

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1804

August 18, 2011

The Louisiana Shrimp Task Force  
ATTN: Mark Abraham, Chairman  
2000 Quail Drive  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70898

Dear Louisiana Shrimp Task Force Members:

Thank you for contacting me regarding the RESTORE the Gulf Coast Act of 2011 and specifically about the promotion of Gulf seafood. I appreciate hearing from you on this very important issue and can assure you that my bill specifically prohibits the use of funds for imported seafood.

On April 20, 2010, the explosion of the Deepwater Horizon took the lives of 11 men and unleashed an uncontrolled flow of oil and gas into the Gulf of Mexico. The damage to the economic and environmental sustainability of America's working coast is immense. As you may know, the Clean Water Act gives the EPA authority to fine parties found to be responsible for an oil spill. In the case of the BP penalties, these fines could amount to billions, and under current law, they would go straight to the general fund of the Federal Treasury.

Many others share my feeling that sending these penalties to the general treasury is not right. The fines and penalties from a spill of this magnitude should be returned to the place where the damage occurred. These funds are desperately needed to restore the Gulf Coast ecosystem and economy. That is why I introduced S. 1400, the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourism Opportunities and Revived Economy of the Gulf Coast Act of 2011 (RESTORE the Gulf Coast Act). This bill would direct the Clean Water Act penalties back to the Gulf Coast where the damage occurred. Thankfully, I was joined by a bipartisan coalition of nine United States Senators representing all five Gulf Coast states in sponsoring my legislation.

The Restore the Gulf Coast Act will dedicate eighty percent of Clean Water Act penalties charged to BP to the restoration of the Gulf Coast. These funds will provide the needed resources to the Gulf Coast States to start environmental recovery efforts immediately, establish a Gulf Coast ecosystem restoration council and a comprehensive plan for the Gulf Coast, and establish a long term science and fisheries endowment.

To answer your specific question, I want to assure you that this bill would make available funds for the promotion of domestic seafood produced from the Gulf of Mexico. I have never even considered a proposal such as that which you described in your letter dated July 12, 2011. In fact, the following language was included to ensure that any promotion or funding for imported seafood is specifically prohibited under this bill; on p. 13 of S. 1400 the bill reads:

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RESTORE the Gulf Coast Act of 2011  
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“(II) PROHIBITION ON USE FOR IMPORTED SEAFOOD.—None of the funds made available under this subsection shall be used for any program to support or promote imported seafood or any seafood product that is not harvested from the Gulf Coast ecosystem.”

I hope this alleviates the concerns you discussed in your letter. I appreciate the opportunity to hear from you and look forward to working with you on the passage of the RESTORE Act.

With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely,



Mary L. Landrieu  
United States Senator