

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 15, 2014

The Honorable Jacob Lew  
Secretary  
Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Lew,

We write to express our concern regarding the lengthy process employed by the Department of Treasury (Treasury) in developing and finalizing regulations pursuant to the Resources and Ecosystem Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012 (RESTORE Act).<sup>1</sup> The 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill was described as the “worst environmental disaster” in the United States by this Administration.<sup>2</sup> Although the impacts of the spill were devastating for countless Americans, no one felt the effects more than the citizens of Louisiana. Over 671 miles of Louisiana’s shoreline experienced significant oiling after the spill. This is more than three times the amount suffered by any other Gulf state. Consequently, Louisiana’s economy faced substantial setbacks as its seafood, recreational, and commercial industries were devastated. Full implementation of RESTORE Act is critical to Louisiana’s recovery, and this cannot occur until Treasury fulfills its responsibilities.

As you know, the RESTORE Act, enacted on July 6, 2012, creates a Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund (RTF), which will receive 80% of the Clean Water Act (CWA) civil penalties paid by the companies responsible for the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.<sup>3</sup> Under the RESTORE Act, Treasury was charged with developing the procedures for depositing and expending amounts to and from the RTF within 180 days of enactment, or by January 2, 2013.<sup>4</sup> Even a full year after the deadline has passed, the citizens of Louisiana are still waiting for the critical funds needed to help ease the strain of this disastrous event and to jumpstart a variety of ecological and economic restoration projects along the coast. Treasury is effectively denying relief by failing to complete these regulations. Louisiana has worked diligently to satisfy its requirements under the RESTORE Act in preparation to receive these funds. We now have everything in place and ready to go. All we need are the funds. Accordingly, we urge you to make these regulations a top priority. Moreover, we request that you provide a briefing for our staff by April 29, 2014.

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<sup>1</sup> 33 U.S.C. § 1321 note (Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012).

<sup>2</sup> *Gulf of Mexico oil leak 'worst US environment disaster'*, BBC NEWS, May 30, 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10194335>.

<sup>3</sup> 33 U.S.C. § 1321 note (Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

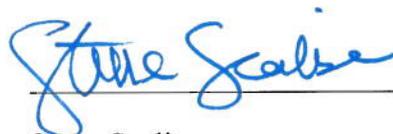
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If you have any questions regarding this letter, please feel free to have your staff contact the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works staff at (202) 224-6176.

Sincerely,



David Vitter  
United States Senator



Steve Scalise  
Member of Congress



Bill Cassidy  
Member of Congress