

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 21, 2013

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Capitol S-128
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski:

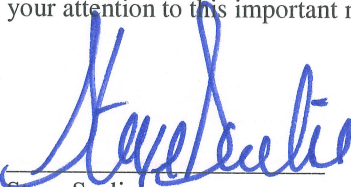
We are disappointed to learn that the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations voted to cut funds for coastal restoration in Louisiana. The RESTORE Act authorizes federal spending from the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund as mandatory appropriations. Funds in the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund are not tax dollars but rather administrative and civil penalties collected from parties responsible for the Deepwater Horizon offshore oil spill that occurred in 2010. These dollars are to be used for economic and ecological restoration projects within the states impacted by the spill.

On July 25, 2013 the Senate Appropriations Committee, in a 16-14 vote, authorized \$10.2 million in cuts to the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund for overhead expenses. The authorization to pay for overhead expenses using monies within the trust fund was not part of the President's FY14 Budget proposal. Louisiana's coastal communities along with other Gulf Coast areas cannot afford reductions to the RESTORE Act's Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund.

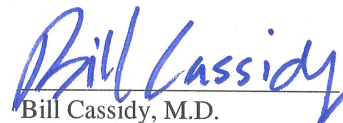
Louisiana is losing its coastal wetlands at an alarming rate. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that if present land-loss trends continue, the State will have lost 2,400 square miles of land between 1932 and 2050. That's an area about 25 times the size of Washington, D.C. Across the region, communities are being threatened, jobs are being lost, and habitats are vanishing. Gulf Coast restoration efforts should not be obstructed with outright reductions by the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee.

We strongly urge you to restore these funds by removing the authorized cut to the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund prior to full Senate passage of its FY14 Financial Services Appropriations bill. The intent of the RESTORE Act is to provide funds for restoration activities in the Gulf Coast region. These are not tax dollars, they are fines routed through the U.S. Treasury Department that should be used for its intended purpose. Thank you for your attention to this important matter and we look forward to your timely action and response.

Sincerely,



Steve Scalise
U.S. House of Representatives



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
U.S. House of Representatives

Cc: Senator Leahy
Senator Harkin
Senator Murray
Senator Feinstein
Senator Durbin
Senator Johnson
Senator Landrieu
Senator Reed
Senator Pryor
Senator Tester
Senator Udall
Senator Shaheen
Senator Merkley
Senator Begich
Senator Coons