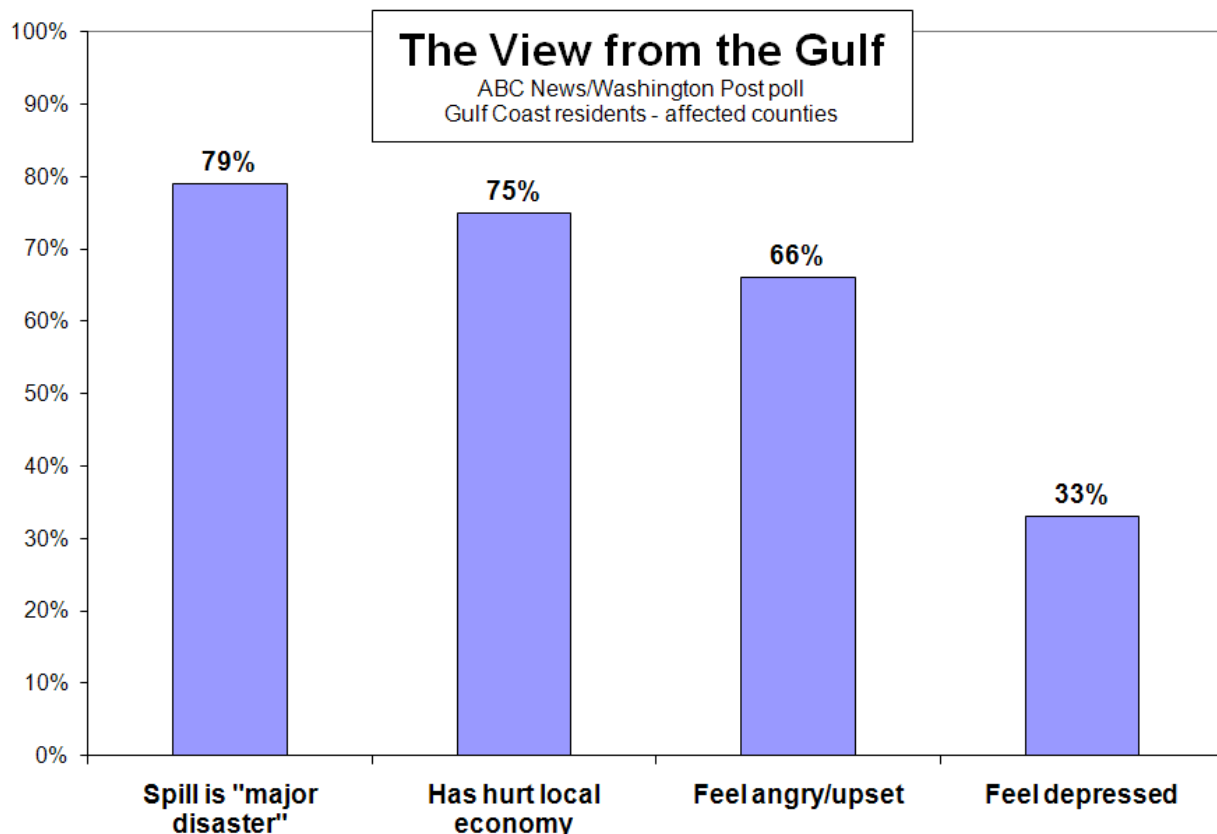


## **The Damage for Gulf Coast Residents: Economic, Environmental, Emotional**

Gulf Coast residents report serious economic, environmental and emotional impacts of the BP oil spill, with vast majorities concerned about long-term negative effects on the area's economy, tourism, seafood safety and more.

This ABC News/Washington Post poll finds that three-quarters of residents in the most affected counties along the Gulf say the spill has hurt their area's economy, including 55 percent who say it's had a strongly negative impact. One in four reports personal financial damage.

And there are other tolls: One in three personally has felt depressed in the past few days because of the spill. Forty percent are angry about it; many others, upset if not angry.

