

**EPA**

**Moderator: Eryn Witcher  
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11:00 am CT**

Operator: Good morning. My name is (Christy) and I'll be your conference facilitator today. At this time I would like to welcome everyone to the Update on Gulf Water Conference Call.

All lines have been placed on mute to prevent any background noise. After the speaker's remarks there will be a question and answer period. If you would like to ask a question during this time simply press star then the number one on your telephone keypad. If you would like to withdraw your question, press star then the number two on your telephone keypad.

Thank you. Miss Witcher you may begin your conference.

Eryn Witcher: Thank you everyone for joining us today. We're here to talk - give an update on the waters in the Gulf. We have representatives from the USGS, NOAA, FDA, LDEQ and MDEQ. Each representative will give a update of what their agency is doing and then we will open it up to questions and answers. We do ask that we start with one question per person and ensure enough time for everyone to ask their questions.

I'm going to ask, before we start with opening remarks, if each person could - each representative of the agency to give their name, spelling and title. And we'll go ahead and start with USGS.

Eryn Witcher: Can the person on the - at the airport mute? Can... Great. And who do we have from NOAA?

Steve Murawski: This is Steve Murawski. Last name spelled M U R A W S K I. I'm Chief Scientist with NOAA Fisheries.

Eryn Witcher: Thank you. FDA?

Donald Kraemer: This is Donald Kraemer -- K R A E M E R, and I'm the Acting Director Office of Seafood with FDA.

Eryn Witcher: Thank you LDEQ?

Chris Piehler: This is Chris Piehler -- P as in Paul I E H L E R with Louisiana DEQ. I'm a Senior Environmental Scientist and Clean Waters Project Director.

Eryn Witcher: Great thanks. And DEQ?

Phil Bass: This is Phil Bass -- B A S S. I'm Director of the Office of Pollution Control at DEQ.

Eryn Witcher: Thank you. And Tom do we have you? We're also joined by Tom Weimer, Senior Advisor to Secretary Norton at the Department of the Interior -- W E I M E R. Great. And I'm going to turn it over to Ben Grumbles. I forgot to announce Ben Grumbles. Sorry Ben.

Ben Grumbles: Oh that's okay. Thanks for joining me today on this call. My name is Ben Grumbles and I'm the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Water at the USEPA. With me are representatives from United States Geological Survey, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Food and Drug Administration, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality.

I want to give you a brief overview of the numerous monitoring and sampling activities that have been taking place in the region. This is a massive response effort -- a multi-agency fully coordinated effort to monitor the hurricane's impact on the Gulf water. USGS has monitored in Louisiana and Mississippi, including Lake Pontchartrain, water and sediment for microbial indicators, water quality, sediment quality, and chemical contaminants.

NOAA is analyzing plumes, collecting fish tissue, crab, shrimp, water, and sediment samples for analysis of bacteria and contaminants. FDA is testing commercially important seafood species for microbial and chemical contaminants. LDEQ has been working with FDA on fish tissue sampling in Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Borne. MDEQ has been working with the federal government on identifying sites for water quality monitoring. And EPA's ocean survey vessel, the Bold, has served as a mechanism for sampling and analysis of water and sediment quality from the Gulf and the mouth of the Mississippi.

The effectiveness of our response hinges on the effectiveness of our partnership. Collaboration is critical. Today EPA is releasing the first pathogen indicator data collected by the ocean survey vessel, the Bold. This data was collected from September 27 through October 2 at monitoring stations in the river channels and near shore waters surrounding the Mississippi Delta.

We monitored 20 areas to determine whether fecal pollution from flooded communities had spread into these waters. The analysis performed aboard the Bold tested for enterococcus and clostridium. And today's results are from enterococcus only as the clostridium analysis requires additional time. At four stations, enterococcus was detected from 10 to 53.1 per 100 milliliter, well below the marine water standard of 500 per 100 milliliter and the fresh water standard of 151 per 100 milliliter.

