

RESTORE ACT Benefits for Persons with Disabilities

Bentina Terry,
Chair, Escambia County RESTORE Advisory Committee

In 2010, this country's largest man-made disaster occurred in the Gulf of Mexico, discharging 4.1 million barrels of oil. The discharge had a tremendous impact on the environment and this region's main industry – tourism.

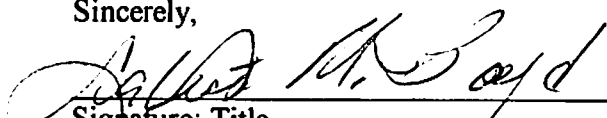
In order to restore the gulf coast ecosystem and economy the federal government sued BP under the Clean Water Act. Billions of dollars are at stake. To ensure that all of the five impacted states receive a portion of any fines levied by the courts or through settlement agreements, congress passed the Resources and Ecosystem Sustainability Tourist Opportunities and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012 (RESTORE ACT).

Unlike other fines that have been levied against BP, the RESTORE funds can be used for projects other than environmental restoration. For instance, the funds can be used to create workforce development, promote tourism, economic development, and improve infrastructure and transportation, all of which can impact persons with disabilities in positive ways. For instance, programs can be developed that would provide greater access to beaches, recreational fishing, tourism venues, jobs and workforce opportunities that have not been accessible to persons with disabilities in the past. To make sure the funds allocated to Escambia County are used wisely, the Escambia County Board of Commissioners established the RESTORE Advisory Committee (RAC).

I request that RAC give top priority to funding programs that provide maximum inclusion for groups that have historically been disadvantaged and underserved, including minorities and persons with disabilities. Furthermore, I ask that projects receiving funds from the RESTORE ACT, comply with all federal accessibility laws as mandated by the US Treasury Department, including the Rehabilitation Act of 1963 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. I ask that enhanced inclusion and accessibility be a priority in the criteria for any rating system established for allocation of projects funded with RESTORE ACT funds.

If you desire further information regarding this matter please contact Frank Cherry (850) 595-5566, Ext. 16.

Sincerely,


Signature: Title

11-5-13
Date

Advocate for Change, Inc.
Organization