



News Release

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Mabus Report Delivers on 1st Part of President's Promise to Make Gulf Better than Before BP Oil Disaster

Obama, Congress must agree on how much BP fine money is dedicated to restoration fund

(Washington, DC—September 28) Praising a new government [report](#) detailing a long-term environmental restoration plan for the Gulf Coast, five environmental groups today called on the President and Congress to implement the report's recommendations by using the fines BP will have to pay for the blowout of the company's Macondo well. The report was presented today in New Orleans by Navy Secretary and former Mississippi Governor Ray Mabus, who was appointed by President Obama to lead the team developing the plan. The report urges Congress to create a Gulf Coast Recovery Fund—managed by a council including federal, state, local and tribal representatives—and funded with a “significant amount” of BP fine money.

“Secretary Mabus is doing his part to fulfill President Obama’s promise to create a long-term plan to restore the Gulf Coast and make it better than it was before the BP oil disaster,” said a joint statement by the [Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana](#), [Environmental Defense Fund](#), [Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation](#), and [National Audubon Society](#) and [National Wildlife Federation](#). “Now it’s up to President Obama and Congress to act this year to ensure that the fines paid by BP under existing law are directed to restoring the Gulf, and that the new penalties included in House legislation are made law.”

As a first step in the restoration plan, the President soon plans to sign an executive order creating a Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force, which will be led by Environmental Protection Agency administrator Lisa P. Jackson, a New Orleans native. The joint statement also applauded this commitment, noting that moving forward quickly with a robust task force is necessary to move forward already-authorized projects, ensure that congressional appropriations are put in place, and that the full scope of needed restoration projects is designed and implemented.

“Restoring the Gulf will require that numerous federal agencies work closely together, with Congress, and with state governments. An executive order should give Administrator Jackson all the tools she needs to move quickly and effectively,” the groups concluded.

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed an amendment to oil response legislation (H.R. 3534) authored by Congressman Charlie Melancon (D-La.) that would [create a new civil penalty for any oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico—including the BP oil disaster](#)—but the Senate has yet to act on this provision or on dedicating penalties from existing Clean Water Act provisions.

U.S. Senators Mary Landrieu (D-La.) and David Vitter (R-La.) and U.S. Rep. Steve Scalise (R-La.) have introduced legislation that would require that at least 80 percent of the civil and criminal penalties charged to BP under the Clean Water Act for oil spill damages be returned to the Gulf Coast for [long-term economic and environmental recovery](#). Penalties for violations of the Clean Water Act alone will range between \$1,100 and \$4,300 for each of the 4.9 million barrels spilled, totaling between \$5 billion and \$21 billion. The exact amount will depend upon if BP is found grossly negligent for the Gulf oil disaster.

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