



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT:**

**John Hill**

**America's WETLAND Foundation**

**504.756.0101**

**NOTE: Video News Release for web sites or TV available at URL listed below**

**LEADERS FROM FOUR GULF ENERGY-PRODUCING STATES CALL FOR IMMEDIATE ASSESSMENT OF OIL SPILL LESSONS**

**GALVESTON** -- Leaders of environment, industry, science and government from four Gulf energy-producing states Wednesday cautioned to assess immediately lessons of the recent Gulf rig incident and move to set in place cooperative avenues of response without waiting and missing opportunity for change, as was the case with the 1979 oil spill off the coast of Mexico.

Meeting as America's Energy Coast (AEC) convened by the Americas' WETLAND Foundation in Galveston, Texas, the joint interests agreed on short-term and long-term strategies aimed at advancing resiliency for communities along the coast. Specifically, the group called on the federal government to understand the relationship of a healthy coast and needs for restoration along with the response to the oil spill cleanup.

"A healthy coast would have provided important defense mechanisms and this incident only shows how vulnerable the coast is to natural and man-made events," said Dr. Robert Twilley, an LSU oceanographer.

"We see tragic ironies of needing sand and sediments to build healthy wetlands being funneled into the deep Gulf and lost while emergency measure are being discussed to build sand barrier defenses for to repel the oil," Twilley said.

Additional AEC measures recommend a focus on university research and development to design response scenarios for deepwater exploration in partnership with industry scientists to eliminate untested responses in association with high tech exploration. The group also supported leveraging information and support for the White House Council on Environmental Quality's project to design a roadmap to sustain the coast.

Last year, the AEC released the groundbreaking report, “A Region at Risk,” calling on the federal government to reduce conflicting federal policy and accelerate action on restoration projects. In particular, finding an immediate way to create a Mississippi River diversion to build wetlands was approved. Also, the AEC passed resolutions to support policy that will accelerate revenues from Outer Continental Shelf lease sales and to eliminate red tape with the release of CIAP (Coastal Impact Assistance Program) due to states to address impact from energy development.

“We must have a coordinated federal effort to restore our coast now. Certainly the oil spill will focus funds for clean-up and we need to leverage that funding to repair our coast so that tax payer dollars are wisely utilized,” said King Milling, chair of the America’s WETLAND Foundation.

Scientists at the meeting suggested that developing protocols for restoring wetlands as carbon sinks is an obvious opportunity for the region, where land loss rates are the largest on the planet and carbon emission issues are abundant in a place where the majority of domestic energy is produced and refined. “The size of our ecosystem means we can also create a strong play in carbon capture,” said Jeff Williams with Entergy Corporation.

The AEC set in place a two year plan for working in local coastal communities to create resiliency plans to abate vulnerabilities and measure and plan for risks that arise from living in a working environment that is vital to environmental, energy, economic, cultural and community assets.

Video News Release available at this web address:

<http://hometownproductions.com/videos/satellitefeeds/download.php?f=sat052610.mpg>