

The American Shore & Beach Preservation Association
Protecting our coastal economy and ecology since 1926



February 16, 2012

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230 United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell:

The American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) is composed of elected officials from coastal communities throughout the nation, as well as a large contingent of coastal engineers, researchers, scientists, and regulators. Together, we are committed to promoting the health of our country's coastal resources, which play a critical role in perpetuating a robust economy, job creation, and environmental well-being. On behalf of our members, I ask that you support the timely passage of the RESTORE the Gulf Coast States Act (S. 1400).

By allocating eighty percent of the Clean Water Act penalties to the five Gulf Coast States, the RESTORE Act creates an essential framework to manage and finance the economic and ecological recovery for years to come. Many communities and businesses are still struggling nearly two years after the spill began and experts fear that the total damage from the spill will not be known for at least a decade. Like the rest of our nation's coastline, the Gulf Coast is comprised of vibrant and productive communities, as well as sensitive ecosystems that have been severely damaged. We believe that this bill balances both the ecological and economic interests of comprehensive restoration.

ASBPA recognizes that the RESTORE Act does not affect collected tax dollars because the Act will only use fines paid by BP and other responsible parties. We do not think that the federal government should profit off of the suffering of the Gulf Coast region, especially when many communities and businesses are not yet back on their feet. A recent study by Duke University shows that the funds from the RESTORE Act will benefit at least 140 firms with 400 employees in thirty-seven states.

Recent news reports indicate that BP and the federal government are likely to settle litigation addressing the 2010 Gulf oil spill. If Congress does not immediately take decisive action before any potential settlement occurs, the economic opportunities created by RESTORE Act could be

lost entirely. We urge you to take immediate steps to pass the RESTORE Act, so that the BP oil spill penalties can go where they belong: to ecosystem and economic recovery for the States and communities harmed by the worst environmental disaster in U.S. history.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Harry Simmons', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Harry Simmons
President