

American Fisheries Society – American Fly Fishing Trade Association – American Sportfishing Association - Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies – Archery Trade Association – B.A.S.S. LLC – Berkley Conservation Institute, Pure Fishing – Bonefish and Tarpon Trust – Boone & Crockett Club – Campfire Club of America – Center for Coastal Conservation – Coastal Conservation Association – Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation – Delta Waterfowl – Ducks Unlimited – International Game Fish Association – Izaak Walton League of America – National Marine Manufacturers Association – Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association – National Wildlife Federation – Pheasants Forever – Public Lands Foundation – Quail Forever - Quality Deer Management Association – The Billfish Foundation – The Nature Conservancy – Shimano American Corporation –Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership – Trout Unlimited – Wildlife Forever –Wildlife Management Institute – The Wildlife Society

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We are writing to request on behalf of the country’s leading conservation and sportsmen’s organizations and trade associations that as you and your administration look ahead to a possible legal settlement with BP and other responsible parties in the wake of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, you consider a strong and explicit commitment to dedicate Clean Water Act and other penalty revenues from any such settlement to natural resource and economic restoration in the Gulf of Mexico. We support the recommendations of your EPA-led Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force, of Navy Secretary Ray Mabus and of the National Commission on the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill that a substantial portion of any Clean Water Act civil penalties and other penalties be dedicated to Gulf restoration and recovery.

As you so eloquently stated in June of 2010, “Beyond compensating the people of the Gulf in the short term, it’s also clear we need a long-term plan to restore the unique beauty and bounty of this region. The oil spill represents just the latest blow to a place that’s already suffered multiple economic disasters and decades of environmental degradation that has led to disappearing wetlands and habitats. And the region still hasn’t recovered from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. That’s why **we must make a commitment to the Gulf Coast that goes beyond responding to the crisis of the moment.**”

While the Natural Resources Damage Assessment being led by NOAA is focused on recovering areas directly damaged by the oil spill to a baseline, our organizations believe Clean Water Act and other penalties afford the best opportunity to fulfill your commitment to address the long-term ecological challenges that have plagued this region including marsh and land loss in the

Mississippi River Delta. With the right foresight and targeted investments, we have an excellent chance to bolster Gulf fisheries and migratory waterfowl that depend on healthy Gulf ecosystems well into the future.

A number of us will continue to advocate for passage of the RESTORE the Gulf Coast Act of 2011 which represents an extraordinary bipartisan consensus among lawmakers in the region and one that ensures Clean Water Act and other penalties are not diverted to other unrelated matters or simply returned to the U.S. Treasury. We hope you will consider a comparable framework and the specificity found in the legislation when it comes to directing settlement funds should those funds become available. In particular, we urge you to ensure that settlement funds be made available for the large-scale restoration projects so urgently needed in the Mississippi River Delta region and other parts of the Gulf. In addition, we would emphasize the importance of keeping Gulf waters open to recreational fishing and would ask that no projects be funded that could lead to closures or restrictions without adequate regard for science, data, economic impacts, or public access considerations.

We also would also like to recommend that a portion of any potential settlement funds be administered through appropriate conservation-related foundations with expertise in the Gulf of Mexico ecosystems and a strong track record of funding high quality habitat restoration projects, such as the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and the Fish America Foundation (FAF).

We greatly appreciate the continued, on-going and steadfast commitment you and your administration have made to restoring natural resources in the Gulf and rebuilding sectors of the region's economy that have been affected by the spill. We have seen you follow through on this commitment in many important ways including the handling of the Natural Resource Damage Assessment, the forthcoming funding of projects using the early restoration funds provided by BP and the work of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force.

We hope you will proactively set a clear mark consistent with these efforts and the main provisions of the RESTORE Act legislation in Congress. Thank you very much for your leadership on Gulf of Mexico restoration and for considering our request.