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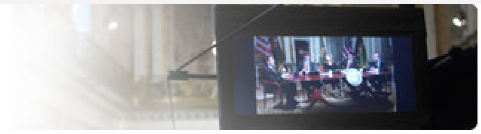

Treasury Issues RESTORE Act Rule to Help Aid Recovering of Gulf Coast Communities

8/13/2014

New rule supports environmental and economic restoration of the Gulf Coast region

WASHINGTON – To help further the recovery of communities affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the U.S. Treasury Department today announced that a new rule has been published in the Federal Register for Gulf Coast states and municipalities to receive funding for environmental restoration and economic development projects. The Interim Final Rule outlines grant programs for Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas that were established by the Resources and Ecosystem Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States (RESTORE) Act.

“Treasury today took another important step to help the communities, ecosystems, and people of the Gulf Coast as they continue to recover from the largest offshore oil spill in U.S. history,” said David Lebryk, Fiscal Assistant Secretary at the U.S. Treasury Department. “With this action, affected states and municipalities can now begin the process of applying for grants from the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund.”

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill released millions of barrels of crude oil in the Gulf waters, and caused extensive damage to marine and wildlife habitats, fishing, and tourism. On July 6, 2012, President Obama signed the RESTORE Act into law establishing a trust fund within Treasury with 80 percent of the civil penalties to be paid by parties responsible for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

Under the Interim Final Rule published today, 35 percent of the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund is divided equally among the five states for ecological and economic restoration. In the States of Alabama, Texas, and Mississippi, each will be responsible for obtaining and distributing the funds for the benefit of the Gulf region. The State of Florida’s allocation goes to 23 coastal counties. The State of Louisiana’s allocation will be split between the state and the parishes, with 70 percent for state initiatives and 30 percent for initiatives chosen among 20 coastal parishes. Separately, Treasury recently published a proposed rule that sets out the individual Louisiana parish allocations.

Treasury will also provide grants using 2.5 percent of the trust fund for research centers of excellence that will be selected by the Gulf Coast States. Research centers of excellence will focus on science, technology, and monitoring. In addition to these grant programs, the Interim Final Rule describes requirements for RESTORE Act programs administered by other federal agencies.

Treasury is one of several federal entities working to implement the RESTORE Act. The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council, a federal entity composed of the five Gulf Coast States and six federal agencies, will use 30 percent of the trust fund for projects selected by the council, and administer grants to the states pursuant to council-approved state expenditure plans using an additional 30 percent. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will use the remaining 2.5 percent of the trust fund for a program focused on advancements in monitoring, observation, and technology. For more information on the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council, please visit http://www.restorethegulf.gov/.

On September 6, 2013, Treasury published its first proposed rule to implement the Act. Today’s rule builds on Treasury’s ongoing work to implement the RESTORE Act.

To review the Interim Final Rule, please click here. The formal Federal Register webpage will be available on Friday, August 15, 2014 along with program information on the Treasury website.

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