

## **Fishery Failure in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama declared.**

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### ***Commerce Secretary Gary Locke Announces Fishery Failure Determination in Gulf of Mexico***

*WASHINGTON – U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke today determined there has been a fishery disaster in the Gulf of Mexico due to the economic impact on commercial and recreational fisheries from the ongoing Deepwater Horizon oil spill. **The affected area includes the states of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.***

*“We are taking this action today because of the potentially significant economic hardship this spill may cause fishermen and the businesses and communities that depend on those fisheries,” Locke said. “The disaster determination will help ensure that the Federal government is in a position to mobilize the full range of assistance that fishermen and fishing communities may need.”*

*Locke made the determination under Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The declaration was made in response to requests from Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal and Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour based on **the loss of access to many commercial fisheries** and the existing and anticipated environmental damage from this unprecedented event.*

*Since May 2, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has closed a portion of federal waters affected by the spill to commercial and recreational fishing. This closure area, which is based on the scientific trajectory of the spill, now includes 19*

*percent of federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico, largely between Louisiana state waters at the mouth of the Mississippi and the waters off Florida's Pensacola Bay.*

*"We stand with America's fishermen, their families and businesses in impacted coastal communities during this challenging time," Locke said. "Commercial and recreational fishing provides vital jobs to the region and is essential to the Gulf Coast's unique culture and heritage."*

*Commercial fishermen in the Gulf harvested more than 1 billion pounds of fish and shellfish in 2008. In addition, there are approximately 5.7 million recreational fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico region who took 25 million fishing trips in 2008.*

*The administration has requested \$15 million of supplemental funding as a backstop to address this disaster, as well as \$5 million of economic development assistance through the Economic Development Administration. In addition, the administration is requesting unemployment coverage for this disaster, and the Small Business Administration is offering economic injury disaster loans, which can help fishermen and other affected businesses. However, the administration expects that BP and any other responsible parties will cover the full costs of economic damages to and restoration of these fisheries.*

*NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources. Visit NOAA at <http://www.noaa.gov> or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/noaa.lubchenco>.*