

ANNOUNCEMENT

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council to Help Rebuild the Gulf Coasts' Ecosystems and Economies in the Wake of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill

The Council Announces its First Public Meeting

WASHINGTON — The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (the Council) announced today that it will hold its first public meeting on December 11, 2012 in Mobile, Alabama. The Council, which was established by the Resources and Ecosystem Sustainability, Tourism, Opportunities Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012 (RESTORE Act), will develop and oversee implementation of a comprehensive plan to help restore the ecosystem and economy of the Gulf Coast region in the wake of the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill.

The oil spill caused extensive damage to the Gulf Coast's natural resources, devastating the economies and communities that rely on it. In an effort to help the region rebuild, Congress passed the bipartisan RESTORE Act, which dedicates 80 percent of Clean Water Act administrative and civil penalties paid by responsible parties after the date of enactment of this Act in connection with the *Deepwater Horizon* explosion and spill to the Gulf Region for ecological and economic recovery efforts. This law will likely generate investments in economic development, tourism promotion, and science-based natural resource restoration in the states hit hardest by the spill -- Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.

The Council will work with the State and local communities to identify projects and programs that will restore the region's natural resources and help benefit local businesses, boost their economies, and create jobs. In order to ensure robust public input throughout the entire process, the Council will hold several public meetings and listening sessions in each of the Gulf States in the coming months.

The first meeting will introduce the Council to the public. It will also give the public the opportunity to provide feedback on the Council's restoration planning efforts. This meeting will be held on December 11, 2012 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm at the Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza Hotel, 64 South Waters Street, Mobile, AL, 36602. There will also be an Open House from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm, during which the public can discuss these issues with participating state and federal representatives.

To preregister for the Council meeting, visit:

events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=hghxkyjab&oeidk=a07e6po9rtw09ef560b.

Gulf Restoration Council

The RESTORE Act established a Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (the Council), which is comprised of governors from the five affected Gulf States', the Secretaries from the U.S. Departments of Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, and Homeland Security as well as the Secretary of the Army and the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Gulf States selected and President Obama appointed the Secretary of Commerce as the Council's Chair.

RESTORE Act

The RESTORE Act dedicates 80 percent of all administrative and civil penalties related to the *Deepwater Horizon* spill to a Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund and outlines a structure by which the funds can be utilized to restore and protect the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, coastal wetlands, and economy of the Gulf Coast region. The RESTORE Act sets forth the following framework for allocation of the Trust Fund:

- 35 percent of the money divided equally between the five Gulf States for ecological and economic restoration efforts in the region;

- 30 percent of the money through the Council to implement a comprehensive plan for ecosystem and economic recovery of the Gulf Coast;
- 30 percent of the money for States' plans to address based on impacts from the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill;
- 2.5 percent of the money to create the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Science, Observation, Monitoring and Technology Program within the Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); and
- 2.5 percent of the money to the Centers of Excellence Research grants, which will each focus on science, technology, and monitoring related to Gulf restoration.