



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
PHIL BRYANT, GOVERNOR

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
TRUDY D. FISHER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

<BR>

Release Date: 07/03/2012

Title: Gov. Bryant Names Team to Help Guide Oil Spill Recovery Under RESTORE Act

Author: Robbie Wilbur

Publish:  Yes

**Gov. Bryant Names Team to Help Guide Oil Spill Recovery Under RESTORE Act**

July 3rd, 2012

**JACKSON**—Congress last week in a bipartisan vote passed legislation that includes the RESTORE Act—a key measure for Gulf states in recovery from the Deepwater Horizon disaster. Today, Gov. Phil Bryant named a leadership team to guide Mississippi’s implementation of the act once it has been signed by the president.

“Passage of the RESTORE Act is tremendous news for Mississippi, and I thank our congressional delegation for their tireless leadership on this critical issue,” Bryant said. “However, our work in this state is just beginning. The Deepwater Horizon disaster impacted our Gulf Coast in many complex and serious ways. That’s why today I am naming a team to help expedite our understanding of the RESTORE Act and to develop recommendations on the best method for implementing the act in Mississippi.”

Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and trustee in the Deepwater Horizon disaster Trudy Fisher will lead the team. Bryant also named to the team Bill Walker, Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources; Mark Henry, Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Employment Security; and Brent Christensen, Executive Director of the Mississippi Development Authority.

The team will also make recommendations on an advisory panel consisting of elected officials from the Gulf Coast. Panel members will help identify recovery priorities.

“Input from the Gulf Coast will be critical to this process,” Bryant continued. “A panel of elected officials will represent the interests of the fisherman, businesses, nonprofits and individuals who were impacted by this disaster. Through the guidance of the panel, Mississippi will identify

priority projects that focus on seafood, tourism, economic recovery, ecosystem restoration, infrastructure, planning, workforce development and job creation.

“We will not rest until the Gulf Coast is made whole.”

Officials estimate that RESTORE Act penalties—while undetermined at this point—will likely reach hundreds of millions of dollars. Mississippi’s portion will be administered by the Office of the Governor.

“Obviously, a critical part of recovery for the Gulf Coast is economic development and job creation,” Bryant continued. “The livelihoods of many—especially those in the seafood and tourism industries—were directly impacted by this disaster. Under the RESTORE Act, we will not only be able to restore our natural resources; we will also be able to use the money to promote the Gulf Coast economy and job creation.”

“We will also include research initiatives such as NOARC in Mississippi’s RESTORE Act plan,” Bryant said. “By strengthening our understanding of the Gulf watershed, we’ll become better stewards of this priceless environment and know better how to preserve it for future generations.”

The RESTORE Act guarantees that 80 percent of Clean Water Act violation fines and penalties paid by BP and other responsible parties in the Deepwater Horizon oil spill will be directed to the five Gulf states impacted by the disaster, not the federal coffers. The RESTORE Act is one of three avenues of recovery. Mississippi is also pursuing economic loss claims and damages under the natural resources damage assessment.

###