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President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

I am writing with concerns over the continued effects the devastating oil spill has had upon Alabama's Gulf Coast economy. According to Alabama's Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau, in a typical year, the Alabama Gulf Coast generates more than \$2.3 billion in tourism and is responsible for creating over 40,000 tourism-related jobs. We have seen a nearly 50 percent drop in tourism-generated dollars and a substantial loss of jobs. Tourism revenues lost to the coastal economies as a direct result of the oil spill are estimated at between \$850 million and \$1 billion, a figure that does not include the additional losses to the fishing industry and shipyard repair and maintenance operations. Many locally owned businesses are desperately struggling and are on the brink of shutting their doors permanently.

I respectfully request that you encourage federal agencies to host their conferences and meetings along the Alabama Gulf Coast, which has been severely economically impacted by the devastating oil spill. The Alabama Gulf Coast is uniquely affected because the economy is significantly reliant on tourism and there are no military installations or large federal facilities to sustain the smaller cities.

After having endured the past several years of the economic downturn that has affected the entire nation, as well as rebuilding the economy after the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, Alabama's Gulf Coast must now deal with the adverse effects of the oil spill on its core economic sectors—tourism and the fishing industry. Mobile and Baldwin Counties offer world class convention facilities that can meet the needs of any conference or meeting. Federal agencies spend millions of dollars every year attending meetings, conventions, and conferences around the United States. Increasing the presence of federal agencies through these meetings will benefit the region by boosting the economy while also reiterating to the rest of the country that Alabama's Gulf Coast is open for business.

I hope that you will support this idea. The people of Alabama's Gulf Coast and I appreciate your consideration in promoting our State and its superb facilities. I am confident that visitors will not only find a productive and professional meeting environment, but also what so many others find when visiting the area -- it is a place they would like to return to.

Sincerely,



Richard Shelby