

Michael C. Voisin

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee December 7, 2011

Chairman Mica, Ranking Member Rahall and Members of the Committee, my name is Mike Voisin. I am pleased to have this opportunity to testify before you today on several factors impacting seafood production and jobs in my home state of Louisiana. In order to give you the most accurate perspective on this issue, I will be wearing my business hat. Since 1971, I have owned and operated Motivait Seafoods in Houma, Louisiana. My business is oyster farming, seafood harvesting, processing and distribution, but my forty year career in Louisiana's fisheries goes well beyond that. My family came to Louisiana in 1770 and I am a 7th generation oyster harvester, with the 8th generation poised to take over.

Since 1982 I have served as a Trustee for the Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, the Southern Fisheries Association and the National Fisheries Institute, among others. The Gulf of Mexico and the State waters associated with it produce one third of all of the domestically caught fisheries production in the United States. In my associations with each of these organizations, I have advocated for developing a strong and sustainable commercial fishing industry. That is why I am here today in support of the RESTORE Act, H.R. 3096.

The Louisiana seafood community has faced its share of environmental and economic challenges in recent years, most notably with the horrific hurricane season of 2005, the Deepwater Horizon spill in 2010, and this past summer's severe Mississippi River floods. Fishing is a livelihood that has been under attack from global competition, environmental regulation, natural disasters, and resource depletion. In the absence of concerted action, this oil spill could be the final blow for these fishermen.

Despite these ongoing difficulties, Louisiana's fishermen have always risen to the occasion, often with strong support from the Federal Government. We need that continued support, and the RESTORE Act is our answer so we can continue to provide consumers with the safe, wholesome Gulf seafood products they love.

There are many ways Congress and this Committee can support the Gulf Coast economy as we work to recover after the Deepwater Horizon spill. In the last year, the Gulf Coast seafood community has worked diligently to identify and address several outstanding challenges, and I would like to take this opportunity to bring a few to your attention.

First, it is imperative to recognize the natural resources our culture and heritage has relied on to feed families for many generations is not something you can put a simple dollar value on. It is a tradition that has been threatened. It has forced U.S. fishery production into a downward spiral. In my written testimony, I have included two charts provided by the National Marine Fisheries Service that outline employment in both recreational and commercial fisheries across the Gulf of Mexico from 2006 – 2009¹ (*see attachment*).

¹ National Marine Fisheries Service. (2009). Fisheries Economics of the U.S.
http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st5/publication/fisheries_economics_2009.html

These charts illustrate the dramatic decline in fisheries employment that has occurred in the Gulf seafood industry and that should give us all cause for concern. Nearly one in seventy jobs in Louisiana² is seafood-related, and the industry has a total economic impact of \$2.4 billion annually³. Many of these jobs are in family-owned and operated companies that have been in business for generations, like mine. Continued employment decline in our industry will radiate outward, affecting communities across the Gulf and increasing the region's economic strains.

Secondly, Louisiana's economy is highly dependent on a strong seafood supply chain and, under current law, the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) process can take anywhere from 10 – 20 years before efforts can begin addressing recovery needs for our natural (fisheries) resources. This is time, we in the seafood community, simply do not have.

Al Sunseri, owner of P&J Oysters, is my competitor. I welcome the competition to keep our industry healthy and compete in the global marketplace. But he is struggling. He can't supply all of his wholesale customers because production is down by an estimated 50%. Next year, projections point to an oyster harvest equivalent to 35% of what we have been producing. His workforce will likely absorb the impact of the decline in sales.

Our future is uncertain. We do know that environmental disasters at sea can have serious consequences for the seafood industry. For instance, three years after the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska, the herring fishery there collapsed. It has not recovered to this day. It is no overstatement to predict that without significant help, the same future awaits the Gulf oyster industry. In 2009, Louisiana produced \$50.4 million⁴ in oysters. Last year, production amounted to \$24.7⁵ million. These numbers do not lie.

The only way to move forward is to calm the waters of fear in the fishing community, first and foremost by passing the RESTORE Act.

On November 15, 2011 Governor Bobby Jindal signed a Resolution urging mediation for our commercial fishermen because of the high number of claims that are being lost or delayed. Every day that goes by, we lose another fisherman because he can't afford to make his boat payment, his house payment or feed his family.

