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There must be room for common ground

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The sights of BP's 2010 catastrophic oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico reminded people around the globe of the



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environmental dangers of drilling in the ocean.

During the spill, the cost in human lives, wildlife and natural resources was made tragically clear.

And for years since the spill, the lingering economic fallout has continued to affect local fishermen even as the experts continue to monitor for effects that might not yet be known.

This much is clear: The people and businesses of the Gulf Coast cannot afford another oil spill of the magnitude we saw in 2010.

In response to the spill and various studies of federal oversight of the oil industry that were conducted after the spill, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement has proposed the so-called well control rule aimed at preventing a similar spill in the future.

Predictably, the rule has drawn outrage from the oil industry. Some of that outraged is backed up by a study that says the regulations could cost 190,000 jobs and \$70 billion in tax revenue.

Those are some of the figures contained in a study by Wood Mackenzie, a research and consultancy group for the energy industry, among others.

Meanwhile, environmental groups are cheering the rule.

"The bottom line is that we need to make sure we don't see another disaster like the BP disaster, which caused billions of (dollars in) damage to the Gulf economy," said Raleigh Hoke with the Gulf Coast Restoration Network. "We need safety measures in place to prevent disasters like that and smaller spills as well."



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[HoumaToday.com](#) February 2, 2016 12:08 PM

The sights of BP's 2010 catastrophic oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico reminded people around the globe of the environmental dangers of drilling in the ocean. During the spill, the cost in human lives, wildlife and natural resources was made tragically clear. And for years since the spill, the lingering economic fallout has continued to affect local fishermen even as the experts continue to monitor for effects that might not yet be known. This much is clear: The people and businesses of the Gulf Coast cannot afford another oil spill of the magnitude we saw in 2010. In response to the spill and various studies of federal oversight of the oil industry that were conducted after the spill, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement has proposed the so-called well control rule aimed at preventing a similar spill in the future. Predictably, the rule has drawn outrage from the oil industry. Some of that outraged is backed up by a study that says the regulations could cost 190,000 jobs and \$70 billion in tax revenue. Those are some of the figures contained in a study by Wood Mackenzie, a research and consultancy group for the energy industry, among others. Meanwhile, environmental groups are cheering the rule. "The bottom line is that we need to make sure we don't see another disaster like the BP disaster, which caused billions of (dollars in) damage to the Gulf economy," said Raleigh Hoke with the Gulf Coast Restoration Network. "We need safety measures in place to prevent disasters like that and smaller spills as well." With the oil industry already facing massive difficulties caused by low prices for oil on the global market, no bad news is welcome. That industry is what fuels south Louisiana's economy and what helps keep the lights on and the engines running across our nation. But sensible and effective regulation of the industry is needed. The challenge is to implement improvements to regulation — changes that make us and the many workers in the oilfield safer — without paralyzing an industry that plays such a crucial role in the economic health of our entire region. The interests of the industry must be balanced against the interests of the public and of the environment. All of the parts depend on one another for a healthy and safe future. The industry cannot exist in a vacuum. It must look out for the interests of the coast and the people and businesses that live, work and thrive because of it. The people here — many thousands of them, anyway — cannot work and earn their livelihoods without a healthy industry. The industry must be able to absorb the costs of improved regulation without casting so many out of work. And the prospect of coastal restoration and improved flood protection depend in large measure on the tax revenue generated by a healthy oil industry. Finally, proper oversight based on current rules or new rules must be implemented by the federal regulators charged with making sure the rules are followed. The rules we already have, if they are properly enforced, might be adequate without significant changes if regulators do their jobs. In any event, there must be room in any new rules for common ground, an approach that will protect each without destroying any. Editorials represent the opinion of the newspaper, not of any individual.

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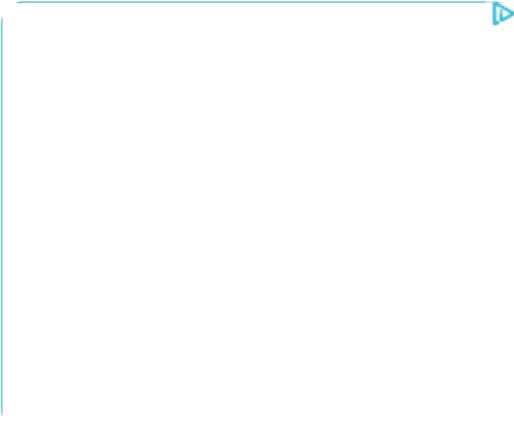
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