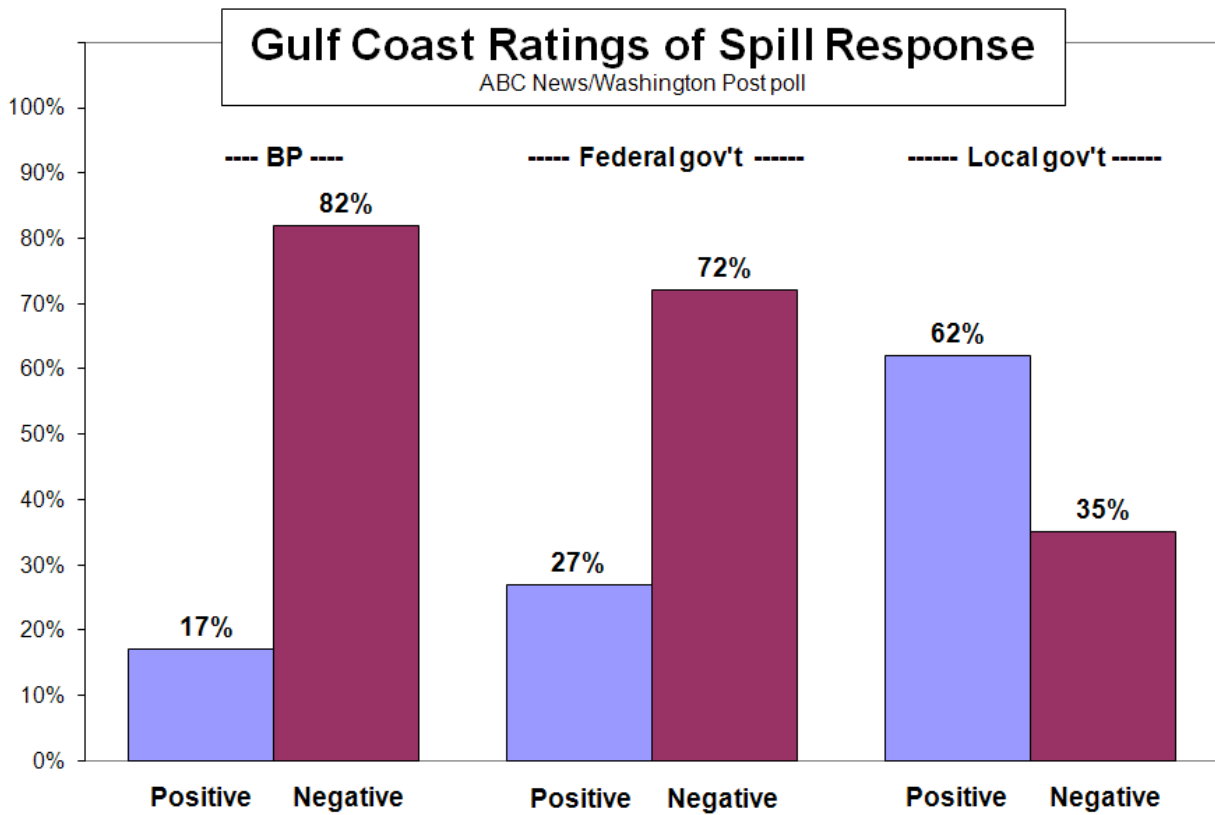


Nonetheless, given their region's reliance on the oil industry, most residents of the affected counties aren't turning their back on offshore drilling. By 60-38 percent they oppose the Obama

administration's six-month moratorium on drilling (it gets far more support nationally); and more, three-quarters, say drilling should resume at its current level, or be expanded, in the future.

This poll is based on results both among respondents nationally and from an extra sample of randomly selected residents of the 22 most affected counties along the Gulf, in an arc from Cameron Parish, La., east to Gulf County, Fla.

**BACKLASH** – There is broad criticism of the federal government's spill response in the affected counties (72 percent rate it negatively), and even steeper criticism of BP (82 percent say it's done a bad job; this poll was completed before the new cap was in place). In sharp contrast, more than six in 10 residents rate their local and state governments' responses positively.



