

# Texas first state in the nation to receive funding from RESTORE Trust Fund for Centers of Excellence

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, June 30, 2015 - Research centers part of RESTORE Act implementation related to 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill

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TCEQ Commissioner Toby Baker today announced that Texas is the first state in the nation to receive money from the RESTORE Trust Fund through a federal award to fund two Centers of Excellence. The two centers, Texas OneGulf at Texas A&M Corpus Christi and the Subsea Systems Institute at the University of Houston, will split an initial \$4.036 million.

The federal RESTORE Act requires the five Gulf states affected by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill to establish centers to conduct research on the Gulf Coast region. Commissioner Baker, Texas' representative on the RESTORE Council, manages the implementation of the RESTORE Act in Texas.

"We are pleased that Texas is the first state to be awarded these funds," says Commissioner Baker. "Through these dedicated financial resources we can now get to work and focus on the research and development needed to protect and revitalize our Gulf Coast and enrich our state's economy impacted by this disaster."

The Texas OneGulf Center of Excellence is being led by the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies at Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi and includes the Center for Translational Environmental Health Research, Texas A&M University–College Station; Texas A&M University–Galveston; , the University of Texas at Brownsville; Texas State University; the University of Houston Law Center; the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System Regional Association; and the

University of Texas Medical Branch–Galveston.

OneGulf will assemble a consortium of Texas institutions focused on marine science and human health to promote collaborative, multi-disciplinary research, synthesis, and problemsolving concentrating on the Gulf of Mexico. Their research will foster sustainable and resilient growth, as well as economic and commercial development in the coastal region.

"Texas OneGulf joins together with these state institutions to focus on the Gulf of Mexico," says Dr. Larry McKinney, Executive Director of the Harte Research Institute. "This collaboration will ensure that our political leadership, resource managers, business and industry, and our citizens have the best available science to address issues affecting the environmental and economic health of our state."

"The Texas OneGulf initiative provides an important opportunity to improve not only the health of the Gulf of Mexico, but the citizens of Texas that depend on the Gulf for their livelihood, and are impacted by Gulf-related emergencies," says Dr. Cheryl Walker, director, Center for Translational Environmental Health Research, Texas A&M Health Science Center.

The Subsea Systems Institute Center of Excellence is being led by the University of Houston and includes Rice University, the NASA Johnson Space Center, Texas Southern University, Houston Community College, and Lone Star Community College. Subsea Systems Institute will study offshore energy development with a focus on science and technology to establish policy and best practices for safe and responsible energy development in the Gulf.

"Our vision is to create an institute that is recognized around the world as the undisputed leader in transformative deepwater technology," said Ramanan Krishnamoorti, chief energy officer and interim vice president for research and technology transfer at the University of Houston. "We will create, test, and provide the technologies that industry will need in the next five to 10 years."

"Technology can only transform if it is deployed by industry," said Chuck McConnell, executive director

of Rice University's Energy and Environment Initiative. "It is of paramount importance that the Subsea System Institute's efforts be driven by the marketplace. Our focus and strategic direction will be set by our industry partners via the industry advisory board and communicated and integrated with the state of Texas through the TCEQ."

The funds supporting the Centers of Excellence amount to 2.5 percent of the RESTORE Trust Fund, derived from administrative and civil penalties paid by those responsible for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The role of these centers could expand as more money is devoted to the fund.

As required by the U.S. Treasury Department, the federal agency overseeing the centers, the Subsea Systems Institute and OneGulf were selected competitively, in accord with state statute and regulations used by the TCEQ when awarding grants.

For more information, visit [RestoreTheTexasCoast.org](http://RestoreTheTexasCoast.org).