At - all 20 monitoring stations tested showed at this time that the water was appropriate for what is referred to as primary contact recreation. This includes swimming. While this is encouraging for recreational uses, this data should not be used to assess the safety of consuming raw or undercooked molluscan shellfish such as oysters, because accidental ingestion of water presents different risks than eating raw or undercooked shellfish.

EPA's assessment is now complete and sample analysis is currently proceeding as planned. We will continue to (unintelligible) additional results of water, sediment, and fish tissue analysis as the data become available. Meanwhile, we and our state and federal partners will continue to monitor for any longer term effects that may materialize.

These preliminary results are encouraging but we need to keep on guard. After a large hurricane, the effects on water are not all immediate. Bile accumulation of contaminants in fish for example, takes time to turn up. So for the coming year we will continue to monitor for any new impacts. Both the initial emergency assessment and the long term monitoring will assist the states of the Gulf Coast in detecting and addressing possible risks to human health in the environment. This collaboration will take time and resources but we're committed to its success.

I'd now like to turn it over to Tom Weimer, the Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the Interior. Tom?

Eryn Witcher: We may have lost Tom but we'll come back. NOAA -- Steve you want to go?

Steve Murawski Yes. Thank you very much. And thanks to Ben for that excellent summary. I certainly agree with all the points that he's made about cooperation. Would like to emphasize that the sampling that all the federal and state agencies are doing is coordinated through an inner-agency agreement that we're working with that's sponsored by the Council on Environment Quality at the White House. And so this cooperation is basically trying to assure that the samples are located in an effective way.

Now NOAA's primary mission here is to assist the ensuring of safety of the seafood supply and supporting FDA's regulatory mission in that area. And our other statutory requirement here is that we assess the effects of impact of events like the hurricane on living marine resources such as fish, shellfish, and mammals, their habitats and a (potential) transfer from - of land-based contaminants into the coastal (sediment) reservoir.

I'd like to make a few points about NOAA's sampling (to date). First of all NOAA initiated its sampling activities in oceanic waters within two weeks of the landfall of Hurricane Katrina. And this effort is ongoing basically on a bi-weekly basis. And so we've had essentially three sets of samples collected to date and these samples are collected on NOAA's research vessels, the Nancy Foster and Gordon Gunter as well as chartered fishing vessels and other ships of other institutions -- or example, cooperative work with the EPA on their ship, the Bold, as well as the National Science Foundation's ship, the Cape Hatteras, as well as the University of Miami vessel.

Now our sampling efforts are basically nationwide because of the resources that NOAA's brought in to assist here. Much of our contaminant sampling work is being done out of laboratories at the Northwest Fishery Science Center in Seattle, the NOS Laboratory in Charleston, the (unintelligible) Laboratory in Charleston, and the Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Now our chemical contaminant analyses are being measured in sediments, water, and fish tissues and microbial indicators are also being assessed in water and (unintelligible) marine species, and was also continuing sampling as part of its ongoing efforts in two programs called The Mussel Watch and Status and Trends Programs. And in these programs - they've been ongoing for about 20 years so they provide a substantial pre-Katrina baseline for which to look at contaminants in the - in particular in inshore shellfish and in this case in American oyster populations. And so the Mussel Watch Program will be looking at over 120 chemicals as potential contaminants in American oyster in the Gulf region.

Now all the findings that we have today -- and we're - today we're announcing some new findings -- have been coordinated with relevant state and federal agencies so that there are no surprises. There is (also) - released to date have been primarily for the week of September 13, which again was about two weeks after the event. And we're involved in long-term analysis as Ben said. And so we'll be monitoring because some of the contaminants may take a while to work their way out into the ocean environment.

Now all the samples that we've analyzed, including a series of 23 shrimp samples that we are releasing today from the Mississippi Sound, are far below

(SEA's) threshold limits for contaminants in seafood, although a few of the individual samplers are within a few of the EPA's more stringent guidelines.

