



National Incident Commander
Deepwater Horizon Response

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3100
July 12, 2010

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy and Environment
Committee on Energy and Commerce
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6115

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This correspondence responds to your letter dated June 24, 2010 regarding the use of dispersants to mitigate the effects of the Deepwater Horizon (DWH) oil spill. You requested to know why BP is continuing to use surface dispersant in the Gulf of Mexico after being told by the EPA and Coast Guard to completely eliminate surface application of dispersants unless absolutely necessary. As you are aware, the EPA and Coast Guard signed the May 26, 2010 order directing BP to minimize the overall use of dispersant and to apply it on the surface rarely. That directive also required BP to seek approval from the FOSC prior to the use of surface dispersants.

The Federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC) has approved the use of surface dispersants when needed for the control of volatile organic compounds and vapors at the wellhead site to ensure the safety of source control vessels and operators, and as a last resort to disperse oil when mechanical recovery and in-situ burning are insufficient or unemployable due to weather conditions. Recovery of discharged oil at the wellhead, combined with mechanical recovery and in-situ burning are the preferred methods of removing oil from the environment. Current directives support the optimum removal of oil using mechanical means with the controlled and monitored application of dispersants only when absolutely necessary to preserve the health and safety of workers at the well site and to minimize shoreline impacts.

Your letter requested copies of the BP requests to the Coast Guard to use surface dispersants; responses to those requests; and any associated documentation that would describe the circumstances surrounding the approval of surface dispersant use after the May 26, 2010 directive. Your letter also requested copies of the BP requests to the Coast Guard to exceed 15,000 gallons per day for subsurface dispersant use.

The Coast Guard has documents responsive to your request. On a July 7 call, my Legislative Affairs Officer (Commander Todd Offutt) and Dr. Michal Freedhoff of your Energy and Commerce Committee staff made arrangements to transmit the electronic record of nearly 250 pages.

My National Incident Command staff is prepared to respond to any additional questions you may have, but please feel free to contact me with any specific concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter Gautier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "G".

PETER GAUTIER
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Chief of Staff
National Incident Command