

THE FLORIDA SENATE
SENATOR JEFF ATWATER
President

May 20, 2010

VIA HAND DELIVERY

The Honorable Charlie Crist
Governor of Florida
The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32311-0001

Dear Governor:

Having spent time over the past two days at our Emergency Operations Center, monitoring the progress of the Gulf oil leak, I am impressed by the capabilities and commitment of the professionals overseeing the State's response to the potential environmental impacts to Florida. I remain very concerned, however, that our reaction to the burgeoning economic crisis already unfolding has not been as sensitive to the immediate needs of the citizens of our Gulf coast.

A great deal of mystery continues to shroud the very process by which funds are to be made available by British Petroleum (BP) to assist in market-driven initiatives aimed at reassuring the traveling public that Florida continues to be a viable and attractive choice for visiting and vacationing. I am told that a Memorandum of Understanding between BP and the State exists but has yet to be executed. I would respectfully urge your office to share with the citizens of this State exactly how these funds are to be transmitted to and received by the State, how they will be spent, who will drive the process of distribution, how decisions on deployment will be made, and who will be asked to participate in that decision making. It would be helpful to have one person designated to make timely decisions, and a central repository of data which would be made available to the residents of this State. We should be able to track these funds and identify the accountable parties, as well as determine what, if any, responsibilities various parties throughout the State may be asked to assume. The greater the lead time to prepare, the higher quality and more timely the response.

Time is clearly of the essence. Memorial Day will be upon us soon. This is a particularly critical time for the business men and women of the Panhandle, given the regional nature of their business model and their proximity to the site of the incident. I would hope that we would see carefully targeted advertisements specifically designed for the various regional audiences that visit our State as early as this weekend. We should be making market media purchases now.

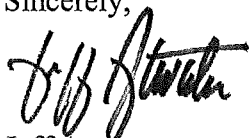
May 20, 2010

Page 2

You and your staff have worked closely with the Legislature on budget issues, and I need not remind anyone that this budget is based upon revenue estimates that will be seriously and adversely affected by a sustained reduction of tourism dollars. Although I am primarily compelled by a deep felt concern for the immediate prospects of hundreds of men and women throughout the State who may be at risk of losing their livelihoods, the real possibility exists that failure to act promptly and with clear purpose will erode an already fragile revenue base.

I know you share my deep concerns and I look forward to your communicating with all Floridians both the process, the accountability and the responsible parties who are charged with addressing these great needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Atwater". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeff Atwater

President

cc: Chris Hart, OTTED
Senator Durrell Peaden
Senator Don Gaetz
Senator Al Lawson
Senator Charlie Dean