

# IT'S TIME TO END OUR DEPENDENCE ON OIL

What I have seen during my visits to the Gulf of Mexico is shocking, horrifying, and heartbreaking. One bird, covered in oil, struggled again and again to take off from the water. It's the kind of image you want to share, not because it's beautiful, but because you want so badly for people to understand.

That pelican, coated in oil and struggling to take flight, reminds me of America's past failed attempts to make meaningful progress toward the clean energy future we all know we must someday achieve.

We can't accept business as usual after what we've seen in the Gulf. This disaster changes everything.

The oil industry has impeded our progress for far too long. It's time to stand up to the oil industry and move America beyond its dependence on oil. We have never needed President Barack Obama's vision and boldness more than we do today. We are urging the president to seize this moment, not just to repair broken oversight of the oil industry, but to chart a new course.

The BP oil disaster has become a hostage situation. The Gulf region, like the rest of the country, desperately needs jobs. Now, thousands in the Gulf are looking at an even more uncertain future as BP's massive oil slick wipes out fishing and tourism livelihoods.

According to the Louisiana Workforce Commission, more than 12,000 Louisiana residents have filed unemployment claims since the blowout—and most of the filings are from folks displaced by the spreading oil.

Fishing and shrimping boats are now all either docked or in service to BP to clean up its mess. The disaster has affected an estimated 13,000 commercial licensed fishermen in

Louisiana, not including deckhands and crew, according to the Louisiana State Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Roughly 46 percent of the Gulf economy, or over \$100 billion a year, comes from tourism dollars. The Louisiana Tourism and Cultural Department is reporting that the stalling of the fishing industry is affecting the \$1.36 billion in tourism dollars that the state's nine coastal parishes provide. Those nine parishes also have 15,000 tourism-related jobs with a \$238 million payroll. And this is just in Louisiana.

How many more jobs should we let Big Oil destroy? Workers who depend on the Gulf have seen their livelihood disappear. How many more catastrophes will it take to convince us to stand up to Big Oil and support industries that will employ people without destroying the economy and the environment?

Eleven rig workers died, the Gulf's beaches and wetlands are closed and covered in oil, thousands are jobless, and cleanup workers are getting sick, and yet some want to pretend this isn't happening and just start drilling for more oil. If this isn't a sign of just how bad our oil addiction is, I don't know what else could be.

Clean energy and clean transportation could create thousands of jobs, without the risk of disasters like we are witnessing now. For many Americans, it's easy to watch images from the Gulf and feel despair. It's easy to feel helpless. But there is something we can do. We can make sure this doesn't happen again.

That's why we're calling on our supporters and concerned citizens everywhere to send a clear message to President Obama. We're ready to stand up to the oil industry, and embrace clean energy and a 21st-century transportation system.

During World War II, this country completely transformed itself to meet an unprecedented threat. We need that level of ambitious vision now. It's time to be bold. This is our chance to move America beyond dependence on oil. We need to seize it.

It's time to end our oil addiction. President Obama should deliver a plan to move America beyond its dependence on oil over the next 20 years.

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