



**CHARLIE CRIST**  
GOVERNOR

May 12, 2010

Mr. Lamar McKay  
President, BP America  
501 West Lake Park Blvd  
Houston, TX 77079

Dear Mr. McKay:

The Sunshine State has long been cherished as a premier travel destination for both business and relaxation. With more than 80 million visitors traveling to Florida in 2009 alone, the tourism industry contributes greatly to our state's economic security. In fact, according to the Florida Department of Revenue, Florida's tourism generated \$65.2 billion in direct economic impact in 2008, comprising 21 percent of Florida's total taxable sales.

At this time, Florida's beaches have not been impacted by this destructive spill. I visited several of our coastal Panhandle communities this weekend, and our sugar sand beaches and crystal clear waters are breathtaking. Unfortunately, because of the constant images of millions of gallons of oil spilling into the Gulf of Mexico, potential visitors are receiving negative and false information. This spill was not of Florida's making, and therefore, we need your urgent assistance to correct the record. This action is critical to our economic survival.

Now, the potential immediate impact of the continuing Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico stands to threaten Florida's tourism industry due to widespread fear and uncertainty. For that reason, I have called on VISIT FLORIDA – Florida's public/private partnership responsible for promoting Florida as the premier travel destination, both domestically and internationally – to prepare a contingency plan to develop an immediate integrated marketing plan. The focus of the marketing campaign will be to counter the impacts of the oil spill and restore the health of the Florida tourism industry.

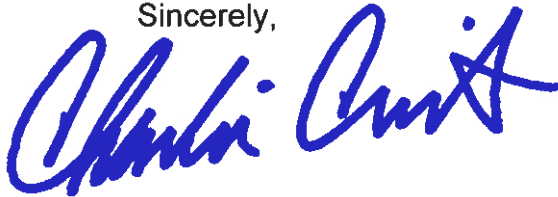
Obviously, we must respond swiftly and effectively to ensure a secure and prosperous summer tourism season. VISIT FLORIDA will include broadcast television and radio, print, online and social marketing, targeting in-state, domestic and international markets. The campaign will also include extensive proactive image generation and distribution of photos and videos of visitors enjoying Florida beaches and attractions to counter the impact of widespread negative imagery generated by the spill. An emergency campaign established immediately and continuing through July will require an estimated \$24.75 million. In addition, marketing support for impacted counties, beginning in May and continuing through September, will require approximately \$10 million. For that reason, I am requesting \$34.75 million to cover the costs of these marketing efforts.

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Additionally, VISIT FLORIDA indicates that the marketing response to mitigate the near and long-term impact of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill will be dependent upon the actual environmental impact to Florida. We will diligently monitor the incident and provide appropriate updates as the situation develops.

Finally, I want to thank you for your continued efforts to address this devastating oil spill. I look forward to working with you during the coming months as we focus on protecting Florida's future economic and environmental future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charlie Crist". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a stylized "Crist" following.

Charlie Crist