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## **WOMEN LEGISLATORS SEEK COOPERATION IN THE GULF; COALITION TO MEET WITH STATE OFFICIALS & INDUSTRY LEADERS**

**(WASHINGTON, DC)** – Elected women from across the nation are gathering in Louisiana on Friday and Saturday for meetings with government officials and industry leaders to support a multi-pronged approach to tackle the Deepwater Horizon Spill. Meetings have been prompted by the National Foundation for Women Legislators' Deepwater Horizon Spill Coalition.

The National Foundation for Women Legislators (NFWL) has formed a Coalition of industry experts, agency officials and a select group of elected women leaders from across the country to address the Deepwater Horizon Spill.

Coalition members, hosted by Louisiana State Representative Simone Champagne (D-Jeanerette), traveling to the Gulf include:

- Representative Bette Grande (R-ND)
- Representative Patricia Hurley (R-NC)
- Representative Marsha Looper (R-CO)
- Representative Kesha Ram (D-VT)
- Representative Debbie Riddle (R-TX)
- Representative Ann Rydalch (R-ID)
- Representative Franke Wilmer (D-MT)

The Delegation's visit will include a helicopter tour of the effected areas in addition to meetings with local, state, federal, and industry officials. The legislators believe that a visit to the region will allow them to understand first-hand what is needed and wanted both by local residents and officials and industry leaders a like, recognizing that what happens next will effect the entire country. The visit will also help them determine how their states can play a role in relief efforts.

Some of the Delegation members will travel to Washington, DC prior to the Gulf trip to meet with key Administration officials and industry experts as they testify in Congress on Thursday.

“This Delegation is working with a network of elected women leaders from across the country who believe that now is not the time to point fingers, but instead work together as a nation to identify and implement solutions to the most pressing concerns currently confronting the Gulf states as well as the impending challenges that are likely to rise in the coming months,” stated Robin Read, NFWL’s President & CEO.

In response to the recent oil leak in the Gulf, NFWL’s Energy, Natural Resources & Agriculture Policy Committee has jumped into action to emphasize the importance of bringing the nation together to find solutions. Serving as Team Leaders for this NFWL Committee in their states, these women legislators are working to implement an organized strategy utilizing state leaders to help mitigate the economic impact.

“Despite being in the middle of a recession, it is important for the Administration, federal labs, universities, high-tech industries and the oil and gas industries to work together in facing this challenge,” Read continued. “This Coalition is committed to facilitating this communication, cutting through the red-tape and bringing real solutions and collaborations to the table.”

Through critical public-private partnerships, the Coalition is able to determine the best technologies and methods to assist with clean-up efforts – efforts that will have an impact on the Gulf Coast’s wildlife, land, and economic viability.

NFWL has a history of moving into action quickly with its Disaster Relief Task Force initiative, connecting elected women at all levels of government with relevant officials, issue experts, and industry leaders to create timely delivery mechanisms, streamline communications, and meet the needs of those most affected by disasters such as hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes.

**About the National Foundation for Women Legislators, Inc. (NFWL)**

Through annual educational and networking events, the National Foundation for Women Legislators supports elected women from all levels of governance. As a non-profit, non-partisan organization, NFWL does not take ideological positions on public policy issues, but rather serves as a forum for women legislators to be empowered through information and experience. [www.womenlegislators.org](http://www.womenlegislators.org)

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