



February 14, 2012

The Honorable Harry Reid  
United States Senate  
522 Hart Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
United States Senate  
317 Russell Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Urging Quick Passage of S. 1400, the RESTORE Act to Help Gulf States

Dear Senators Reid and McConnell,

On behalf of the Audubon chapters of Florida representing over 35,000 members we ask you to move quickly to pass S.1400, the RESTORE Act. The Deepwater Horizon spill caused unprecedented economic and environmental damage to the five Gulf States and federal waters. The RESTORE Act will make sure that 80% of Clean Water Act penalties related to the Deepwater Horizon spill will be invested in restoring the environment and the economic wellbeing of the Gulf region.

The wetlands and coastal resources of the Gulf are among the world's richest biological communities. Improvements in estuaries and watersheds will bring economic benefits to the region and to the rest of the country. Forty percent of the seafood locally harvested and processed in the lower 48 states comes from the Gulf. Healthy wetland and coastal systems provide a natural barrier that prevents storm damage and flooding and reduces the need for costly post disaster aid.

Florida's economy is particularly dependent on a healthy coastal environment. Our tourism industry generates more than \$20 billion and Florida's commercial and recreational fishing industry is worth more than \$12 billion. A recent Duke University economic study found that the Clean Water Act penalties from the BP oil disaster could kick start a long-term investment in ecosystem restoration benefitting 387 marine construction industry locations in 37 states. Investments in restoring the Gulf will make the region more resilient, and create tens of thousands of jobs.

Most Florida voters believe that the Clean Water Act Deepwater Horizon fines should come back to impacted Gulf States and not added to the federal budget. Investing the fines in recovery of the affected areas is the right and fair thing to do.

The undersigned organizations consider the RESTORE Act a top legislative priority. We urge you to act now to pass legislation to restore the Gulf.

Sincerely,

Richard H. Baker  
President  
Pelican Island Audubon Society

Joyce King  
President  
Santa Fe Audubon

Don Picard  
President  
Southeast Volusia Audubon Society

Peter Day  
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West Pasco Audubon

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Lake Region Audubon

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Florida Keys Audubon Society

Larry Behrens  
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Peace River Audubon Society