Now none of the samples so far we feel are attributable in any elevated contaminant levels to the effects of the hurricanes. And the reason we are arguing this is that we hadn't seen the evidence of the presence of brominated fire retardants, which are generally indicative of acute urban (runoff) events. And NOAA will continue to sample potentially affected areas, because some of these pollutants may either be released slowly into the ocean environment or may take a while to accumulate up at higher levels of the food chain, which are basically the seafood levels.

Now addition to its sampling for toxic and contaminants, NOAA is also deploying satellite track drifters in the Northern Gulf of Mexico. And these data help with model (runs) to look at potential downstream threats posed by coastal pollution events. And we'll be doing this on an ongoing basis.

The last point I want to make is this -- based on the data we've analyzed so far and supplied the FDA, we do not see significant threats to the seafood supply. And customers - consumers should feel confident that the agencies involved are continually monitoring seafood and will continue to do so for the duration of any event that we may see or that's prudent in vigilant monitoring (unintelligible). Thank you.

Eryn Witcher: Great. Thank you so much. Don with FDA.

Don Kraemer: Thanks. This is Don Kraemer with the Food and Drug Administration. Just as a point of clarification, FDA's role in all of this is - FDA is the federal agency with regulatory responsibility for the safety of commercial seafood. And so that's where our primarily interest is in the sample collection efforts.

As Ben mentioned earlier, FDA has been involved with the collection of fish tissue samples from commercially important species, and those include oysters, shrimp, crab, and finfish primarily from Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Borne and adjoining Lake - to Lake Pontchartrain.

We've been collecting samples now for a bit over two weeks and we'll be continuing for about another month. These samples as well as samples from some of the cooperating agencies -- state and federal -- are being analyzed by a number of our FDA laboratories or microbiological indicators of sewage contamination because of the concern for sewage breakdown during the storm, what's called (PAH's), which are an indication of petro chemical contamination -- because of concerns there -- as well as pesticides, metals, and (PCBs).

In addition, FDA's been collaborating with the other federal partners that you've heard and the state partners that you will hear to assess the data -- both the data that we've been collecting as well as the data that our partners have been collecting -- to determine the significance of that data with respect to the safety of seafood.

And as a follow - and following from that, what we'd like to say -- and I think it agrees with what you just heard from NOAA -- is that FDA has no reason to question the safety of commercially -available seafood from Louisiana, Mississippi, or Alabama. And that's primarily for two reasons -- one, because the waters which were impacted from the hurricane remain closed to the harvest of oysters and other molluscan shellfish. And that is because these species have a particular food safety concern in that they -- I'm sorry -- they concentrate contaminants from the environment and then therefore are likely to have them at much higher levels and at higher frequency than would other



species and at higher levels than would even be found in the waters surrounding them, and also because they're eaten raw and they're eaten in their entirety.

So we have special provisions for the safety of molluscan shellfish. The states and FDA and others are continuing to monitor these waters. And when they are safe they will be re-opened for the harvest of oysters and other molluscan shellfish.

On the other side, for species other than molluscan shellfish, such as the crab, the shrimp and fin fish as I mentioned earlier, none of the analytical results to date show contamination at or above levels of concern or any of the contaminants that have been tested, and as Ben mentioned previously, show no significant impact from the storm water other than the somewhat bleeding elevation of sewage contamination bacteria in the water, which no longer is an issue.

And again as others have mentioned, testing will continue. We see that as an added measure of prudence for the - for our confidence in the safety of seafood at this point, and also to see if conditions change over time. And that's it for my prepared remarks. Thank you.

Eryn Witcher: Thank you. And we'll move on to Chris Piehler with LDEQ.

Chris Piehler: Yes this is Chris Piehler with Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality. Louisiana would like to just say that we really appreciate a couple of statements (unintelligible) to the need for effective partnerships between state and federal agencies. And we've certainly seen plenty of that.

LDEQ, the EPA (unintelligible) U.S. Geologic Survey, since a few days after Hurricane Katrina came ashore, have collected over 500 water samples representing both the flood waters within the city of New Orleans, the discharge of those waters to Lake Pontchartrain, and the ambient conditions of Lake Pontchartrain and the surrounding estuaries.

