Elect of the Florida Association of Counties, “Nothing would be more inherently unfair than to have the federal government profit from this tragedy.”

The event, organized by the Florida Association of Counties was comprised of commissioners, supervisors and presidents from counties and parishes across Mississippi, Louisiana and Florida. Attendees included, but were not limited to:

Florida

- Commissioner Grover Robinson, Escambia County
- Commissioner Lane Lynchard, Santa Rosa County
- Commissioner Bill Williams, Gulf County
- Commissioner Warren Yeager, Gulf County
- Commissioner Smokey Parish, Franklin County
- Commissioner Cecilia Jones, Walton County
- Commissioner Alan Brock, Wakulla County
- Councilman Bobby Nabors, City of Fort Walton Beach, Okaloosa County TDC

Louisiana

- President Young, Jefferson Parish
- President Billy Nungesser, Plaquemines Parish
- President Michel Claudet, Terrebonne Parish
- President Charlotte Randolph, Lafourche Parish
- Councilman Jerry Lafont, Lafourche Parish
- Representative Ray Garofalo, Jr.

Mississippi

- Derrick Surrette, Executive Director, Mississippi Association of Counties
- Jimmy Ladner, Hancock County Tax Collector and Assessor
- Steve Seymour, Hancock County Board of Supervisors
- Connie Rockco, Harrison County Board of Supervisors, Women of the Storm

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