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July 13, 2010

Admiral Thad W. Allen
National Incident Commander
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street, SW Stop 7101
Washington, DC 20593-7101

Dear Admiral Allen:

BP has now installed the three ram capping stack on the Deepwater Horizon Lower Marine Riser Package. BP now plans on closing the vents on this capping stack and conducting pressure testing to determine if the well can safely be shut in. Pressure readings will be used to determine if sufficient well integrity exists and a determination will be made whether it is safe to completely shut in the well or whether additional oil collection should continue in order to relieve pressure on the well.

In the past, you have raised questions about wellbore integrity. On June 17, 2010, you noted that "we don't know if the wellbore has been compromised or not. One of the reasons we did not continue with top kill at higher pressures, there was a concern that if we increased the pressure too hard we might do damage to the casings and the wellbore. What we didn't want was open communication of any oil from the reservoir outside the wellbore that might get into the formation and work its way to the subsea floor and then result in uncontrolled discharge at that point."

At today's press conference you raised similar issues and suggested that the pressure readings will help to determine the advisability of shutting in the well, stating that:

"I think we are very confident we can take control of this hydrocarbon stream and then slowly close all these valves and stop the emission of hydrocarbons. What we can't tell is the current condition of the well bore below the sea floor and the

Admiral Allen

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implication of the pressure readings. That is in fact why we're doing a well integrity test."

In light of the importance of understanding the situation regarding wellbore integrity, I am asking that the Coast Guard provide the Subcommittee with additional information regarding wellbore integrity at the Deepwater Horizon site. Specifically, I would like to know:

- 1) What information, if any, has BP provided to the Coast Guard regarding well bore integrity at the site?
- 2) What documents does the Coast Guard have regarding well integrity and the decision to stop the top kill procedure?
- 3) Did BP and the Coast Guard reach any conclusions regarding well integrity based on the failure of the top kill procedure?
- 4) Please provide us with all correspondence, including electronic correspondence, between the Coast Guard and BP, relating to wellbore integrity at the Deepwater Horizon site.
- 5) What risk does full and complete shut in of the well for an extended period of time pose for wellbore integrity?
- 6) You first mentioned the possibility of shutting in the well in your July 2 press briefing. When did BP first suggest that the well could be shut-in? What did the government do to assess this procedure?

Thank you very much for your attention to this important matter. Please provide your response within 10 working days or not later than July 27. If you have any questions or concerns, please have your staff contact Dr. Michal Freedhoff of the Energy and Environment Subcommittee staff at 202-225-2836

Sincerely,



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

Cc: Honorable Henry Waxman, Chairman,
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Honorable Joe Barton, Ranking Member
Honorable Fred Upton, Ranking Member