The - thankfully the data has come back very unremarkable, but with added prudence and given the national concern for the safety of seafood in the estuaries of Southeast Louisiana, we've partnered very - working very closely with the Food and Drug Administration to sample fish and shellfish tissue within Lake Pontchartrain and some of the surrounding areas as well, including Lake Borne.

That is ongoing currently and we anticipate data to be coming back relative to the Food and Drug Administration's lab to confirm our suspicions of the seafood being safe to eat just as Don Kramer had mentioned a minute ago. But that'll only tell us the short term. We're going to stay with it and want the nation to know that we're going to stay on top of the quality of the seafood in Louisiana to make sure that in the long term it remains safe for everyone as well.

In addition, we - the Louisiana DEQ is extending its ambient water monitoring into other estuaries now that progress and cleanup is allowed access into some of those areas. And we have initiated sampling in the (Barricaria) estuary to the Southwest of the New Orleans area, and then also the (Bretna) and Chandeleur estuaries, which are to the Southeast. That's all of my prepared statements.

Eryn Witcher: Great thanks. And so - Bass with Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality.

Phil Bass: Good morning. This is Phil Bass in Mississippi. And I just want to echo what everybody else has said, and that is that we've (unintelligible) unprecedented cooperation (unintelligible) state and the federal agencies here.

Mississippi is pleased to let the nation know that we didn't have any identifiable releases of large amounts of industrial contamination. And we've been focusing on getting our sewage treatment plants up and going. I'm happy to report that most of those are back up and at or near permit limits, that the monitoring efforts that everybody's talked about are pleasing to us.

But I also want to remind everybody that we basically have not any rainfall since Hurricane Katrina and that we will likely see some spikes of contamination when we begin to get some normal rainfall back here. So we need to remain vigilant, continue to watch. We as a state agency are working to collect additional bacteriological samples on a daily basis.

We're still advising people because of not - not because of water contamination but because of debris primarily in our waters, to stay out of the Sound -- not to be using the Sound for recreational activities at this time. And we'll continue to monitor that. Yes we're happy to report that some of our (oysters and) even some of our shrimping is back in operation. Some of the shrimp processors are beginning to go back to work and they're beginning to bring shrimp back into Mississippi.

So that's an encouraging sound - sign for us. Our fin fishery appears to be healthy and that's beginning to come back. So we're pleased with where we are. But we're going to continue to monitor for the coming year and see where we are.

Eryn Witcher: Do we have anyone from USGS?

Tim Miller: Yes this is Tim Miller from USGS. I don't think Tom Weimer is on the phone so let me provide our statement. Again I'm Tim Miller. I'm the Senior Advisor for Water Quality to the Director of USGS. We've been collaborating -- as everyone has said -- with USEPA and state officials doing sampling -- most recently on Lake Pontchartrain -- at about 30 sites from October 11 to 14. Our sample collection, in addition, has included sediment quality, water quality, and we've been looking at benthic organism health.

Water samples analyzed by USGS indicate the safety of water for human contact. We've measured the number of colonies of intestinal bacteria -- largely fecal and (terracocci) -- in water. The bacteria come from intestines of humans and other warm-blooded animals and are found in sewage, flood waters, and in animal manure.

Other chemicals and biological samples collected by USGS have also been analyzed for chemistry. The inner-agency response sampling is planned to be repeated on a quarterly basis to document short-term changes caused by movement or dispersion of contaminants from Lake Pontchartrain into coastal waters of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

USGS data re not included in this first data release but will be included in future releases for Lake Pontchartrain. Early results from USGS unpublished data from this study indicate very low levels of fecal and (terracocci) in Lake Pontchartrain, well within safe limits for full body contact. Fecal and (terracocci) levels in this study were lower than what is commonly found in urban storm water, but definitely higher than the drinking water standard, which is zero. However, Lake Pontchartrain is not a drinking water source because it's brackish water. And that concludes our remarks.

