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STATEMENT FROM THE AMERICA'S WETLAND FOUNDATION ON THE GULF OF MEXICO OIL RIG INCIDENT

The rig explosion in the Gulf of Mexico is a tragedy; our thoughts are with the families of those who lost their lives and we wish those who were injured a fast recovery.

We along America's Energy Coast must deal with the realities before us today: a coastline disappearing at the greatest land loss rate on earth, rising sea levels, hurricanes, impacts from the activities on and off our shore that determine the economic and energy security of the United States, and a slow Federal process rife with conflicting policies that prohibits meaningful coastal restoration.

We have hosted the nation's domestic offshore energy production for more than five decades and, until the nation no longer demands it, we will be expected to continue to do so for years to come. A working coast requires a sound environment and is the reason the America's WETLAND Foundation has long called for offshore revenues to be shared with the states hosting offshore production, ensuring a steady stream of revenue that will enable large-scale restoration. A tragedy of this type only adds to the urgency of restoring the deteriorating wetlands and coastal reaches that have for too long been allowed to place our communities in situations that are highly vulnerable to such man made or natural incidents.

Although rare, this rig accident is an example of the many inherent risks along a working coast, and has prompted our call for an acceleration of the offshore revenue sharing due to start in 2017.

The country depends on this coastline and this coastline depends on the national commitment of this country to ensure its environmental and economic sustainability.

America's WETLAND Foundation is a non-partisan, non-profit organization that has acted as a neutral arbiter for coastal interests since its inception in 2002, elevating issues facing the Gulf Coast, specifically those of coastal land loss, to regional and national attention. For more information visit www.americaswetland.com.

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