Assistant Administrator Paul Anastas
Dispersant Testing Release
June 30, 2010

As prepared for delivery.

Thank you all for joining us. Today we are releasing the data gathered from our first round of toxicity testing of eight oil dispersants. This testing was prompted by Administrator Jackson's direction that BP and EPA obtain further data on all approved and available dispersants, including Corexit 9500, the product currently in use.

Administrator Jackson has said many times that the decision EPA and the Coast Guard made to authorize the use of dispersants was a difficult choice – but one suited to the emergency we're facing. With a spill of this size and scope, dispersants are useful in breaking up the oil and preventing its spread – particularly to fragile wetlands.

That approval has come with strict conditions. We have limited the daily amount of subsea use. We have required strict monitoring of environmental conditions in the areas of application. And in the month after EPA and the Coast Guard directed BP to ramp down dispersant use, the volume applied dropped nearly 70 percent from peak usage. That policy does not change, even with these initial data.

EPA has also insisted on transparency. Administrator Jackson helped persuade NALCO, the company that manufactures Corexit, to release the Confidential Business Information claims and publicly disclose details about the ingredients of their dispersant. EPA has provided a broad range of information on dispersants and other issues on our website http://www.epa.gov/bpspill. The next step in the push for transparency is the testing we're releasing today.

Let me be clear: this is the **first** round of data. I know many of you are interested to hear if this testing means EPA will order BP to switch dispersants. We are not making any such recommendation at this time. We have additional testing to do.

What today's data are showing is that, in the tests we performed, all of the dispersants are roughly equal in toxicity, and generally less toxic than oil. None of the eight dispersants tested displayed biologically significant endocrine disrupting activity.

JD-2000 and Corexit 9500, the product currently in use, proved to be the least toxic to small fish, while JD-2000 and SAF-RON GOLD were the least toxic in the tests on mysid shrimp.

Finally, internal modeling results show that the dispersant constituents are expected to biodegrade in weeks to months, rather than remaining in the ecosystem for years as oil might.

Let me be clear about another point as well: this first round of testing studied specific effects under specific conditions. These data provide information on only some of the variables that we must consider. We are going to need more testing to get a full picture of dispersant impacts, and make any determination as to whether one product ranks better or worse than another under all of the conditions of its use.

The next phase of EPA's testing will look at the acute toxicity of multiple concentrations of Louisiana Sweet Crude oil alone and combinations of Louisiana Sweet Crude oil with each of the eight dispersants for two test species. Additional studies are underway to better understand endocrine activity.

We need more data before deciding whether it makes sense to change dispersants. But our ultimate goal in all of this is to reach a point where dispersants are no longer necessary – to fully phase out their use and rely on oil collection, burning, skimming and other methods to protect our Gulf and our shorelines. It's important to remember that oil

is enemy number one in this crisis. So we will continue testing, and we will be sharing more information as soon as we have it. Meanwhile, we are doing everything we can as part of this historic response.