

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** September 14, 2011

**CONTACT:**

Betsie Gambel  
Gambel Communications  
504.319.3442  
HYPERLINK "mailto:Betsie@gambelcommuniactions.com"  
[Betsie@gambelcommuniactions.com](mailto:Betsie@gambelcommuniactions.com)

**New Orleans business community responds to BOEMRE**

*Gulf activity remains dramatically depressed due to slow permitting*

**NEW ORLEANS** – Today, the Business Council of Greater New Orleans and the River Region and Greater New Orleans, Inc. released a statement in response to recent comments made by Michael Bromwich, Director of the Department of Interior’s Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation, and Enforcement (BOEMRE).

On Tuesday, September, 13, 2011, Bromwich made the following remarks during a speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies:

“I continue to be disappointed to see politically motivated, erroneous reports and commentaries, sponsored by various industry associations and groups, criticizing the [government] for allegedly ‘slow-walking’ permits and plans. That is a phrase we see repeated over and over again, and it is simply not true.”

Bromwich’s comments come at a time when permit approval levels are significantly lagging historical averages. Compared to the monthly averages observed over the past three years, new deep water permit issuance is currently 39% below the norm; meanwhile, new shallow water permit issuance is 80% lower than the historical average.

“Our business community does not need to be lectured by Mr. Bromwich,” said Gregory Rusovich, Chairman of the Business Council of Greater New Orleans and the River Region. “We do not need more regulations and bureaucrats strangling our energy sector. We need honest, appropriate oversight which is guided by clear and understandable rules to ensure safe energy production. We need jobs, not bureaucratic lectures.”

“We are an innocent victim of our own government,” said Leslie Bertucci, owner of R&D Enterprises. “Our revenue has been reduced by up to 85% over the last 15 months for no reason other than our administration's decision to shut down our entire industry. While we are grateful to finally be going back to work after almost a year and a half, we don't expect to be back to our pre-moratorium volume until April 2012 due to the excruciatingly slow process of permits being issued.”

In collaboration with the Business Council of Greater New Orleans and the River Region; Jefferson Business Council; and Northshore Business Council, GNO, Inc. has maintained the Gulf Permit Index (GPI) since October 2010 to track the number of deep and shallow water permits approved by BOEMRE.

“It is difficult to understand how our reports are 'politically motivated' and 'erroneous' when they are based on the government’s own data,” said Michael Hecht, President and CEO of GNO, Inc. “Rather, the reports are about jobs and the economy: the tens of thousands of jobs at risk and an economy on the brink of a double-dip recession. Bringing back safe exploration to the Gulf will quickly and substantively address both of these issues.”

The next update to the GPI will be released next week.

###

*Founded in 1985, the **Business Council of New Orleans & the River Region** is a collaborative effort of engaged business leaders who believe New Orleans is a rewarding place in which to live and work. The Business Council focuses on public policy issues that affect New Orleans’ quality of life and prospects for the future.*