

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: David Beattie & Whit Ayres
DATE: December 7, 2011
RE: Support for Using BP Fines for Restoration in Gulf States

Regardless of where voters live in Florida, they believe the state’s beaches and coastal waters are very important to the state’s economy (98% important, 89% very important). Despite the size of the state and the diversity of the population, Floridians start from a position where they believe the economy of the state is inextricably tied to beaches and coastal water. This underlying attitude explains much of the unity in public opinion about the best use of any fines paid by BP for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Importance of Florida’s Beaches and Coastal Waters to the State’s Economy

In your opinion, how important are Florida’s beaches and coastal waters to the state’s economy — very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all?

	<i>Region</i>					
	<u>Total</u> %	<u>Miami</u> %	<u>South Central</u> %	<u>Tampa</u> %	<u>Orlando</u> %	<u>Panhandle/ Northeast</u> %
Very important	89	92	91	88	89	86
Somewhat important	9	7	7	10	10	8
No Opinion	*					*
Not too important	1	1	2	1	1	3
Not important at all	1	*		1		2

Likely voters in Florida overwhelmingly support a bill in Congress to ensure that the money BP pays in fines for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill is spent on restoration efforts in the Gulf Coast states that were directly affected by the spill (84% favor – 11% oppose; 58% *strongly* favor). The strongest support for this bill is among voters in the Panhandle (the Pensacola and Panama City media markets), where 92% of voters favor BP fines being used for restoration (74% *strongly* favor) and in the Miami media market, where 90% favor BP fines being used for restoration (70% *strongly* favor). In a polarized political landscape, this is an issue where there is very little partisan difference among registered Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. In fact, there is no statistical difference between Tea Party supporters and registered Democrats overall on this issue.

Opinions on Bill Ensuring that BP Fines are Spent in Gulf Coast States

Currently, fines paid by BP will go to the U.S. government. Do you favor or oppose a bill in Congress, which would ensure that the money BP pays in fines for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill is instead spent on restoration efforts in the Gulf Coast states that were directly affected by the spill? **(IF CHOICE)** Would you strongly **(FAVOR/OPPOSE)** this bill or only somewhat **(FAVOR/OPPOSE)** it?

	<u>Total</u> %	<u>Democrat</u> %	<u>Republican</u> %	<u>Independent</u> %	<u>Tea Party Supporters</u> %	<u>GOP Pres. Primary Voters</u> %
Favor	84	83	82	88	84	84
Oppose	11	13	12	7	14	12
No Opinion	5	4	5	5	2	4
<i>Strongly Favor</i>	58	56	59	61	59	60

Three-quarters of voters are more likely to support a candidate for public office who supports a bill requiring that the money BP pays in fines be spent in the Gulf Coast states (75% more likely to support – 12% less likely to support – 13% no opinion). The strongest support for a candidate who would ensure BP fines are spent in Gulf Coast states is in the Panhandle (82% more likely – 3% less likely – 15% no opinion). Even likely Republican presidential primary voters strongly support a candidate who would focus payment of BP fines on Gulf Coast states (73% more likely – 12% less likely – 14% no opinion).

Support for Candidate who Supports BP Fines Being Spent in Gulf Coast States

Are you more likely or less likely to support a candidate for public office who supports a bill to require that the money BP pays in fines be spent in the Gulf Coast states? (IF CHOICE) is that much (MORE LIKELY/LESS LIKELY) or only somewhat?

	<i>Region</i>					
	<u>Total</u> %	<u>Miami</u> %	<u>South Central</u> %	<u>Tampa</u> %	<u>Orlando</u> %	<u>Panhandle/ Northeast</u> %
More Likely	75	74	71	74	78	77
Less Likely	12	14	13	10	12	10
No Opinion	13	13	16	15	10	13

Voters strongly support that the fines collected from BP be used for recovery and cleanup in the Gulf Coast states, as opposed to being put toward deficit reduction (79% recovery – 12% reduce deficit). This sentiment is seen with voters in every region of Florida. Tea Party supporters (80% recovery – 12% reduce deficit) do not differ in opinion from likely Republican presidential primary voters in their support of these funds being used within the region.

Opinions on Use of BP Fines

What do you believe should be done with the fines paid by BP for the Gulf oil spill?

	<u>Total</u> %	<u>Democrat</u> %	<u>Republican</u> %	<u>Independent</u> %	<u>Tea Party Supporters</u> %	<u>GOP Pres. Primary Voters</u> %
Reduce Deficit	12	13	11	13	12	10
Recovery & Clean-up	79	79	80	75	80	81
Both/Neither/No Opin	9	8	8	12	7	9

Bottomline:

There is broad, bipartisan support for ensuring that fines paid by BP for last year’s Deepwater Horizon oil spill are actually targeted to the Gulf Coast states hurt by the spill. Regardless of political party or region of the state, this is an issue that unites Florida voters, when so many other issues divide them. It is simply not a partisan issue to voters.

The data presented in this memorandum represent a statewide survey of 700 registered voters who are likely to vote in the November 2012 general election in Florida, as well as an oversample of 100 registered likely voters in the Pensacola and Panama City media markets. Hamilton Campaigns and Ayres McHenry & Associates conducted telephone interviewing November 30 – December 4, 2011. Any discrepancies in totals adding to 100% are due to rounding. The margin of error for a sample of this size is ± 3.7 percentage points, at the 95% confidence level.