Eryn Witcher: All right. Thank you. And, you know, I don't mean to put you on the spot but does Alabama have anything to add? We don't want to leave you out.

Man: No we don't, but thank you.

Eryn Witcher: Okay great. And with that let's open it up to questions. (Christy) can you remind us how that works?

Operator: Yes ma'am. At this time I would like to remind everyone, if you would like to ask a question press star one on your telephone keypad. We'll pause for just a moment to compile the Q&A roster. Once again if you have a question or a comment please press star one. Your first question comes from the line of (Joanna Broader) with AFP.

(Joanna Broader): Hi.

Eryn Witcher: I'm sorry. What's your publication?

(Joanna Broader): Agence France-Presse.

Eryn Witcher: Great. Thanks. Go ahead.

(Joanna Broader): Oh I just have a technical question -- the second person to speak after Ben Grumbles, who was that?

Steve Murawski: Yes that was Steve Murawski from NOAA.

(Joanna Broader): Could you spell that?

Steve Murawski Yes M U R A W S K I.

(Joanna Broader): And the first name is Steve?

Steve Murawski That's correct.

(Joanna Broader): Thank you.

Operator: Your next question or comment comes from the line of (Natalie Bauman) with (Inside EPA).

(Natalie Bauman): Hi thank you. I have a question for Ben Grumbles. In all of the discussion that has been going on about the hurricane, people have said, you know, to prevent the kind of pollutants that we've been talking about from entering the waters that wetlands restoration is an important component...

Eryn Witcher: (Natalie) I'm sorry. Today we're just talking about the Gulf. Do you have a question about (Gulf) water and what we announced today?

(Natalie Bauman): I have a question about how wetlands, you know, in the future what EPA's plan is for making sure they, you know, help the pollutants stay low in the Gulf as you mentioned today, you know, in case of future events.

Ben Grumbles: Thanks (Natalie). Yes this is Ben Grumbles and I'd just say that we are focused on working with federal and state partners to emphasize the importance of wetlands, buffers, and barriers, that restoration of coastal Louisiana and the Gulf wetlands is an important part of our commitment to wetlands -- not just for hurricane protection but also (as) - to serve as nature's kidneys to help filter out pollutants and - as well as provide important habitat for wildlife and water fowl.

(Natalie Bowman): Thank you.

Operator: Your next question or comment comes from the line of (John Hailpin) with AP.

(John Hailpin): This is (John Hailpin) with the Associated Press. I'm just wondering how Hurricane Wilma may or may not play into what's being done and if anything is being done differently to prepare for that?

Eryn Witcher: (John) we can direct you to - I think there's a - (DHS) has a number of - they've been compiling everything that all the agencies have been doing. A lot of, you know, EPA has pre-deployed personnel. I think we're going to really keep this call to the Gulf. And we'd be happy to - does anyone else have anything to add?

Ben Grumbles: (John) I can just say that the EPA has provided assistance to the state of Florida as well as other states for preparedness and response -- part of our water security grants to states. And that has helped the state of Florida to establish a water and wastewater agency resources network to help pre-deploy and position equipment and resources dealing with the hurricane. And we like everyone else have our eyes on the tracking of Hurricane Wilma. And that's about all I can say at this point.

(John Hailpin): Thanks.

Eryn Witcher: Any other agencies want to add (efforts) on Wilma? I - really - this isn't necessarily the right crowd for that, but if anyone wants to add anything else... Okay next question?

Operator: Your next question or comment comes from the line of Steve Hedlund, Seafood Business Magazine.

Steve Hedlund: Thanks. This is Steve Hedlund again for Seafood Business Magazine. My question is for a Steve at NOAA. Steve there were - the additional testing on the 23 shrimp samples from Mississippi Sound, is that available yet? And if so, what are the results?

Eryn Witcher: Steve are you still with us?

Steve Hedlund: Yes. Did you hear my question?

Eryn Witcher: No I'm sorry -- Steve from NOAA.