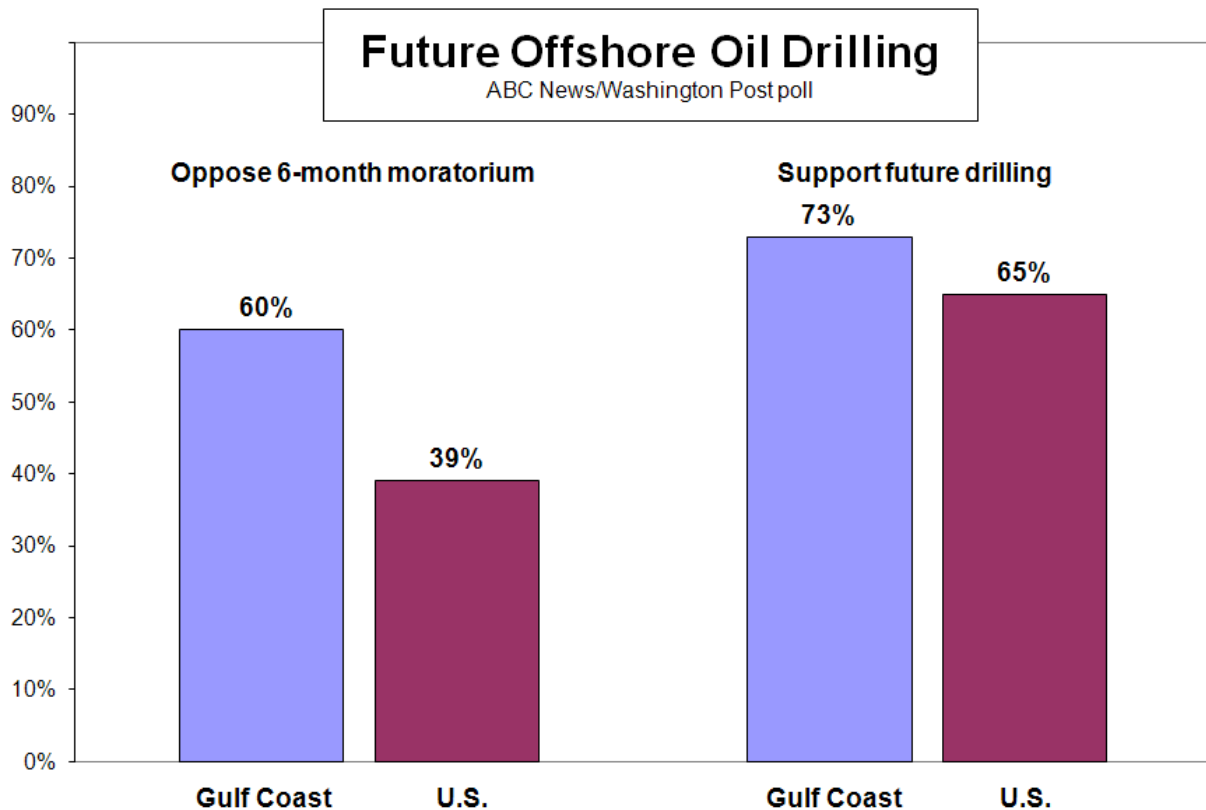
Obama himself is unpopular in the area; just 24 percent approve of his response to the spill (vs. 41 percent nationally) and just 35 percent approve of his job performance overall, vs. 50 percent of all Americans. Some of that relates to basic partisanship; residents in the affected counties lean more toward the Republican Party than do all Americans. But even among those who lean toward the Democratic Party, Obama's spill response is seen more negatively in the affected counties than in the rest of the country overall.

Seventy-nine percent in the Gulf counties call the spill a “major disaster,” 11 points more than do so nationally. And 61 percent favor criminal charges against BP and other companies involved (about as many as say so nationally, 56 percent).

Anger isn’t limited to the affected counties; the number of Americans nationally who say they’re angry or upset about the spill (35 and 29 percent, respectively) is much like the number who say so in the affected counties (40 percent and 27 percent).

That’s even though locals are so much closer to it: Thirty percent say a “great deal” of oil has washed ashore in their own county or parish; an additional 25 percent say “a good amount” of oil has fouled their beaches or marshlands. Just 16 percent report little or no oil ashore.

