

May 2, 2017

Senator Richard Shelby  
304 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Funding for Environmental Protection

Dear Senator Shelby:

The economy of Alabama, and of the entire Gulf Coast, relies on the strength of our natural resources. Alabama's industries, including tourism, seafood, energy, shipping and advanced manufacturing all rely on a strong, healthy ecosystem to ensure our communities thrive. Beyond the Gulf, the entire nation depends on the health of these industries.

With that in mind, we are writing to express our deep concern about proposed federal budget cuts to programs that have been proven to keep our region economically and environmentally strong. These cuts undermine the health of Alabama's natural resources, which are the basis for so much of our state's industry and employment. In addition, without this funding, Alabama's opportunities to leverage funding from the Deepwater Horizon settlement will be missed.

Alabama receives nearly half of the funding for its environmental budget from the federal government. With proposed budget cuts of \$2.6 billion or 31% to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) budget, this will drastically reduce our state's ability to run programs aimed at reducing air pollution, clean up hazardous waste, and ensure public water safety. The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) has already received funding cuts at the state level in previous years, and it is unlikely Alabama could compensate for these federal budget reductions. By ADEM's estimate, the cuts to the federal agencies could result in a 44.5% cut to its overall budget with the most significant losses to the loan program for infrastructure projects and the air and water quality monitoring programs.

- In 2016 Alabama received \$3 million to implement control programs for "non-point" sources of water pollution. The proposed budget cuts these grants to states by 45%.
- The EPA's role in protecting our air quality provides benefits to more than 357,000 adults and more than 146,000 children in Alabama who have been diagnosed with asthma.
- There are 13 hazardous waste sites in Alabama on the EPA's National Priority List for the Superfund program. The proposed budget would cut the Superfund program by 30%.

These budget cuts also threaten our ability maintain a healthy balance in our coastal communities and along our beaches, which are a huge economic driver for our state. Funding from EPA and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) provide for many local programs that support coastal and ocean-dependent industries, such as fisheries, and have a direct benefit to Alabama's economy.

- The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (NEP), proposed for zero funding in the EPA budget, brings together leaders from business, government, experts in the scientific and research communities, nonprofit conservation and environmental organizations, and coastal residents to create and implement a Comprehensive and Conservation Management Plan. The Mobile Bay NEP has successfully leveraged its EPA funding of \$600,000 per year into \$20,000,000 of investment in coastal restoration activities, representing a return on investment of eight dollars for every dollar invested.
- The proposed budget cuts to NOAA would completely eliminate the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant program.
- The Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve is estimated to contribute resources that provide at 5.8% of the total county GDP.
- Funding cuts have implications on our ability to respond to national disasters, which have cost our state \$57 billion since 1980.

The programs that support the work described above include: the EPA Gulf of Mexico Program, the EPA National Estuary Program, the NOAA National Estuarine Research Reserve Program, the NOAA Coastal Zone Management Program, and the NOAA Sea Grant Program. Permitting Gulf restoration and infrastructure projects funded by Deepwater Horizon sources - and avoiding miles of bureaucratic red tape - also means that agency offices involved in permitting should be adequately resourced.

The bottom line is that slashing funding to these programs undercuts Alabama's economic well-being, including jobs in our region. We are deeply concerned about the short and long term impacts of these proposed drastic cuts, and respectfully request that you protect Alabama's needs by advocating for these vital programs.

Thank you for your time and attention to this letter.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the following business and community organizations:

Business and Industrial Organizations

James K. Lyons  
Alabama State Port Authority

Bill Sisson  
Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

Scott Posey  
AM/NS Calvert and ArcelorMittal USA

Ashley Jones Davis  
North Baldwin Chamber of Commerce

David Scheid  
Outokumpu Stainless, USA

Lee Walters  
Goodwyn Mills and Cawood, Inc.

John Baker  
Thompson Engineering

Michael E. Pierce  
MLK Avenue Redevelopment Corp.

Randy Rogers  
Evonik Industries

Liz Freeman  
Long's Human Resource Services

Business and Industrial Organizations Continued

Wayne Keith  
Keith Air Conditioning

Sam St. John  
Logical Computer Solutions, Inc.

Darrellyn Dunmore  
Strategic Wealth Specialists

Curtis Polk  
BLP Mobile Paint Manufacturing

Hayden Olds  
Olds Filtration

Avalisha Fisher  
Driven Engineering

Justin Plant  
U.S. Environmental Services, LLC

Ronald Pierce  
Wesco Gas and Welding Supply, Inc,

Barron Partridge  
Performance Personnel Services, LLC

Robert Beckmann  
World Marine of Alabama, LLC

Jamie Myrick  
Candlewood Suites Downtown-Mobile

H. Donald Pearman  
Communication Technology Services, Inc.

Mike Magnoli  
South Mobile County Community  
Development Corporation

Tara O'Rourke  
LaQuinta Inn and Suites

H. Pete Jones  
GSI Services, LLC

W. Burley Shedd  
WB Shedd & Co.

James Embry  
Elevate Workforce, Inc.

Brandon Hyde  
Capitol Ultrasonics LLC

Shawn Rolin  
Rolin Construction, Inc.

William Akdrige  
Metal Roofing Center & Supply, LLC

Scott Beech  
Block USA Gulf Coast Division

Mary Mullins Redditt  
MPACT

Melissa Griffin  
Apache Industrial Services

Ralph A. Hargrove  
Hargrove Engineers + Contractors

Community Business and Environmental Organizations

Jennifer Denson  
Partners for Environmental Progress

Charlotte Kopf  
Mobile Section  
Associated General Contractors of Alabama

Josh McElhenney  
Mobile County Roadbuilders Association

Jimmy Mitchell  
Baldwin County Roadbuilders Association

Yael Girard  
Weeks Bay Foundation

Mark Berte  
Alabama Coastal Foundation

Walter C. Ernest  
Pelican Coast Conservancy

Hank Caddell  
Alabama Coastal Heritage Trust

Andrew Whitehurst  
Gulf Restoration Network

Suzanne Langley  
Birmingham Audubon Society

Cindy Lowry  
Alabama Rivers Alliance

Tammy Herrington  
Conservation Alabama & Conservation  
Alabama Foundation

Kara Lankford  
Ocean Conservancy

Casi (kc) Callaway  
Mobile Baykeeper