



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

August 16, 2010

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Gulf of Mexico seafood industry was among the first to sustain the severe impacts of the Deepwater Horizon spill. Generations of fish, shellfish and fishermen now face a very uncertain future.

The Gulf seafood industry is a collection of thousands of small, mostly family-owned businesses that employ hundreds of thousands of fishermen and shoreside personnel in coastal communities throughout the region. The exceptionally healthy and high-quality shrimp, oysters, crabs, finfish and other seafood they produce accounts for a large portion of our domestic seafood production. According to a June 7th Washington Post Article, Louisiana alone generates 30 percent of our Nation's seafood. Gulf seafood production generates tens of billions of dollars in annual economic activity.

Seafood is fundamental to the economy and culture of this region. In many ways, it defines the people and the places that make up our nation's Gulf coast.

Although Gulf seafood producers are a major stakeholder in the government's response to the spill, they don't have a seat at the table in the response and restoration process. We believe the Gulf seafood industry presents a vast, unutilized resource of knowledge and manpower ready and able to contribute substantially to the federal response.

What is currently missing from the work of the numerous federal agencies in the Gulf of Mexico is an official mechanism for the seafood industry to develop and provide sustained input into the daily decisions that profoundly affect their lives both in the near and long term.

We believe this deserves immediate attention. As members representing the states of the Gulf coast, we request that you address these concerns by formally establishing a Gulf Seafood Advisory Group charged with developing and providing advice and recommendations to your Administration on a range of relevant response issues and activities pertaining to--

- 1) fishery closures and openings;
- 2) seafood safety testing and public dissemination of information;

- 3) claims for compensation;
- 4) the role of Gulf seafood producers and their concerns regarding spill remediation;
- 5) health and safety of remediation personnel; and
- 6) other activities relevant to the seafood industry.

This group could also serve to communicate critical information broadly and effectively to the seafood industry.

Like other advisory bodies, the advisory group should be comprised of knowledgeable industry leaders representative of each of the Gulf States, representatives of relevant state and federal agencies, and the principal components of the Gulf fisheries. The work of this group would complement the work of the Gulf of Mexico Regional Fishery Management Council.

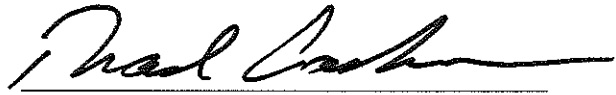
The profound impacts of this spill on the fishery resources and seafood-based economy of our region will continue long after this event has faded from public attention. We cannot allow the needs for monitoring, remediation and compensation to go unmet. The formation and sustained utilization of this advisory group will ensure that this doesn't happen.

Thank you for your consideration.

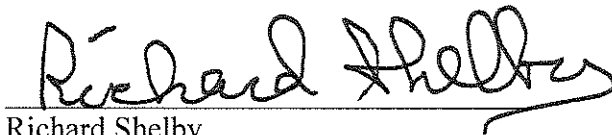
Sincerely,



Bill Nelson



Thad Cochran



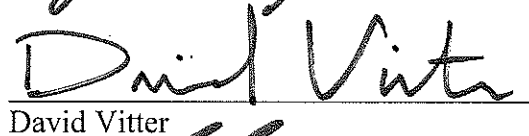
Richard Shelby



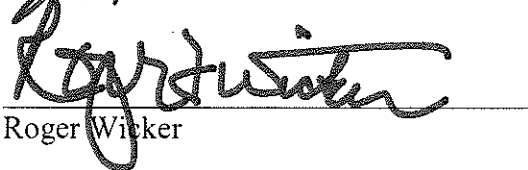
Mary Landrieu



Jeff Sessions



David Vitter



Roger Wicker



George Lemieux