



# The United States Conference of Mayors

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## HUNDREDS OF MAYORS MEET IN OKLAHOMA CITY FOR THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS' 78TH ANNUAL MEETING – JUNE 11 TO JUNE 14

### The BP Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico, Immigration & Jobs Top Agenda

Oklahoma City – The nation's mayors, led by Conference President and Burnsville, MN Mayor Elizabeth Kautz, along with host Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett, gathered today in Oklahoma City (OK) for the 78<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the United States Conference of Mayors, where they will debate an onslaught of pressing issues that are reaching crisis levels in America's cities. Mayors opened the meeting today at the Cox Convention Center with a press conference that stressed **the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, immigration reform, and the need for job creation in America's cities.**

"Mayors and cities are at the center of every one of these issues and we have a responsibility to speak candidly about what is happening with the residents in our cities and the challenges they face every day," said Conference President Mayor Kautz.

"If this country is indeed emerging from a recession as national economists say, many, many people in our cities don't feel it. The jobs picture in our cities is still dire, and we need immediate federal action to make sure the recovery arrives on MainStreet," Kautz continued.

In numbers released by the Conference today through economic forecasting firm Global Insight, 148 of the nation's 363 metropolitan areas will still have unemployment rates above 10 percent by the end of this year, with 110 metro areas facing double-digit unemployment by the end of 2011. Most center cities have much higher unemployment rates than these. The mayors renew their call for passage of a major jobs bill.

"It is time for federal action and we urgently call on both parties to lay down their political swords and work together for the common good of American families who are struggling to make ends meet," Kautz concluded.

Also highlighting the Conference is a special session on Sunday with mayors from Gulf Coast Cities on that will face the brunt of the BP oil leak and its devastating after-effects on the long-term sustainability of the region. At that session, mayors will discuss a resolution put forth by the mayors of Baton Rouge, LA and Tallahassee, FL that calls for stepped up federal efforts to access, mitigate and recover from the environmental and economic damage of this disaster, and work closely with mayors and other local officials in all phases of the national response.

New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, who attended today's sessions, spoke about how critical it is to coordinate federal efforts with local officials. "The oil spill is a national tragedy that requires a national response, so I am proud to stand in solidarity with mayors from across the country, particularly Gulf Coast mayors, as we face this daunting challenge. The disaster threatens our coast and environment, our fisheries that feed the nation, and our unique culture that is the highlight of New Orleans' tourism industry. After Hurricane Katrina, we were grateful to have the support and assistance of cities across the country, and we'll need the same unity of purpose to meet these new challenges."

Sunday will also feature a panel discussion on immigration with Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, who is the Conference's Vice President, Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon, and Trenton, NJ Mayor Doug Palmer. Janet Murguia, President and CEO of The National Council of La Raza, will address the mayors in that special session. The nation's mayors are calling for quick, comprehensive immigration reform and firmly oppose the new Arizona immigration law.

Two Administration officials, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke will address the mayors during the Annual Meeting. And finally, on Monday, mayors will vote on policy resolutions to forward to Congress and the Administration in the hopes of shaping federal legislation.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,204 such cities in the country today. Each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. More information about the Conference is available at [usmayors.org](http://usmayors.org).