



May 22, 2013

The Acting Secretary Cameron Kerry  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Re: Development of the Restoration Comprehensive Plan

Dear Acting Secretary Cameron Kerry:

As leaders in the hunting and fishing community, we are encouraged to see the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council commit to ensuring the long term health, prosperity, and resilience of the Gulf Coast. Developing a comprehensive restoration plan in collaboration with the people who live, work, and recreate in the Gulf is essential. We commend your willingness to coordinate with stakeholder groups that are active in restoration of the Gulf Coast region.

Truly one of America's greatest natural resources, the Gulf Coast is near and dear to the heart of sportsmen and women throughout the country. Its beaches, islands, bays, wetlands, and forests provide endless opportunities to enjoy the bounty of this productive landscape.

We believe investments in long-term ecosystem restoration will drive economic prosperity in the Gulf Coast region. The people, businesses, communities, and economy of this region are undeniably reliant upon a healthy and productive Gulf, and ecosystem restoration should be the top priority in drafting and finalizing the Council's Comprehensive Restoration Plan.

Hunters and anglers have long been considered leaders in conservation and, as such, we have demonstrated an unrivaled commitment to protecting wildlife and wild places. We firmly believe in the value of responsible stewardship of our natural resources. We are committed to this responsibility and have even advocated taxing ourselves to fund fish and wildlife conservation and restoration.

Hunters and anglers exemplify the fact that habitat restoration and wildlife conservation can drive and support economic recovery. Sportsmen and women spent \$90 billion on hunting and fishing in the United States in 2011. That same year, in the five Gulf States alone, nearly 8.5 million hunters and anglers spent \$15.7 billion pursuing their passion. This spending supports over 255,000 jobs and generates \$3.3 billion in federal, state, and local taxes.

The loss of healthy and productive habitat means the loss of quality hunting and angling opportunities. If the wild spaces of the Gulf region aren't protected and restored, sportsmen and women will lose the

return on their long-standing investment, and the region will lose its rich hunting and angling heritage. A restored and productive Gulf ecosystem is essential for both regional and national economic recovery and growth. Every dollar spent on ecosystem restoration helps the recovery of the Gulf's natural resource based economy.

The national hunting and fishing community was at the forefront of the efforts to pass the RESTORE Act and we intend to see this through. Funding from the RESTORE Act provides a long-awaited opportunity to address comprehensive ecosystem restoration for the Gulf. The Council has the responsibility to direct unprecedented resources into restoring one of the most important ecosystems in the country. We are counting on you. We look forward to working with you to restore the Gulf.

Sincerely,

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Minnesota Sportsmen Magazine  
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New York Game and Fish Magazine  
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SCSU Ecology Club – Student Chapter  
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Shotgun News Magazine  
Silver Thread Line  
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South Carolina B.A.S.S. Federation  
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Tennessee Sportsman Magazine  
Terminal Tackle  
Texas Black Bass Unlimited  
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The Birding Wire  
The Coalition for a Clean Minnesota River  
The Fishing Wire  
The Fowl Life  
The Hangman  
The Hunting Wire  
The Open Space Council of St. Louis  
The Outdoor Guy, Outdoor Writer  
The Outdoor Kitchen Show  
The Outdoor Kitchen Show  
The Outdoor Wire  
The Outdoor Wire Digital Network  
The Wildlife Society Crookston Student Chapter

The World Aquarium and Conservation for the Oceans  
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Vicious Fishing  
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Washington-Oregon Game and Fish Magazine  
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WeareDuckHunters .com

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