



National Advocacy Center

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August 3, 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

Mr. Robert W. Dudley
Chief Executive Officer
BP, International Headquarters
1 St James's Square
London, SW1Y 4PD
United Kingdom

Dear Attorney General Holder and Mr. Dudley:

As members of the scientific community, we are writing to ask for full and prompt transparency of all scientific information associated with the environmental assessment of the Macondo Prospect oil spill following the tragic explosion of the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig on April 20, 2010 in the Gulf of Mexico.

As you know, the oil spill poses a significant risk to many public resources, including the waters of the United States and the Gulf region's diverse ecosystems. In the interest of minimizing harmful impacts and to facilitate timely recovery of impacted resources, it is essential that the scientific community and the general public have prompt and complete access to the scientific data collected.

We are greatly concerned with reports that BP is requiring confidentiality agreements in research contracts with scientists, which would preclude them from releasing any of their findings for a three year period. Failure to disclose this scientific information in a timely manner hides critically important information from the public -- the owners of the natural resources at risk.

BP stated unambiguously in its press release of May 21, 2010 that "We share with you a strong commitment to transparency."ⁱ On June 8th Secretary Chu of the Department of Energy stated that "Transparency is not only in the public interest, it is part of the scientific process."ⁱⁱ While the federal government has made public some Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) information, other key data relating to wildlife mortality and injury is simply not available. By facilitating a transparent process, BP

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and the federal government would also better enable university participation not only from the standpoint of academic freedom, but by increasing avenues for research funding – the pragmatic driver of much of our scientific knowledge. It is clear that both BP and the federal government have a legal, scientific and moral obligation to release information collected in the Natural Resources Damage Assessment and related investigations.

Anything less than full and timely transparency of all scientific information regarding impacts to our nation's natural resources would be a disservice to all U.S. citizens. We urge your prompt action in the best interest of protecting these public resources now and into the future.

Sincerely,

Doug Inkley, Ph.D., Senior Scientist, National Wildlife Federation

Bruce Stein, Ph.D., Associate Director, Wildlife Conservation and Global Warming,
National Wildlife Federation

Francesca Grifo, Ph.D., Senior Scientist and Director, Scientific Integrity Campaign,
Union of Concerned Scientists

Joel Kostka, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Oceanography at Florida State University

Ian MacDonald, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Oceanography at Florida State
University

Fiorenza Micheli, Ph.D., Professor of Biological Sciences, Marine Community Ecology,
Stanford University

Cary Nelson, President of the American Association of University Professors

Barry R. Noon, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Biology,
Colorado State University

Carl Safina, Ph.D., President and Co-founder, Blue Ocean Institute

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ⁱ www.bp.com/genericarticle.do?categoryId=2012968&contentId=7062348

ⁱⁱ www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com/go/doc/2931/601171/

