

## Northwest Florida Oil Recovery Special Session

### “OTHER ITEMS”

For purposes of this paper, references to “oil impacted Counties,” or other similar phrases, refer to the Florida Counties of Bay, Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton. With the exception of the first item under part 3 below, no new appropriations are solicited for these disaster recovery/economic diversification initiatives.

- (1) Limit restrictions on State Economic Development Incentives to proactively incentivize diversification of the regional economy in oil impacted Counties. More specifically, this includes:
  - Increase the Qualified Target Industry (QTI) tax credit program from \$3,000 per job to \$6,000 per job
  - Waive the average wage requirements, etc. of State incentive programs including QTI, QRT, CITC and HIPI for a period of five years
  - Waive the NAICS (North American Industry Classifications)/SIC requirements for CITC and HIPI incentive programs
  - Waive the local match requirements for the QTI tax credit program and other state incentive programs
  - Provide appropriate, but expedited, access to the Quick Action Closing, and Qualified Targeted Industry, funds.

These waivers would NOT be utilized for “in state” relocations or for projects competing within the State of Florida.

- (2) Provide preferences through other State programs to spur economic activity in oil impacted Counties, to include:
  - The institution of a sales tax holiday on boating, marine equipment, maritime recreational products, etc.
  - Provide tax incentives for development of port infrastructure.
  - Dedicate \$2,000,000 of FSTED (Florida Seaport and Transportation and Economic Development) grant funds per year for five years to ports in oil impacted Counties to assist funding of infrastructure improvements. [Note: this State fund is budgeted at approximately \$13 million annually.]
  - Dedicate workforce training dollars to allow for increased job training to enhance job diversification opportunities, and to allow for the creation of “on site” workforce training centers for target industries.
  - Afford oil impacted Counties a priority and/or preference with respect to various state loan funds (e.g. FDEP wastewater loan fund, FDOT loan fund, etc) and state grant programs (e.g., defense infrastructure grants, etc).
- (3) Create opportunities and resources for sustainable economic development initiatives to aid in the economic diversification of oil impacted Counties, including:
  - Secure sustainable funding (\$2 million per year) for a regional economic development marketing and promotion campaign to promote the “Technology

Council of Northwest Florida” initiative and otherwise to attract new jobs and investment in an effort to diversify the regional economy.

- The program would be administered by Florida’s Great Northwest, a regional economic development organization serving 16 Northwest Florida Counties.
- Funds would be used for the development of a multi-faceted marketing and promotion campaign including web-based marketing; business to business marketing strategies; site selection consultant awareness campaigns; targeted marketing to high-impact clusters (including aviation/aerospace and defense, life sciences, information technology and emerging technologies; etc).
- Enable a local option economic development funding option for oil impacted Counties. This could come in a form similar to the occupational license tax (as used in Orlando, Sarasota, and Miami) or through some other means. Funds could be utilized by County governments to support local economic development initiatives, capital improvements, incentives and other programs that would generate new jobs in Northwest Florida and diversify the regional economy.

(4) Advocacy memorials to the Obama administration, Congress and the Florida Congressional delegation:

- Urging swift passage of the proposed oil recovery “Gulf Opportunity (GO) Zone” legislation introduced in the U.S House by Congressman Jeff Miller (of Florida) and colleagues for other oil impacted states, and a similar bill to be introduced in the Senate and co-sponsored by, among others, both Florida Senators Nelson and Lemieux (or other similar legislations providing tax and financing incentives and other benefits for businesses and residents in the oil impacted areas of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana);
- Urging equitable recognition and participation of Florida oil impacted Counties in the “Gulf Coast Restoration Plan” being developed by Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus on behalf of President Obama; and
- Urging the Obama administration to afford oil impacted areas along the Gulf Coast with a 5 year preference, priority and/or set asides, along with waiver of any matching fund requirements, for awards from existing Federal grant programs (and the like), including, without limitation, remaining grant funds to be awarded under ARRA (the so-called “stimulus” bill) such as TIGER II grant.

(5) Non-financial assistance for local governments, to include:

- Protect local government revenues (we need local governments as healthy as possible/guard against disproportionate, adverse impacts on businesses/job creators)
- Explore a mechanism for the state of Florida to serve as collection agent for local governmental BP claims.
- Tolling of permits: local government permits in oil impacted Counties should be automatically tolled and extended for several months following conclusion of the disaster (this is fairly common following disasters)