

**Alaska Wilderness League • American Bird Conservancy • Environment America
• Environmental Defense Fund • Izaak Walton League of America • League of
Conservation Voters • National Audubon Society • National Parks Conservation
Association • National Wildlife Federation • Natural Resources Defense Council •
Oceana • Ocean Conservancy • Oxfam America • The Nature Conservancy • The
Trust for Public Land**

December 16, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Reid and McConnell,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters in the Gulf Coast and across the country, we ask you to ensure enactment, before the end of the 2011 Congressional session, of S.1400, the RESTORE Act.

The Gulf Coast region is home to some of the most productive and important ecosystems in the world. From the wetlands of the Mississippi River Delta to deep waters and cold water coral reefs it supports thriving natural resources that make the region a natural wonder, not to mention the rich communities that rely on these resources for their well being and livelihoods.

Last year, the Deep Water Horizon Spill, now considered our nation's worst environmental catastrophe, caused unprecedented damage to the region. It is time for decisive action to help restore this ecosystem.

It is important that those responsible for the oil disaster be held fully accountable for the spill. The RESTORE ACT will ensure that the fines they pay under the Clean Water Act are used to help restore the Gulf environment, communities, and economy. The legislation is also designed to repair and sustain the coastal and deepwater environments degraded by the Deepwater

Horizon oil spill, and to address the decades of environmental degradation and multiple economic disasters that have led to disappearing wetlands and habitats.

The good news is that by taking decisive action to restore these precious ecosystems, you will also be supporting the restoration of the communities and economies that rely on them.

Our organizations consider this legislation a top priority, and we would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss moving RESTORE Act forward. We urge you to advance floor action on the RESTORE Act.

Sincerely,

Cindy Shogan, Executive Director
Alaska Wilderness League

Thomas Kiernan, President
National Parks Conservation Association

George Fenwick, President
American Bird Conservancy

Larry Schweiger, President & CEO
National Wildlife Federation

Margie Alt, Executive Director
Environment America

Frances Beinecke, President
Natural Resources Defense Council

Fred Krupp, President
Environmental Defense Fund

Andrew Sharpless, Chief Executive Officer
Oceana

David Hoskins, Executive Director
Izaak Walton League of America

Vikki Spruill, President & CEO
Ocean Conservancy

Gene Karpinski, President
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Raymond Offenheiser, President
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David Yarnold, President & CEO
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Mark Tercek, President & CEO
The Nature Conservancy

Will Rogers, President & CEO
The Trust for Public Land