Steve Hedlund: Oh okay. Steve from NOAA. No I didn't. It cut out.

Eryn Witcher: All right. We're going to try to - offline we're going to get Steve back on the line and Steve...

Steve Murawski Yes I'm back on the line. Sorry about that.

Eryn Witcher: Go ahead. Go ahead and repeat your question.

Steve Hedlund: Oh okay. Steve the additional testing on the 23 shrimp samples from Mississippi Sound, is that available?

Steve Murawski Yes that'll be available on our website very shortly.

Steve Hedlund: Okay.



Steve Murawski We're just finalizing the press release that goes with.

Steve Hedlund: Okay.

Steve Murawski It'll be an extensive report on the findings themselves along with (GIS) (unintelligible) location all those samples in Mississippi Sound as well as the results.

Steve Hedlund: Okay thank you.

Eryn Witcher: Thanks. Next question.

Operator: Your next question or comment comes from the line of Lonnae O'Neal Parker Washington Post.

Eryn Witcher: You there?

Lonnae O'Neal Parker: Hi. Can you hear me?

Eryn Witcher: Yes we can.

Lonnae O'Neal Parker: Hi. Very good. I am wondering if a transcript summary or some sort of recommendations are going to be made available to Gulf residents who are scattered across the country and trying to make decisions about whether or not they can return -- whether it's safe to return with their families, things of that nature.

Eryn Witcher: I think each agency can talk about what they are doing. I know EPA has a multi-faceted effort with getting out (numerous) (sic) flier to residents - handing them to residents. We have public service announcements, we have

information on the website, we have, you know, there's a number of efforts going on. And also...

Lonnae O'Neal Parker: Right. Since this is such a coordinated efforts to get out, for instance, (fish information), will some sort of summary or recommendations in a centralized place so that residents who may not even have, you know, internet access or who are looking for one place centralized to go to to find out information. Will that kind of option be made available?

Eryn Witcher: I can tell you right now on the call you have experts on Gulf water sampling and testing in assess of the Gulf. And so I think if you have more broader policy questions you probably need to address that to the right person. Thank you.

Lonnae O'Neal Parker: Right.

Eryn Witcher: Next question.

Lonnae O'Neal Parker: Even for the Gulf water samples then.

Operator: Your next question comes from the line of (Declin Conroy), (Publication Food Protection).

(Declin Conroy): Yes hi. I'd actually two. One as just who spoke for the LDEQ.

Chris Piehler: My name is Chris Piehler -- P as in Paul I E H L E R. I'm a Senior Environmental Scientist and Clean Waters Project Director.

(Declin Conroy): Thanks Chris. And then my second question's probably for you. Is there any raw sewage outflow into the Mississippi at this time?

Chris Piehler: To my knowledge there is. The East Bank sewage treatment plant, which handles the treatment for the city of New Orleans is not operational. And the authority to regulate that city actually resides with the EPA. They have been - (I'm right - I have been right) out of Region 6.

(Declin Conroy): Yes.

Chris Piehler: So I really don't know the specifics about that...

Man: Yes.

Chris Piehler: ...but they have been allowed to release sewage from the system at two -- at least two (lift) stations that I'm aware of and send it...

Man: Yes.

Chris Piehler: ...to the Mississippi River after some disinfection.

Ben Grumbles: This is Ben Grumbles, the USEPA, and I would say that EPA is closely monitoring the situation, working with - both LDEQ and with the city in getting that system -- the East Bank sewage treatment plant -- online and operational. And there is an enforceable agreement to do so. They are -- as I understand it -- providing primary treatment, which is a term of art under the Clean Water Act, and they're committed to providing secondary treatment by the middle of November. And the meantime, it's important and a priority to monitor the (affluent) - the quality of the water as it goes downstream.

Now part of what we're announcing today is that the efforts of the agency - our first round of testing of - for pathogens at the mouth of the Mississippi River. So - if that's helps with the clarification.

(Declin Conroy): Yes. Thank you.

