

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Office of the Governor



TO THE MISSISSIPPI SENATE:

GOVERNOR'S SIGNING STATEMENT FOR SENATE BILL 2898

I am signing Senate Bill 2898, "AN ACT TO PROVIDE THAT ALL FUNDS RECEIVED BY THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI THROUGH A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT FOR ECONOMIC DAMAGES IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEEPWATER HORIZON OIL SPILL SHALL BE DEPOSITED INTO THE BUDGET CONTINGENCY FUND FOR APPROPRIATION BY THE LEGISLATURE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES."

Consistent with the Legislature's constitutional power and duty to appropriate public funds, this Act provides that all "economic damages" recovered by the State as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill "shall be deposited into the Budget Contingency Fund for appropriation by the Legislature." I look forward to working with the Legislature to ensure that these damages owed the State by BP and other parties are used to benefit the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and not for pet projects in parts of the State not affected by the spill.

As its text makes clear, this Act does not apply to damages recovered pursuant to the federal Natural Resource Damages Assessment (NRDA). See 33 U.S.C. §§ 2702(b)(2)(A) & 2706. Nor does it apply to any funds transferred to the State as a result of the federal RESTORE Act, in the event Congress passes and the President signs that legislation, as they should. Any such funds will be overseen by my office and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) in accordance with federal law and for the benefit of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

To date, unlike his counterparts in Alabama and Louisiana, the Attorney General has not filed a lawsuit to recover the State's economic damages, although I have urged him to do so. MDEQ and my office are aggressively pursuing the State's NRDA claim, and hopefully the Attorney General will soon file the State's claim for economic damages.

Respectfully submitted,

PHIL BRYANT
GOVERNOR

5/23/12