

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

JULY 29, 2010

**CONTACT:**

GOVERNOR'S PRESS OFFICE, (850) 488-5394

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- July 29 Request for \$43 Million

**Governor Crist Announces \$7-Million BP Grant for  
Northwest Florida Tourism Marketing**

*~ Requests \$43 million to complete second round of tourism marketing and advertising campaign ~*

TALLAHASSEE – Governor Charlie Crist today announced BP will provide \$7 million to the Northwest Florida Travel Council for tourism marketing and advertising. Expressing appreciation for the grant, Governor Crist promptly sent a letter to BP's Doug Suttles, requesting another \$43 million from BP to complete a second round of a tourism marketing and advertising campaign. On June 30, 2010, Governor Crist requested \$50 million for this purpose.

“As I hear from business and tourism industry leaders throughout our coastal communities, it is clear we must continue working to convince potential visitors to our state that our beautiful beaches are clean and open,” Governor Crist said. “While we appreciate BP's commitment, we must insist on full support of Florida's \$60-billion-a-year tourism industry.”

The additional \$43 million Governor Crist requested today would be used to promote tourism to coastal areas of the state. Because of the tourism industry's key role in the financial well-being of Florida's economy, Governor Crist emphasized the need to address misperceptions held by potential travelers to the Sunshine State through tourism marketing and advertising.

The Northwest Florida Travel Council is a partnership of local tourist development councils of Escambia, Okaloosa, Walton and Bay counties. They will use the funds to provide real-time information about the status of beaches in their areas and garner positive media coverage, as well as run television, radio, print and Web-based advertising.

On May 12, 2010, Governor Crist first requested \$34.75 million from BP to create an immediate marketing campaign to counter negative, widespread information that potential visitors to Florida are receiving about the oil spill's impact on Florida's beaches and waters. Later that month, Florida received \$25 million from BP for Visit Florida and local tourist development councils to air a tourism marketing campaign with ads reflecting the accurate condition of Florida's beaches.

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**CHARLIE CRIST**  
GOVERNOR

July 29, 2010

Mr. Doug Suttles  
Chief Operating Officer  
Exploration & Production  
BP America Inc.  
501 WestLake Park Boulevard  
Houston, Texas 77079

Dear Mr. Suttles:

In response to your July 28, 2010, letter I thank you for your commitment to support tourism in coastal areas impacted by the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. While we are grateful the well has been capped – and pray that a complete seal of the well is achieved as soon as possible – there still remains a very real and constant threat to Florida's \$60-billion-a-year tourism industry. Unfortunately, images of damage from spill continue to appear in the media, thereby perpetuating the perception that Florida's pristine beaches are contaminated by oil.

For that reason, I must continue to urge BP to recognize that the impact of the oil spill extends far beyond the coastal counties of Northwest Florida. Statewide, we continue to receive reports of a downturn in reservations in coastal resorts and hotels, and therefore, loss of business at nearby restaurants and retailers. While the \$7 million you have committed to the Northwest Florida Travel Council is certainly appreciated, we continue to believe, these funds fall drastically short of the need throughout the Sunshine State.

As you are aware, Florida's economy relies heavily on tourism. The tourism industry is key to the financial well-being of our entire state, as well as local communities. From Pensacola to Key West, tourism industry leaders are reporting cancellations and declining reservations. As Floridians, we are committed to consistently and persistently communicating to all potential visitors accurate information that our beaches are safe and clean. Florida's coastal communities continue to offer tremendous opportunities for business or vacation travel.

Every dollar spent on tourism advertising and marketing allows Florida businesses to stay open, Floridians to keep working, families to worry less about their bills – and fewer claims for economic losses. Business owners and families in our affected coastal counties are in great need. To continue restoring their economic security, we respectfully request an additional \$43 million to complete a second round of tourism advertising and marketing.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charlie Crist".

Charlie Crist