**DRILLING** – Still, as noted, however much oil has sullied the Gulf and its beaches, most residents continue to support offshore drilling. The six-month moratorium is particularly unpopular in Louisiana, where 72 percent oppose it; this declines to 51 percent in the rest of the affected counties and 39 percent in the country overall.



Whatever happens with the moratorium (revised by the administration this week, and still the focus of a court battle), residents in these Gulf counties are at least as likely as Americans overall to say the offshore drilling in U.S. coastal waters should be increased (23 percent Gulf Coast, 21 percent nationally) or kept the same (50 percent Gulf Coast, 44 percent nationally).

MORE – Among other findings, while 70 percent of Gulf Coast residents say the spill has had no effect on their personal financial situation, 27 percent say it has hurt their own finances, including 14 percent who say it's hurt severely. Three percent say it's helped.

There's near unanimity in concern about long-term negative local impacts on the economy (96 percent concerned), the environment (94 percent), seafood safety (91 percent) and tourism (88 percent). These include anywhere from 70 to 86 percent who are "very" concerned about these impacts.

Economic concern shows up in another measure: Nationally, 32 percent of Americans say the economy, bad as it is, still is getting worse. In the oil spill counties, that spikes to 45 percent.

OBAMA and POLITICS – As noted, Obama, for his part, gets just 24 percent approval among residents of the affected counties for his own handling of the spill, well under his (still weak) 41 percent approval on handling it nationally. Seventy-three percent in the Gulf disapprove, 59 percent "strongly," exceeding strong disapproval nationally by 19 points.

This is not limited to the spill itself; residents of these Gulf counties also are 8 to 16 points less apt to approve of Obama's performance across a range of other issues. Republican House candidates lead Democrats by a 21-point margin in these counties (it's a dead heat nationally). And residents of the affected counties are 16 points more apt than all Americans to say they'd like to see the Republican Party take control of Congress.

Some of this is purely partisan: Fifty-five percent of residents in the affected Gulf Coast counties are either Republicans or independents who lean toward the Republican Party, 14 points more than the share of leaned Republicans nationally. And self-identified Republicans in these counties are 16 points more apt than Republicans nationally to call themselves "strong" supporters of the party.

All the same, just among Democrats and those who lean toward the Democratic Party, Obama's approval for handling the spill is substantially lower in the affected counties, 43 percent, than it is among leaned Democrats nationally, 60 percent.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone July 7-11, 2010, among a random national sample of 1,288 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents, and an oversample of residents in the Gulf Coast counties most affected by the oil spill for a total of 301 Gulf Coast county residents. The oversample was conducted in Cameron, Vermilion, Iberia, St. Mary, Terrebonne, Lafourche, Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Orleans and St. Tammany parishes in Louisiana; Hancock, Harrison and Jackson counties in Mississippi; Mobile and Baldwin counties in Alabama; and Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay and Gulf counties in Florida. Results have a 3.5-point error margin for the full sample, 6.5 points for the Gulf Coast sample. Click [here](#) for a detailed description of sampling error. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, PA.

Analysis by Gary Langer and Mike Mokrzycki.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934. Full results follow (\*= less than 0.5 percent).

\*= less than 0.5 percent

1 Previously released.

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Obama is handling [ITEM]? Do you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?

		----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No opinion
		NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
The oil spill								
in the Gulf								
of Mexico								
	U.S.	41	23	19	53	14	40	5
	Gulf	24	14	10	73	14	59	3

3-4 Previously released.

5. Changing topics: Do you support or oppose the current six-month ban on new offshore oil drilling while authorities investigate the cause of the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico?

		Support	Oppose	No opinion
7/11/10	U.S.	56	39	5
7/11/10	Gulf	38	60	2

6. After this period, do you think the amount of offshore drilling in U.S. coastal waters should be increased, decreased, or kept about the same as it's been? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

		--- Increased ---			Kept the same	----- Decreased-----					
		NET	Strgly	Smwht		NET	Smwht	Strgly	Stopped /None(vol)	Depends (vol)	No opin.
7/11/10	U.S.	21	14	7	44	31	10	20	*	2	2
7/11/10	Gulf	23	18	5	50	22	4	17	1	2	3

7. How would you rate [ITEM] overall response to the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico - excellent, good, not so good or poor?

