



## Gulf groups hail Senate passage of gulf restoration amendment

*Vote follows recent House approval of similar amendment*

News Release (Washington, D.C.—March 8, 2012) A coalition of six Gulf Coast restoration advocacy groups praised the Senate today for its strong bipartisan approval of legislation that would dedicate 80 percent of the Clean Water Act (CWA) fines for the gulf oil disaster to restoring the gulf ecosystem and economy. The [RESTORE the Gulf Coast States Act](#) was originally introduced by nine of the 10 gulf state senators, including Senators Mary Landrieu (D-La), Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) and Richard Shelby (R-Ala.), and was also supported by Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman Boxer. The RESTORE Act passed as an amendment to the Senate transportation bill by a vote of 76 to 22 .

“The Senate’s overwhelming vote in favor of the RESTORE Act reflects the broad nationwide support for revitalizing the Gulf Coast region by ensuring the bulk of the money collected in spill fines is spent in the area that suffered so much harm,” said a joint statement issued by [Environmental Defense Fund](#), [National Audubon Society](#), [National Wildlife Federation](#), [The Nature Conservancy](#), [Ocean Conservancy](#) and [Oxfam America](#).

“Faith leaders, conservationists and sportsmen, and strong majorities of voters from all sides of the political spectrum in Gulf states and across the nation agree that it just makes sense for the fines from the Gulf spill to come back to help repair the damage that has been done to the economy and the environment,” the groups added.

The legislation will ensure that penalties paid by BP and others responsible for the 2010 Gulf oil disaster are used to rebuild the economies of Gulf Coast communities that were impacted by the spill and to restore the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, barrier islands, dunes, coastal wetlands, that are the foundation of the Gulf Coast economy.

The Senate’s approval of the RESTORE Act follows the [House's recent approval](#) of an amendment by the same name introduced by Rep. Steve Scalise (R-La.). Both the House and Senate bills affirm the principle that the penalties for the Gulf oil spill belong in the Gulf for restoration.

“The next step is for the House and Senate to resolve the differences between these two amendments in conference and enact RESTORE into law to bring this victory home for the Gulf region,” concluded the groups. “We look forward to working with House, Senate and Gulf Coast leaders to make RESTORE a reality to support the restoration needs of this critical ecosystem and its vulnerable communities.”

A [nationwide poll](#) of 1,006 likely general election voters conducted by the Democratic firm, Lake Research Partners, and the GOP firm, Bellwether Research and Consulting, showed that the vast majority of U.S. voters (84 percent) believe the Gulf Coast—including the Mississippi River Delta—

impacts the nation's economy. Nearly two-thirds of those voters (63 percent) believe this region impacts the economy in their part of the country.

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