

August 10, 2007

The Honorable Haley Barbour  
State of Mississippi  
PO Box 139  
Jackson, MS 39205

Dear Governor Barbour:

We would like to extend our appreciation for your continuing support for ocean and coastal policy reform in Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico. Your leadership is essential to the success of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance and its efforts to encourage the conservation and prudent use of Gulf resources and improved resiliency of coastal communities. By helping coordinate the efforts of the Governors in the region, you are leading the way in protecting one of the nation's most vital natural and economic treasures. We are pleased to learn that you have invited the other Gulf governors to talk about this important initiative on August 25, immediately before the official start of the Southern Governors Association meeting. We hope that this meeting will provide a forum for you to discuss how each state values the Gulf and formulate ways to encourage regional and national leadership to view the Gulf as a national resource.

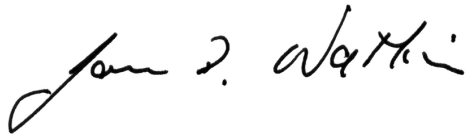
As you well know, Mississippi and the other Gulf states rely on the Gulf of Mexico for its economic prosperity. Thus, ensuring the long-term health of this asset is imperative to the quality of life for all of the citizens in the region. Moreover, from energy production and fishing, to transportation and shipping, to recreation and tourism, the Gulf region plays a starring role in the U.S. economy. Similar benefits are shared by other coastal states—that is why investing in our oceans and coasts makes sound economic sense.

The Gulf of Mexico Alliance has clearly demonstrated that collaboration among states, working in concert with the federal government, is not only possible, but has the potential to change the way we manage our oceans and coasts. The work of the Gulf Alliance has been a resounding success and is a model other regions in the nation can follow. We are following the work of the Gulf Alliance carefully, and through the work of our fellow Commissioners, such as that of Paul Kelly, and Joint Initiative staff, are working to support its goals and objectives.

The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative is committed to advancing meaningful ocean policy reform throughout the nation. If there is any way that we can be of assistance in your efforts in the Gulf of Mexico please contact us at (202) 354-6444.

Thank you again for your leadership on this critical issue. We look forward to working with you to accelerate the pace of ocean policy reform.

Sincerely,



James D. Watkins  
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)  
Chairman, U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy



The Honorable Leon E. Panetta  
Chair, Pew Oceans Commission