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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0910
July 28, 2010

COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND
VETERANS AFFAIRS

SELECT INTELLIGENCE OVERSIGHT PANEL

www.house.gov/young

The Honorable Lisa Jackson
Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

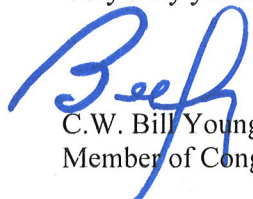
I welcomed your May 27th directive to British Petroleum on limiting the use of dispersants in the Gulf of Mexico as a result of the ongoing Deepwater Horizon disaster, but I am troubled by the long-term effect of their continued use. While I understand that the use of dispersants minimizes the onshore impact of oil, the Gulf of Mexico is a fragile ecosystem and both the animal and human residents require an environmentally conscientious response. The short-term use of dispersants may have been effective in the past, however, their sustained use may lead to unintended future consequences.

As we all know too well, since April, oil has been spilling into the Gulf of Mexico. Efforts continue to permanently stop the flow of oil from the damaged well, but no quick solution has been found and oil is still gushing into the ocean. The short-term effects of the spill are already leading the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to close large portions of the Gulf to fishing due to concerns over oil contamination. But oil is not the only contaminant now in the Gulf, as nearly two million gallons of dispersant have been used both on and beneath the surface. Combined with recent university reports on rising levels of methane in the Gulf, it has become increasingly clear that we do not know enough about the future effects of this spill, which will continue to emerge.

This is why it is vitally important that we continue to fund the research being done at institutions of higher learning around the country, including at the University of South Florida whose College of Marine Science has become an international center for the study of our nation's and our world's waters and of our coastal lands. Together with the Florida Institute of Oceanography, also in St. Petersburg, which is drawing together all the state of Florida's marine research expertise, and a variety of other local, state and federal organizations, our community has provided key information to our nation's decision makers about the movement of the oil, the impact it is having on our environment and the development of long-term strategies to clean it up. Even with all that work in St. Petersburg and throughout our state, the long-term effects of the oil spill itself, as well as those of the response and clean-up efforts, are still unclear and continued monitoring of the Gulf will ensure we are prepared to quickly respond to the unintended consequences of the sustained use of dispersants.

It is my hope that you will continue to consider the impact that the current spill will have in the future and remain vigilant not only in your monitoring, but also in funding important university projects. As always, I stand ready to provide any additional information. With best wishes and warmest personal regards, I am

Very truly yours,


C.W. Bill Young
Member of Congress