a. The federal government

		----- Positive -----			----- Negative -----			No opinion
		NET	Excellent	Good	NET	Not so good	Poor	
7/11/10	U.S.	34	4	30	65	32	33	1
7/11/10	Gulf	27	5	22	72	32	40	1
6/6/10	U.S.	28	2	26	69	37	32	3

b. The oil company BP

		----- Positive -----			----- Negative -----			No opinion
		NET	Excellent	Good	NET	Not so good	Poor	

7/11/10 U.S.	19	2	17	80	31	48	1
7/11/10 Gulf	17	3	14	82	36	46	1
6/6/10 U.S.	16	1	15	81	27	54	3

c. Your state and local govts'

	62	22	40	35	24	12	3
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8. Do you think the federal government should or should not pursue criminal charges against BP and other companies involved in the oil spill? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	NET	Should Strongly	Should Somewhat	NET	Should not Somewhat	Should not Strongly	Depends/ too soon (vol.)	No opin.
7/11/10 U.S.	56	42	14	34	15	20	6	4
7/11/10 Gulf	61	49	12	31	17	15	3	5
6/6/10 U.S.	64	51	14	28	14	14	4	4

9. From what you've seen and heard, do you think that the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is a major environmental disaster, a serious environmental problem but not a disaster, or is it not too serious an environmental problem?

	NET	Major disaster	Serious problem	Not too serious	Too soon (vol.)	No opinion
7/11/10 U.S.	68	28	3	*	*	
7/11/10 Gulf	79	17	3	*	1	
6/6/10 U.S.	73	25	2	*	*	
5/9/10* U.S.	55	37	4	1	3	

\*Pew, "oil leak"

10. (ASKED OF GULF COAST RESIDENTS) As far as you know, how much oil from the spill has come ashore in your county/parish - a great deal, a good amount, just some, or hardly any?

	NET	More Great deal	Good amt	NET	Less Just some	Hardly any	None (vol.)	No opinion
7/11/10 Gulf	56	30	25	41	25	12	4	3

11. How would you describe your feelings about the spill - are you angry about it, upset but not angry, concerned but not upset, or not concerned?

	NET	Angry	Upset	NET	Not Angry/Upset Concerned	Not concerned	No opinion
7/11/10 U.S.	64	35	29	35	33	2	*
7/11/10 Gulf	66	40	27	34	32	1	*

12. (ASKED OF GULF COAST RESIDENTS) So far, has the economy in your area been (helped by the oil spill), (hurt by the oil spill), or has the spill not affected your area's economy? Has it been helped/hurt STRONGLY or SOMEWHAT?

	NET	Helped Strgly	Helped Smwht	No effect	NET	Hurt Smwht	Hurt Strgly	No opinion
7/11/10 Gulf	7	2	5	14	75	20	55	3

13. (ASKED OF GULF COAST RESIDENTS) How about your own personal financial situation - has this been helped by the oil spill, hurt by the oil spill, or has the spill not affected your personal financial situation? Has it been helped/hurt STRONGLY or SOMEWHAT?

	----- Helped -----			No	----- Hurt -----			No
	NET	Strgly	Smwht	effect	NET	Smwht	Strgly	opinion
7/11/10 Gulf	3	1	2	70	27	12	14	0

14. (ASKED OF GULF COAST RESIDENTS) How concerned are you about negative long-term impacts on [ITEM] in your area because of the oil spill - very concerned, somewhat concerned, not so concerned or not concerned at all?

7/11/10 - Summary Table - Gulf Coast residents only

	---- Concerned ----			----- Not concerned -----			No
	NET	Very	Smwht	NET	Not too	Not at all	opin.
a. the economy	96	78	18	3	2	1	1
b. the tourism business	88	70	18	11	6	5	1
c. the safety of seafood for people to eat	91	75	16	8	5	3	1
d. the environment	94	86	8	6	3	3	0

15. (ASKED OF GULF COAST RESIDENTS) In the past few days, have you yourself felt depressed because of your concerns about the spill, or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
7/11/10 Gulf	33	67	*

16-35 Previously released or held for release.

\*\*\*END\*\*\*