



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

11-020026

HALEY BARBOUR
GOVERNOR

June 22, 2011

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OS EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

The Honorable Gary Locke
Secretary of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
14th and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Locke:

On May 9, 2011 the USACE opened the Bonnet Carré Spillway to relieve the pressure from the Mississippi River waterway system. As I am sure you are aware, the Bonnet Carré Spillway acts to divert the waters of the Mississippi River into Lake Pontchartrain, which ultimately flow into the Mississippi Sound. The large release of fresh-water from the actions of the Spillway inundates the salt-waters of the Mississippi Sound and greatly disrupts the unique eco-system, and subsequently, the sea-life of this region. Historically this has led to significant negative impacts to all estuarine/marine species in coastal Mississippi, particularly the Mississippi's oyster reefs located westward of the Gulfport Ship Channel which have experienced near total, if not total, mortality rates.

I am writing to you to request that you initiate the process to implement a federal fisheries disaster declaration as outlined in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. We will continue to monitor the influence of the Mississippi River freshwater as it makes its way into the Mississippi Sound.

The declaration of a federal fisheries disaster for Mississippi may assist in obtaining financial assistance for all negatively impacted ecosystems, fishermen and related businesses in a timely manner.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Haley Barbour
Haley Barbour