



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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July 2, 2010

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U.S. House of Representatives H-232
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives H-204
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate S-231
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Congressional Leaders:

Last week we led mayors from cities across the country on a mission to New Orleans to stand in solidarity with that City's mayor and the other Gulf Coast mayors whose cities have been put in harm's way by the catastrophic explosion and blowout of BP's Deepwater Horizon oil well more than two months ago. The U.S. Conference of Mayors June 21 Emergency Meeting on the BP Oil Disaster was designed to give the mayors assembled there an opportunity to be briefed by the Coast Guard on the scope of the disaster and the work underway to contain it, to go out into the Gulf to see firsthand the damage being done to Louisiana's coastal waters and marshland, and to enjoy the area's seafood, which continues to be available and safe, despite reports to the contrary that circulate in all the varieties of our media.

Thanks to New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, who orchestrated a full day of activities for us, we learned, for example, how much damage was being done to the seafood industry and the local economy by inaccurate perceptions of the availability and safety of Gulf seafood, and how the loss of so many seafood industry jobs in companies that have been family-owned and operated for generations is weakening the very culture of the Louisiana Gulf Coast. We also learned how important the continued coexistence of the seafood industry and the energy industry will be to the families and the economy of the Gulf region.

In the face of the worst manmade environmental disaster in this nation's history – one that already has dealt a staggering blow to the people and the economy of the Gulf region – Louisiana needs all the help it can get to protect and restore the natural resources on which its people and economy depend. The Restoring Ecosystem Sustainability and Protection on the Delta (RESPOND) Act sponsored by Senator Mary Landrieu will, in fact, respond to this need by accelerating the sharing of offshore oil and gas drilling revenues with Louisiana as one of the Gulf Coast's energy-producing states.

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Current legislation, the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006, shared revenues from certain portions of new drilling acreage seaward of Alabama and Florida but did not authorize revenue sharing from the new leases directly off Louisiana's coast until 2017. The RESPOND Act remedies this.

The significant additional revenues that Louisiana needs to combat the catastrophic and historic assault now underway on its shores and its way of life are desperately needed now, not in 2017. On behalf of mayors across the nation, we urge you to support immediate passage of Senator Landrieu's RESPOND Act.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth B. Kautz
Mayor of Burnsville
President



Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director

CC: All Members of the Senate and House of Representatives