



## News Release

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### **GULF GROUPS PRAISE SENATE COMMITTEE FOR APPROVING GULF RESTORATION BILL** ***Senate urged to pass bipartisan bill to dedicate oil spill fines to restore Gulf***

(Washington, D.C.—September 21, 2011) A coalition of six groups supporting Gulf restoration praised the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee for approving legislation today, the RESTORE the Gulf Coast States Act, with a strong showing of bipartisan support. The bill passed by voice vote with only three requested no's recorded.

The legislation would ensure that penalties paid by BP and others responsible for last year's Gulf oil disaster are used to restore the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, barrier islands, dunes, coastal wetlands, and economy of the Gulf Coast; and the economies of communities and the region that were impacted by the spill.

"We applaud the Environment and Public Works Committee and Gulf state senators for working across the aisle and recognizing that Gulf restoration will benefit America's economy and its people," said a joint statement issued by [Environmental Defense Fund](#), [National Audubon Society](#), [National Wildlife Federation](#), [The Nature Conservancy](#), [Ocean Conservancy](#), and [Oxfam America](#). "The damage from the oil spill was done in the Gulf, and now the Senate needs to take quick action to make sure that the oil spill penalties go to restoring the Gulf region. Given the overwhelming bipartisan support from Americans across the political spectrum, we hope this legislation soon reaches the Senate floor."

A [nationwide poll](#) of 1,006 likely general election voters conducted this spring by the Democratic firm, Lake Research Partners, and the GOP firm, Bellwether Research and Consulting, showed that the vast majority of voters (84%) believe the Gulf Coast—including the Mississippi River Delta—impacts the nation's economy. Nearly two-thirds of those voters (63%) believe this region impacts the economy in their part of the country.

EPW Committee Chairwoman Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) was instrumental in securing her committee's support for the RESTORE the Gulf Coast States Act, which is cosponsored by nine of the 10 Gulf state senators. Senators Mary Landrieu (D-LA) and Richard Shelby (R-AL) authored the bill, and were joined as original cosponsors by Senators David Vitter (R-LA), Jeff Sessions (R-AL), Thad Cochran (R-MS), Roger Wicker (R-MS), Bill Nelson (D-FL), Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Kay Bailey-Hutchison (R-TX).

"We look forward to working with the Gulf delegation, other members of Congress and the Obama administration to pass a bill that meets the restoration needs of this critical ecosystem and its vulnerable communities," the groups' statement concluded.

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