



National Wildlife Federation
901 E St. NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20004

Natural Resources Defense Council
1200 New York Ave., NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20005

August 25, 2010

The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Holder:

The National Wildlife Federation and the Natural Resources Defense Council have a deep and abiding interest in protection and restoration of Gulf of Mexico waters and coastal wetlands. The Deepwater Horizon oil spill is obviously a severe blow to our efforts and, like you, we are dedicated to ensuring that BP and its contractors take on full responsibility for the damages and that the analysis of the damages are as complete as possible.

We believe the law is clear that when the federal government evaluates the damages, it must consider not just the oil that was discharged but also the natural gas.

There are strong scientific as well as legal reasons why the discharge of large quantities of hydrocarbon gas must not be ignored. The discharges included a high proportion of hydrocarbon gas that includes methane, ethane, propane, butane, pentane, etc. When calculated in equivalent units of weight, the magnitude of discharged oil plus gas is equal to 1.5 times the oil alone. In other words, if 4.1 million barrels of oil were discharged into U.S. waters, the total discharge in barrel of oil equivalents (oil plus gas) was actually over 6 million barrels.

The discharge of this hydrocarbon gas is of concern because much of it will dissolve into the water before reaching the surface. These dissolved gases can cause mortality and neurological damage to fish. Furthermore, the microbes degrading hydrocarbon gases compete for nutrients

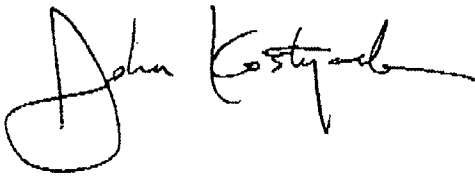
(like oxygen) with those attacking oil and could significantly affect the overall degradation process.

In addition, we believe it is incumbent on the Department, based on the Oil Pollution Act and Clean Water Act, to calculate civil penalties by combining both the oil and gas discharges.

We would welcome the opportunity to provide you with additional information regarding these important concerns.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Kostyack". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

John Kostyack
Executive Director, Wildlife Conservation and Global Warming
National Wildlife Federation

/s

Scott Slesinger
Legislative Director
Natural Resources Defense Council

cc: Hon. Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior