

## **Representative Putnam - Legislative Response to Oil Spill**

### *Seeking to Protect Florida's Ecosystem and State Economy*

Rep. Putnam joined with the entire Florida congressional delegation in requesting the President to take immediate action to authorize and initiate investigative efforts that will better quantify the amount, distribution and nature of oil that is moving below the surface in the Gulf of Mexico. The delegation stressed that our state's "fragile coastline, as well as the tourism economy, is dependent on swift action to identify and ameliorate this threat."

Congressman Putnam also sent a letter to federal banking regulators concerning the economic impact the oil spill may have on communities and further restriction of lending.

### ***Offshore Safety and Response Improvement Act (HR 5313)***

Rep. Putnam is the chief cosponsor of legislation designed to improve disaster prevention and planning to help prevent similar catastrophes from occurring in the future. The Offshore Safety and Response Improvement Act would require the development of new contingency plans for dealing with oil related disasters, mandate a comprehensive review of the current technology and methods used to mitigate oil spills be undertaken, and ensure all oil rigs are equipped with emergency acoustic shut off devices or report to Congress reasons why such technology is not deemed necessary.

### ***Gulf Coast Homeowners Relief Act of 2010 (H.R. 5601)***

Congressmen Adam Putnam and Jeff Miller (Fl-1) introduced legislation to provide mortgage forbearance to homeowners in the areas affected by the BP Deepwater Horizon oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico.

"It is important to give federal regulators maximum flexibility in assisting homeowners in crisis along the Gulf Coast," Rep. Putnam noted upon introduction, "the last thing communities need is bureaucratic red tape unnecessarily forcing families out of their homes."

This bill will allow for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide housing forbearance for those sustaining economic losses due to the oil spill and to evaluate what resources and programs available within the Agency that could provide further assistance to communities along the Gulf Coast.

### ***Gulf Coast Access to Savings Act of 2010 (H.R.5602)***

Congressmen Adam Putnam and Charles Boustany Jr. (La.) introduced legislation to aid small businesses and families affected by the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf. Their measure would allow some to withdraw funds from retirement savings accounts without paying a penalty.

Though many beaches and fishing waters remain open and unaffected by the oil spill, the perception of oil soaked beaches is driving tourism away, placing an additional burden on the

people of the Gulf states who are continuing to struggle in this deep economic recession. The Gulf Coast Access to Savings Act would allow for withdrawals of up to \$50,000 from retirement plans without penalty. The legislation aims to assist those individuals and small businesses that are affected by the oil spill and unable to secure a loan due to restricted lending or that may need to access their retirement plans in order to make payroll or stay afloat.

The economic impact from the oil spill could delay Florida's recovery from the current recession. Given the potential long-lasting consequences, we must ensure our businesses located along coast-lines or those that provide services to businesses on the coast have the ability to ride out the crisis.

***Water Assistance from International Vessels for Emergency Response Act or WAIVER Act (H.R.5585)***

Congressman Adam Putnam has co-sponsored legislation to remove bureaucratic hurdles that are keeping foreign-flagged oil skimming vessels from being deployed to the Gulf of Mexico. Florida and other Gulf states must have access oil skimming vessels. A major hindrance to this recovery effort has been cited as a 90 year old law that keeps foreign flagged vessels from this kind of work unless they receive a special waiver. This legislation would grant a temporary waiver of the law known as the Jones Act.

The Water Assistance from International Vessels for Emergency Response Act or WAIVER Act would waive requirements for coastwise endorsements to a certificate of documentation in order to engage in coastwise trade for foreign vessels engaged in containment, remediation, or associated activities in connection with the mobile offshore drilling unit Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

***Oil Spill Prevention Act of 2010 (H.R. 5572)***

Rep. Putnam has cosponsored the Oil Spill Prevention Act, which restructures the Minerals Management Service enforcement and oversight capabilities to better address safety and permitting activities, including requiring monthly inspection of each vessel and facility used for Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) oil or gas drilling.

The legislation also prohibits the Secretary of Interior from exempting any category of vessel or facility activity in OCS oil or gas drilling in waters deeper than 1,000 feet from any applicable federal requirement or restriction. Furthermore, H.R. 5572 amends the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 to repeal the liability limits applicable to a responsible party for discharge of oil from an offshore facility.

***A Bill to amend the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 to authorize advances from Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. (H.R.5499)***

Amends the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 to exempt advances to the Coast Guard in connection with the explosion on, and sinking of, the mobile offshore drilling unit Deepwater Horizon from the requirement that amounts in the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund shall be available only as provided in annual appropriations. Limits such advances to a maximum of \$100 million each.