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CONTACT: Jim Philipps
202-942-4220, jphilipps@naco.org

Obama administration appoints counties and parishes to gulf restoration workgroup

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Counties (NACo) today applauded the Obama Administration for appointing eight county and parish officials to a gulf coast restoration workgroup.

The Local Government Advisory Committee Gulf Coast Restoration Workgroup will provide an important voice for local officials and their communities as a task force of federal and state agencies, led by U.S. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, moves ahead with gulf coast restoration plans following the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Gulf coast county and parish officials remain concerned about the long road ahead to economic and environmental recovery, in particular about gaining full reimbursement from BP for local tax revenue losses associated with the spill.

The federal Oil Pollution Act requires BP to pay for such losses. The NACo Gulf Counties and Parishes Oil Spill Task Force – created by NACo President Glen Whitley last year – asked the Administration in July 2010 to name a federal advocate for local government claims against BP. Based on a Jan. 12 meeting with Jackson, NACo is hopeful that such an advocate will be named soon.

The Administration appointed the following officials to the workgroup:

- Grover Robinson, Commissioner, Chair, Escambia County, Fla.;
- Charles Gruber, Commissioner, Baldwin County, Ala.;
- Merceria Ludgood, President, Mobile County, Ala.;
- Connie Rockco, Supervisor, President, Harrison County, Miss.;
- Charlotte Randolph, Parish President, Lafourche Parish, La.
- Arlanda Williams, Council Chair, Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government, La;
- Craig Taffaro, Parish President, St. Bernard Parish, La.;
- Ed Emmett, County Judge, Harris County, Texas.

The workgroup will meet on Thursday, Feb. 17 in New Orleans. For more information contact Stephanie Osborn at 202.942.4235.

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The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation’s 3,068 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public’s understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research, and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. For more information about NACo, visit www.naco.org.