

111TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 309

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the need for a \$500 million recovery fund focusing exclusively on travel and tourism to be administered by the Gulf Coast Claims Facility in the wake of the BP oil spill.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 29, 2010

Mr. RUSH submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the need for a \$500 million recovery fund focusing exclusively on travel and tourism to be administered by the Gulf Coast Claims Facility in the wake of the BP oil spill.

Whereas the travel industry in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida generates \$94 billion in revenue and accounts for over 1 million jobs, all of which is in jeopardy due to the BP oil spill;

Whereas the BP oil spill has threatened the natural resources of the Gulf States, damaged beaches and shorelines, and caused significant declines in travel and tourism throughout the region, and leading travel indicators point to sharp declines in traveler levels, independent of where oil has washed ashore;

Whereas travel is a perception-based business and exaggerated or sensationalized media coverage of the oil spill unnecessarily drives travelers elsewhere, exacerbating the harm done to local business and employees;

Whereas also contributing to traveler declines in the Gulf are consumer uncertainties about where oil has washed ashore and where it will come ashore in the future;

Whereas when a region experiences prolonged declines in travel resulting from consumer misperceptions, economic hardship and job loss can ripple throughout a local economy;

Whereas a study by Oxford Economics found that the potential impact of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico could adversely affect tourism arrivals in coastal communities for up to 3 years at a cost of \$22.7 billion dollars in lost revenue;

Whereas it is not too late to mitigate these economic losses by taking an active role in providing credible and accurate information to the traveling public;

Whereas the simplest and most effective way to accomplish this is to direct BP to invest \$500 million over the next 3 years in comprehensive information-based marketing campaigns designed to bring travelers back to the Gulf Coast;

Whereas a study by Oxford Economics also found that a \$500 million information-based marketing campaign could yield \$7.5 billion in traveler spending in the Gulf Coast region and significantly increase traveler levels, thereby helping local economies recover from the impacts of the oil spill;

Whereas the Gulf Coast Claims Facility and the \$20 billion dollar escrow account have been established only to pay for damages that have already occurred, rather than also to prevent further economic damages from happening, leaving the travel industry in a frustrating predicament and with a grim outlook;

Whereas BP recently denied the State of Florida its request for another marketing grant and instead informed the Governor's office that individual counties and cities should submit claims directly to BP;

Whereas, to date, the type of documentation needed to file a marketing claim or the criteria that will be used to evaluate these claims has not been presented by BP to any potential claimants; and

Whereas it is important to avoid potential uncertainties and inequities in the distribution of tourism marketing dollars to recipients on the Gulf Coast: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that—

3 (1) a \$500 million dollar recovery fund focusing
4 exclusively on travel and tourism should be funded
5 by BP and administered by the Gulf Coast Claims
6 Facility;

7 (2) the funds should be administered through
8 an open and transparent process with a defined set
9 of criteria for award; and

10 (3) county or parish and State tourism boards
11 and visitors bureaus in Louisiana, Mississippi, Ala-

- 1 bama, and Florida should all be eligible for funding
- 2 based on a demonstration of a decline in travelers
- 3 since the beginning of the BP oil spill.