The Gulf Coast Claims Facility is the first step, but it is plainly not enough to help ensure our industry's survival over the medium and long term. But **the RESTORE Act** will provide funds more quickly to respond to rebuilding those areas that our resources need to be able to thrive once again. At a time when Congress is justifiably looking high and low for measures to assist in job creation and generate real economic recovery, the RESTORE Act is a concrete, immediate step that could be taken to do just that. I urge you to act quickly in the passage and implementation of H.R. 3096.

² National Marine Fisheries Service. (2008).

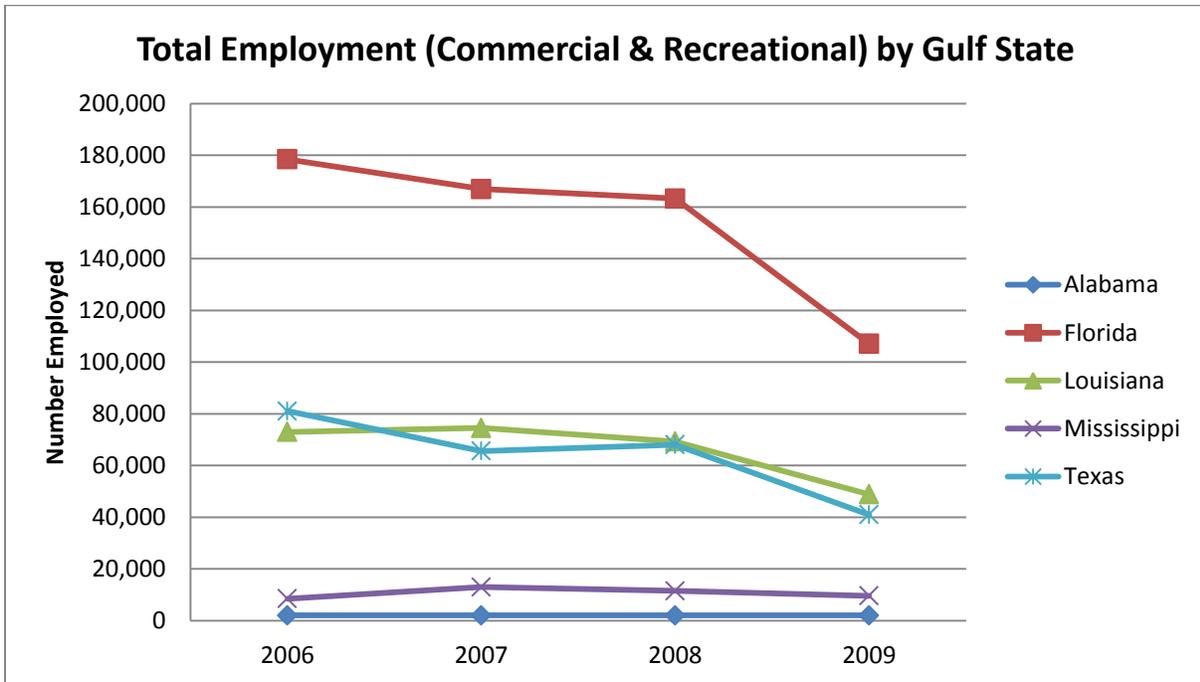
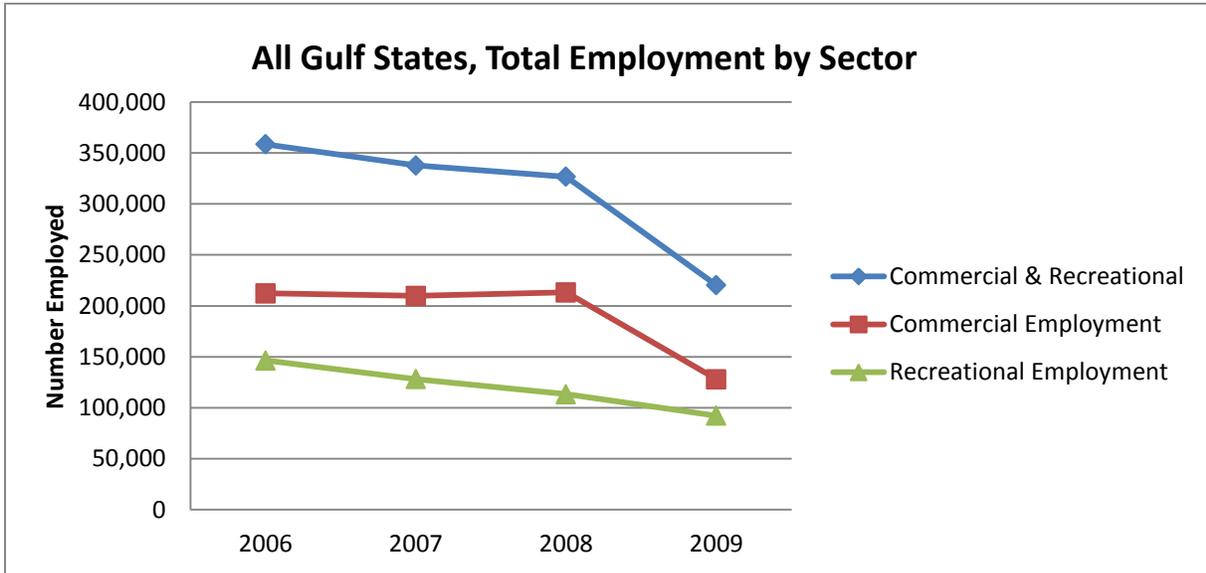
³ Southwick Associates. (2006). The Economic Benefits of Fisheries, Wildlife and Boating Resources in the State of Louisiana. http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/publication/32728-economic-benefits-fisheries-wildlife-and-boating-resources-state-louisiana-2006/southwick_2006_final_final_report_5-27-08_0.pdf

