

Lisa Jackson
Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
Chair, Eco-System Restoration Task Force
United States Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

May 24, 2011

Dear Administrator Jackson and Secretary Sebelius,

The below signed organizations would like to express our concern about the growing health crisis on the Gulf coast. We believe action must be taken immediately to help the people of the Gulf coast who are currently suffering health impacts and those who will become ill because of the continuing impacts of the BP oil disaster. Specifically, we are writing to ask for the creation of a Task Force for health restoration to find and implement appropriate solutions to the growing health crisis on the Gulf coast.

We are asking you for:

- Comprehensive restoration. Our health, economy, and environment are interconnected and solutions must reflect this.
- A Gulf Coast Health Restoration Task Force that includes community members with decision-making authority to address our long and short-term health needs.
- The implementation of the Oil Spill Commission Report Recommendations on health. The Oil Spill Commission stated that EPA should develop distinct plans and procedures to address human health impacts during a Spill of National Significance (See pages 38-39).
- The publication of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) type documents containing lists of potential synergistic health effects of exposure to the combination of oil, dispersants, oil and dispersants combined, any natural and/or bioengineered bacteria, and any other chemical or “natural” product used in response to the BP spill.

As you know, between April 20 and July 15, 2010, it is estimated that 1.84 million gallons of Corexit 9500 and 9527 was applied to BP crude oil—1.07 million were applied to the surface of the Gulf of Mexico and 771,000 gallons were applied subsurface to the

wellhead. For every 93 gallons of oil discharged, one gallon of dispersant was applied. The amounts of crude oil discharged and toxic dispersants released are unprecedented and it was people of the Gulf coast who were the first responders to the BP oil disaster and continue to live in the most heavily impacted areas.

There is no understanding of what this toxic cocktail has done and will continue to do to the health of those living on the Gulf coast. Though the oil discharged for 87 days, communities are still reporting continued dispersant spraying, watching oil continue to wash up on our shores, and seeing devastating impacts on our marine life. **One year after the Deepwater Horizon explosion, the people of the Gulf coast are still in need of proper diagnosis, treatment, and medical monitoring.**

Currently, there is no government forum for those that are suffering from and concerned about the short and long term health impacts to share their stories and solutions, and from which to expect guidance and action. These concerns are therefore being expressed at other government-sponsored meetings, from the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force to NOAA's NRDA commenting session, and all the formal and informal listening sessions in between that are taking place across the Gulf coast. We cannot adequately move forward on these important ecosystem recovery and restoration issues while the health of our people is not being adequately addressed.

Making our communities whole again includes helping every man, woman, and child who has become and will become sick as a result of the BP Oil disaster. Restoring our environment also means restoring our community's health.

We look forward to hearing back from you on this very important issue. Please contact Tracy Kuhns by phone at 504-289-7162 or by email at bayoukeeper@cox.net or Marylee Orr by phone at 225-588-5059 or by email at marylee@leanweb.org to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

Atchafalaya Basinkeeper	Advocates For Environmental Human Rights
Air Alliance Houston	Alabama Coastal Heritage Trust
Alabama Rivers Alliance	Alamos Riverkeeper
Alaska Community Action on Toxics	Alaska Trollers Association
Altamaha Riverkeeper	Apalachicola Riverkeeper
Assateague COASTKEEPER	Asian Americans for Change
Association Of Family Fishermen	

Bayou Interfaith Shared Community Organizing (BISCO)

Big Blackfoot Riverkeeper Biscayne Bay Waterkeeper

Black Warrior Riverkeeper Boat People SOS

Bogota Riverkeeper Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER

Cahaba Riverkeeper Calhoun County Resource Watch

Cartagena Baykeeper Casco Baykeeper

Central Huallaga Riverkeeper Center for Fair Housing.

Center For Health, Environment & Justice (CHEJ),

Centro para la Sustentabilidad "Incalli Ixcahuicopa", Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana

Children's Environmental Protection Alliance NGO

Choctawhatchee Riverkeeper Citizens Against Toxic Exposure

Coastal Women for Change Cook Inletkeeper

Coosa Riverkeeper, Inc. Colorado Riverkeeper

Columbia Riverkeeper Commercial Fishermen of America

Community Development Task Force Inc

Countywide Family Development Center, Inc.

