

BLAKE FARENTHOLD
27TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

2110 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
202-225-7742
202-226-1134

101 NORTH SHORELINE BLVD, SUITE 300
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX 78401
361-884-2222
361-884-2223

1805 RUBEN TORRES, SUITE B-27
BROWNSVILLE, TX 78521
956-544-8800
956-544-8801

COMMITTEES:
TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE

OVERSIGHT AND
GOVERNMENT REFORM

HOMELAND SECURITY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4327

July 26, 2012

Dear Colleague:

In 2010, in a knee-jerk response to the Gulf oil spill, the U.S. Department of Interior issued a directive ordering all non-producing oil rigs to be plugged and any remaining structures be removed within five years of the issuance of that directive. This has a huge negative effect on groups like recreational fishermen as well as wildlife.

Many artificial reefs off the Gulf Coast provide habitat to dozens of species of fish and marine life, many of which are structure-dependent and are being destroyed. We must act quickly to stop rigs from being pulled up left and right, destroying these ecosystems.

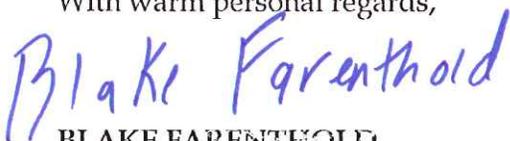
I invite you to join me today as a co-sponsor of The REEFS (Retaining Essential Environmental Fishing Structures) Act. The REEFS Act does one thing: stops the Secretary of the Interior from summarily removing oil and gas platforms and rigs in the Gulf for two years while we work on a long-term solution for the preservation of artificial reefs in the Gulf.

Not only are fisherman, divers, the oil industry, and other recreational users aware of the positive impact these rigs have, but our schools are now incorporating the study of artificial reefs into their curriculum, using charts and diagrams to illustrate their environmental benefits. Now, even children recognize the importance of these artificial habitats. Removing these rigs is disrupting decades of environmental progress.

Instead of pre-emptively removing the rigs, we, as Members of Congress and the Department of Interior, specifically the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), must find a long-term solution to preserve these artificial habitats for generations to come. It makes economic and environmental sense to save these man made reefs.

Should you have any further questions, please contact Olivia Chriss (olivia.chriss@mail.house.gov) in my office. I look forward to working with you on this important legislation.

With warm personal regards,



BLAKE FARENTHOLD
Member of Congress