Eryn Witcher: And before we go to the next question, I'm remiss. I didn't mean to not open up the floor on the question on different efforts of different agencies to get to the public. And I must note that if - just because something might not be said here doesn't mean it's not happening. It's just - you don't have those specific people on the phone.

So, you know, I'll start with the most important thing is we gathered here today as a coordinated effort to get this message to you and to get out to the public. And if anyone else from any agency has anything to add I welcome that.

Operator: Once again to ask a question please press star one. Your next question comes from the line of (Amena Sayid), (BNA).

(Amena Sayid): Yes hi. I wanted to find out - Ben you mentioned that the results for the testing of clostridium are not out as yet. That - if I recall correctly, that is what causes acute food poisoning and stuff. So even then (unintelligible) keeping the data of just one form of bacteria enter (unintelligible) in (mind), is it still safe for people to be out there swimming and stuff? And I throw this question out to the whole panel -- whoever wants to take it.

Ben Grumbles: First (Amena) I wanted to mention that the test results that we're announcing today are for clostridium prefringen. We'll continue to do testing for clostridium. And I'm not sure - I would turn to the expert this year's statement

as what the impact - the health impacts are of clostridium. But you had - I mean we're going to continue to do more testing on additional measures for nutrient and chemical contaminants and sediment testing as well and chemical contaminants and toxicity and benthic community analysis.

So these are preliminary early results focused on measuring at the mouth of the Mississippi River for certain types of pathogens. And we've got a continued work to do and to stay on top of the monitoring -- short term and long term. And really today's results are from enterococcus only.

(Amena Sayid): Okay.

Ben Grumbles: The - I guess I should have - I may have confused people. The ship -- our newly commissioned ship, the OSV Bold -- tested for enterococcus and clostridium but we're still analyzing the clostridium prefringen data. And we plan to be providing more information as we complete the scientific analysis such as for clostridium. Does that help?

(Amena Sayid): Yes. Well what I was trying to find out is for the data that you're releasing today is enterococci today right?

Ben Grumbles: Yes.

(Amena Sayid): Or - and based on that date you're saying that it's below the level of - it's - how did you describe it?

Ben Grumbles: It's well below the level that we're using for - in terms of the relevant water quality criteria and standards.

(Amena Sayid): Yes.

Ben Grumbles: At the 20 monitoring stations tested, showed at this time the water was appropriate what is - to - for what is referred to as primary contact recreation, and this includes swimming.

(Amena Sayid): But the - this is not for clostridium. So...

Ben Grumbles: Correct. Correct.

(Amena Sayid): Right.

Ben Grumbles: It's for enterococcus.

(Amena Sayid): Okay. So what is the (unintelligible)...

Eryn Witcher: You know what, this is the last question. I'm sorry. One question per person. So just - we got...

(Amena Sayid): I just want to get a clear statement.

Eryn Witcher: Okay. Last question go ahead.

Operator: The last question comes from the line of...

Eryn Witcher: Oh no no no. I'm sorry I'm sorry. I wasn't clear. Let's let (BNA) finish up with their last remark. Go ahead.

Operator: One moment.

Man: (Unintelligible)

(Amena Sayid): (Unintelligible) one enterococcus not clostridium. What should we be telling people -- you can go for primary recreation or you should still, you know, be cautious about, you know, going and swimming in the Gulf right now?

Ben Grumbles: The more we know today, I mean this is encouraging for recreational uses but it should not - the data should not be used to assess the safety of the - consuming raw or undercooked molluscan shellfish or oysters. And we need to continue to monitor. But again from what we know today and from the 20 monitoring stations tested, the water was appropriate for primary contact recreation, and that includes swimming at the locations that we tested it for, which is base (unintelligible) enterococcus only.

(Amena Sayid): Okay. Thank you.

Eryn Witcher: Next question.

Operator: One moment ma'am.

Eryn Witcher: Okay great. Well with no more questions I thank everyone for joining us today. Have a good day.

Man: Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. This concludes your conference. You may now disconnect.

Man: Thank you.

END