Delaware Riverkeeper Network Disaster Accountability Project

Earth Day Network Emerald Coastkeeper

Environmental Health Fund Environmental Health Strategy Center

Fannie Lou Hamer center for change Federation Of Southern Cooperatives

Fishing Partnership Health Plan Flint Riverkeeper

Florida Wildlife Federation Fraser Riverkeeper

French Broad Riverkeeper Fresh Fish Live Bait Co

Galveston Baykeeper	Global Community Monitor
Global Green	Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association
Greater Birmingham Ministries	Greenpeace US
Guardians Of The Gulf	Gulf Change
Gulf Islands Conservancy	
Gulf Organized Fishermen In Solidarity and Hope (GO FISH)	
Gulf Restoration Network	Gunpowder Riverkeeper
Hackensack Riverkeeper, Inc.	Haw River Assembly
Haw Riverkeeper	Housatonic River Initiative
Hudson Riverkeeper	
Immaculate Heart Community Development Corp. Inc.	
Indian Riverkeeper	Indiana Toxics Action
Interfaith Power & Light	
Isle de Jean Charles Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw	
Karen Bowman & Associates	LA Oystermen Association
Levees.Org	London Canalkeeper
Loretto Earth Network	Louisiana Bayoukeeper
Louisiana Bucket Brigade	Louisiana Environmental Action Network
Louisiana Shrimp Association	Lower Mississippi Riverkeeper
Lower Neuse RIVERKEEPER®	Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper
Kentucky Environmental Foundation	Magdalena Baykeeper
Mayday New Orleans	
Mary Queen Of Viet Nam Community Development Corporation	

Mercy Housing & Human Development

Milwaukee Riverkeeper

Mississippi Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities

Mobile Baykeeper

MS Coalition For Vietnamese-American Fisherfolks And Families

Natural Resources Defense Council

Neuse RIVERKEEPER® Foundation

NOLA Emergency Response

North Gulfport Community Landtrust

North Sound Baykeeper

Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance

Ogeechee Riverkeeper

Ouachita Riverkeeper

Puget Soundkeeper Alliance

Patuxent Riverkeeper

Quad Cities WATERKEEPER

Qiantang River Waterkeeper

Raritan RIVERKEEPER

RFK Center For Justice And Human Rights

Sabine Riverkeeper

San Francisco Baykeeper Emeritus.

Satilla Riverkeeper

Savannah Riverkeeper

Shenandoah Riverkeeper

Sierra Club

Silent No More Ministries

Silver Valley Community Resource Center

Silver Valley Waterkeeper

SouthWings

Southern Mutual Help Association, Inc

Southern Shrimp Alliance

Spokane Riverkeeper

Steps Coalition

St. Johns Riverkeeper

Surfrider Foundation

Tennessee RIVERKEEPER

Terrebonne Readiness & Assistance Coalition (TRAC)

Texas Injured Workers

Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services

The Delaware Riverkeeper

The Praxis Project.

The Solution To Pollution Project

The Zion Travelers Cooperative Center, Inc,

Tijuana Waterkeeper

Tri-Coastal Community Outreach, Inc

Treasure Coast Environmental Defense Fund

Turkey Creek Community Initiatives

United Commercial Fishermen of America

United Church of Christ (Justice & Witness Ministries)

United Houma Nation

United Louisiana Vietnamese American Fisherfolk

Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper

Upper Watauga Riverkeeper

Vaytka Riverkeeper

Waccamaw RIVERKEEPER®

Waterkeeper Alliance

Western North Carolina Alliance

West Virginia Headwaters Waterkeeper White Oak-New Riverkeeper.

Wings Of Care, Inc.

Yadkin Riverkeeper, Inc.

Cc:

David Lakey, MD, Texas Department of State Health Services

Bruce Greenstein, State of Louisiana, Department of Health & Hospitals

Mary Currier, MD, Mississippi State Department of Health

Donald Williamson, MD, Alabama Department of Public Health

Ana M. Viamonte Ros, MD, Florida Department of Health

Regina Benjamin, MD, U.S. Surgeon General