⁴ National Marine Fisheries Service. (2009). Landings Query Results. http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/pls/webpls/MF_ANNUAL_LANDINGS.RESULTS

⁵ National Marine Fisheries Service. (2010). Landings Query Results. http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/pls/webpls/MF_ANNUAL_LANDINGS.RESULTS

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to present these issues to the Committee for consideration. I look forward to your questions.

Attachment 1
 Mike Voisin
 December 7, 2011
 House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee



Source: Fisheries Economics of the U.S. (by year)
http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st5/publication/fisheries_economics_2009.html

Michael C. Voisin

HOME ADDRESS

BUSINESS ADDRESS

BUSINESS TELEPHONE

EDUCATION

Bishop Montgomery High School
Torrance, California
Graduated – 1971

Nicholls State University
Thibodaux, Louisiana
Attended in 1973, 1974, 1976

EMPLOYMENT

Motivatit Seafoods, LLC
Houma, Louisiana
Motivatit Seafoods, LLC is an oyster farming, seafood, harvesting, processing, and distribution company.
Owner and CEO
August 1971 to Present

Wine Island, LLC
Houma, Louisiana
Wine Island, LLC is a wholly owned subsidiary Corp. of Motivatit Seafoods, LLC, involved in Oyster harvesting and a fabrication yard.
Owner and General Manager
April 1991 to Present

Captain Salty's Seafood, Inc.
Vernon, California
Captain Salty's Seafood, Inc. was a Seafood Distribution Company.
Owner and General Manager
March 1990 to September 2003

Innovatit Seafood Systems, LLC
Seafood technology licensing company.
Owner and Co-Manager
August, 2001 to present

Responsible for all facets of business development
from a management position on all the above
Companies.

ORGANIZATIONS

**Louisiana Oyster Dealers & Growers
Association**

1971 to present
President 1981-1983
President 1993-1995
Chairman of the Board 1984-1986 and 1996-1997
Board Member 1981 to present

Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation

1982 to present
Board of Trustee Member 1983-1990
1996 to present
President 1985-1986
Vice President 2008 to present

Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference

1982 to present
Board of Directors 1982-1985, 1996 to 2005
Irradiation Committee Chairman 1993 to 2001
Executive Committee Member 2002 to 2003

**Terrebonne Parish Economic Development
Consortium**

Executive Committee 1985-1989

Louisiana Restaurant Association

Member 1981 to present
Bayou Chapter President 1984, 1985, 1991

Southeastern Fisheries Association

1983 to present
Director 1984 -1996

Michael C. Voisin

Louisiana Travel Promotion Association
Board Member 1981

National Federation of Independent Business
1978 to present

Houma – Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce
1976 to present
Board Member 1985 – 1997- 2003
Chairman of Seafood Committee 1985-1993
Executive Committee 1987-1993
President 1992

South Louisiana Economic Council
Board Member 1984-1992
Executive Committee Member 1985-1989

Louisiana Association of Business and Industry
1987 to present
Board of Directors Member 1992-1995

