

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION
FOREIGN RELATIONS
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
SMALL BUSINESS AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Honorable Mary Landrieu
Chair
Senate Committee on Small Business and
Entrepreneurship
428A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Olympia Snowe
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Small Business and
Entrepreneurship
428A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

April 20, 2011

Dear Chair Landrieu and Ranking Member Snowe:

I write to respectfully request your consent for the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship to hold a field hearing in Pensacola, Florida as soon as is practicable to evaluate both the economic and ecological recovery status of the Gulf of Mexico a year after the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. More specifically, the purpose of the hearing would be to assess the efforts of the short-term recovery effort, evaluate what is needed for the long-term recovery of the Gulf, and identify areas where we, as United States senators, can best assist those worst impacted by the largest environmental disaster in the history of this country.

As you know, on April 20th, an explosion on BP's *Deepwater Horizon* oil rig resulted in approximately five million barrels of oil leaked into the Gulf of Mexico. While the well was eventually capped on July 15th, the oil was not contained before approximately 89,000 square miles or 37 percent of federal waters in the Gulf were closed to vital small businesses such as commercial and recreational fishermen. The economic impact felt in the tourism industry around the Gulf was also immediately evident. In Florida alone, some industries saw as much as a 20 percent decline in revenues this year, resulting in a significant and negative impact on one of the State's largest industries.

Thankfully, while not perfect, there have been some positive recovery efforts in the short term. Most recently, BP announced a \$30 million marketing grant for the Northwest Florida Tourism Council to mitigate the impacts of the oil spill on the state's tourism industry. Also, just yesterday, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced the reopening of the last area previously closed to fishing due to the effects of the oil spill. However, the recovery

effort remains ongoing and there is much that still can and must be done. The full ecological effects of the spill on vital species, such as the impacts on the spawning of red snapper, are not fully known and many individuals who were economically devastated by the oil spill are still waiting for financial reimbursement or are still struggling.

Economic recovery is vital for each state off the Gulf of Mexico and is closely tied to ecological recovery. Unfortunately, the ecological impacts of the oil spill are still being studied and analyzed. We still do not know the full effect of the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill and it is my hope that, with this hearing, we can identify best practices thus far and find a productive path forward to address both the short- and long-term impacts of this disaster.

Thank you for your consideration of my request. I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Marco Rubio', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Senator Marco Rubio