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2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

MAJORITY (202) 225-2927
FACSIMILE (202) 225-2525
MINORITY (202) 225-3641

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Mr. Lamar McKay
President and CEO
BP America, Inc.
501 Westlake Park Boulevard
Houston, Texas, 70779

Dear Mr. McKay:

The Deepwater Horizon/Macondo well has now been spewing tens of thousands of barrels per day of oil into the Gulf of Mexico for more than 70 days. Due to BP's failure to control the well during the past two months, we are now confronted with a situation in which hurricane season has arrived and the well remains uncapped. Hurricanes and tropical storms have enormous potential to disrupt and delay BP's attempts to cap the well and to prevent the clean up of the immense quantity of oil that is now fouling the gulf. Yet BP's spill response plan for the Gulf of Mexico makes no mention of hurricanes. I am writing to obtain urgently needed information regarding BP's plans for handling tropical storms and hurricanes during this year's hurricane season.

Hurricane Alex is currently in the Gulf of Mexico. While it is not currently expected to pass directly over the accident site, the *Wall Street Journal* is reporting that the high seas it is expected to generate could delay plans to install a tighter fitting collection cap on the well by a week. According to BP official Kent Wells, three days of good weather are required in order to install the cap.

In order that we may fully understand the situation I ask that you answer the following questions immediately:

- 1) What is BP's plan for spill response in the event that a tropical storm or hurricane passes over the overall spill area? Does BP have any such a plan or plans for increasing severity of hurricanes? Or does BP plan on simply "playing it by ear" up to the point at which a full evacuation is required and all spill response operations cease?
- 2) What does BP expect will be the effects of a tropical storm or hurricane on the damage the oil spill will cause to the environment? How could a storm change the impact of oil in the open ocean and the coast?
- 3) What is BP doing to prepare for disruption of oil clean up activities due to the impacts of a storm in the Gulf of Mexico? How could a storm impact the clean up of the oil?
- 4) Does BP have a plan for returning to spill response activities after a tropical storm or hurricane has passed over the spill area? If a hurricane passes over the spill area and spreads oil over large areas of the gulf coast, does BP have a plan for dealing with the combination of oil and general hurricane damage?
- 5) Last week I asked for information regarding the factors that could lead to delay or disruption of the installation of a better fitting cap. Given reports that Hurricane Alex could delay installation of the cap by one week, please indicate the amount of time delay that you would expect to result from a hurricane or tropical storm passing over the accident site.
- 6) Similarly, how would a tropical storm or hurricane affect the drilling of the relief wells? As I understand it, each time a full evacuation of the drilling rigs occurs, 14 days of delay will result. Is this accurate and was this possibility factored into the projected mid-August completion date for the relief wells?

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
Chairman
Energy and Environment Subcommittee
Energy and Commerce Committee

CC: Honorable Henry Waxman, Chairman
Honorable Joe Barton, Ranking Member
Honorable Fred Upton, Ranking Member