Louisiana Seafood Processors Council
Board Member 1989 to present
President 1989 to present

Gulf Oyster Industry Council
Board Member 1995 to present
Chairman 1996-1998

National Fisheries Institute
1994 to present
Board Member 1998 to 2010
Regional Vice President 2002 to 2004
Executive Committee Member 2002 to 2010
Vice Chairman of the Board 2008
Chairman of the Board 2009

Molluscan Shellfish Institute of North America
1994 to present
Chairman 1998 to present

Friends Of The Fisherman
Chairman, Board Member 2010 to present

GOVERNMENT SERVICE
APPOINTMENTS

**Louisiana Seafood Marketing and Promotion
Board**

1983-1996
Chairman 1983, 1984, 1986, 1987

National Fish and Seafood Promotion Council
U.S. Dept. of Commerce Member 1987-1992

National Shellfish Pollution Indicator Program
Advisory Committee Member 1988-1995

**Terrebonne Parish Overall Economic
Development Committee**
1988-1991

**Terrebonne Economic Development District
Commission**
1989-1991
Vice Chairman 1989-1991

**Louisiana Department of Agriculture and
Forestry Logo Advisory Committee Member**
1989-1991

Louisiana Oyster Task Force
Task Force Member 1997 to present
Chairman 2000 to 2008

**Louisiana Oyster Lease Damage Evaluation
Board**
1997 to present

**Terrebonne General Medical Center Board
Of Commissioners**
Houma, Louisiana
1997 to present
Vice Chairman 1998 to 2002, 2008
Chairman 2002 to 2004, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011

**Terrebonne Parish Economic Development
Strategic Planning Advisory Board**
2002 to 2004

Terrebonne Economic Development Authority
2008 to Present
Chairman 2008 to 2009

**Governor's Advisory Commission on Coastal
Protection, Restoration and Conservation**
2008 to 2010

Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission
Member, 2010 to present

UNIVERSITY
APPOINTMENTS

**Louisiana University Marine Consortium
Foundation**
Board of Trustee Member 1982 to present

**Louisiana State University Marine and Coastal
Fisheries Advisory Board**
Member 1985 to present

Nicholls State University
Thibodaux, Louisiana
College of Business
Advisory Board Member 1993 to 2005

Chef John Folsé Culinary School
Nicholls State University
Advisory Board Member 1995 to 2005

Institute for Seafood Studies
Nicholls State University
Advisory Board Member, Chairman
2010 to present

AWARDS

Outstanding Young Man of America
1982

**Lantern Award, Louisiana Department of
Economic Development**
1988

U.S. Senate Productivity Award Finalist
1989

Small Businessman of the Year
Louisiana Department of Economic Development
1991

Trustee Of The year
Modern Health Care Magazine 2011

CHURCH SERVICE
(Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter Day Saints)
Member 1987 to present

Boy Scout Committee
Chairman 1986-1987

Elders Quorum Counselor (Men's Group)
1987-1988

Bishops Counselor
1988-1994
1995-1996

Baton Rouge Stake High Councilor
1994-1995

Stake Young Men's Presidency Counselor
1994-1995 & 2006 - 2007

Bishop
1996-2001

Stake Mission Presidency
2001-2002

Ward Mission Leader
2002 to 2005

Branch President, Larose Branch

2005 to 2006

New Orleans Stake High Councilor
2006 to 2007, 2010 to present

High Priest Group Leader
2007 to 2011

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
Truth in Testimony Disclosure

Pursuant to clause 2(g)(5) of House Rule XI, in the case of a witness appearing in a nongovernmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include: (1) a curriculum vitae; and (2) a disclosure of the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. Such statements, with appropriate redaction to protect the privacy of the witness, shall be made publicly available in electronic form not later than one day after the witness appears.

(1) Name:

Mike Voisin

(2) Other than yourself, name of entity you are representing:

(3) Are you testifying on behalf of an entity other than a Government (federal, state, local) entity?

YES

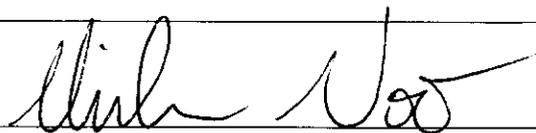
If yes, please provide the information requested below and attach your curriculum vitae.

NO

(4) Please list the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by you or by the entity you are representing:

None

Signature



Date

12/6/11