

Bobby's berms a waste of time, money

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A professor of coastal geology, writing for The New York Times, calls the 45-mile project a "sand trap" that will "monopolize resources that could be used more effectively elsewhere."

Professor Robert Young directs the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines at Western Carolina University. In his NYT opinion piece, Young says the berms present ecological and environmental risks that have not been fully calculated.

If we knew for certain that the berms would keep significant amounts of oil away from fragile wetlands, then such risks might be worth it. But the proposal was so hastily written that no one has estimated its chances of success, or worked out the possibility of adverse consequences. There's not even a clear, scientific rationale for the efficacy of the design. Instead, it simply presents the project's logic as self-evident.

Now that BP is paying the lion's share of a project that was long on blueprints but perpetually short of funding — and consequently a project that is finally taking place — Gov. Bobby Jindal has taken ownership of the plan, which could have a long-lasting effect on his political fortunes. See Wednesday's The Independent Weekly for Jeremy Alford's take on the political dynamic of the berm project.