

Board of County Commissioners

Agenda Request

Date of Meeting: May 17, 2010

Date Submitted: May 13, 2010

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Benjamin H. Pingree, County Administrator
G. Scott McDermid, Director, Department of Public Safety
Scott Nelson, Emergency Manager, Wakulla Sheriff's Office

Subject: Request Authorization to Provide Background, Current Information, a Briefing by the Emergency Manager, and an Opportunity for Board Input and Staff Direction Relating to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico

Statement of Issues:

On April 21, 2010, an explosion on the mobile drilling platform Deepwater Horizon occurred approximately 130 miles southeast of New Orleans, Louisiana.

The resulting fire damaged the rig and it sank on April 22, 2010.

The rig contained 700,000 gallons of petroleum products, and it is unclear how much of that fuel was consumed by the fire.

Efforts to contain the crude oil leaking from the well have not been successful

Background:

On April 30, 2010, Governor Charlie Crist declared a state of emergency for Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay and Gulf Counties (Emergency Order 10-99 – Attachment #1)

On May 3, 2010, Governor Crist extended a state of emergency declaration for the coastal counties of Franklin, Wakulla, Jefferson, Taylor, Dixie, Levy, Citrus, Hernando, Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Manatee and Sarasota (Emergency Order 10-100 – Attachment #2)

On May 3, 2010, the Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners approved an Emergency Proclamation (Attachment #3)

Landfall Predictions:

Deepwater Horizon continues to discharge an estimated 5,000 barrels (210,000 gallons) per day.

BP is evaluating options for successfully reinstalling a dome intended to contain the oil discharge. On May 8, 2010, BP encountered a challenge placing the dome when the dome's opening became clogged with hydrates that form when gas and water mix under certain temperatures and pressures.

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BP continues its efforts to drill a relief well to eliminate the discharge.

The loop current is far south of the oil and there is no imminent threat that the oil will be picked up by the loop current. However, Florida continues to make preparations to safeguard the state's shoreline.

Should any impacts to Florida's coastline occur, these could potentially include tar balls – fragments or lumps of oil weathered into a solid consistency – oil sheen or tar mats – sheets of oil that are thicker than a sheen. Should individuals observe any evidence of oil on Florida's coastline, they should leave the area and report the incident to 1-866-448-5816.

State Actions:

On May 11, 2010, Governor Charlie Crist issued (Executive Order 10-101) creating an Economic Recovery Task Force to facilitate efforts by Florida businesses and industries in recovering from the loss of business and revenues due to the Deepwater Horizon incident.

On May 10, 2010, Governor Charlie Crist and Attorney General Bill McCollum called on former Attorneys General Bob Butterworth and Jim Smith to chair a Legal Advisory Council to explore options relating to the Deepwater Horizon incident and oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The legal advisory team will bring together private-sector attorneys and other experts who will use their expertise to begin assessing the impact the potential disaster could have on Florida.

As of May 11, 2010 at 8:00 a.m. the Florida Oil Spill Information Line was activated to provide Floridians with response information and resources about the Deepwater Horizon oil incident. Live operators will assist callers with questions and direct them to the appropriate source of information on the oil spill from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., 7 days a week. The Florida Oil Spill Information Line phone number is 1-888-337-3569. This number replaces the Florida Emergency Information Line in order to better serve Florida's residents and visitors.

On May 6, 2010, Governor Charlie Crist sent a letter to President Barack Obama requesting a \$50 million disaster National Emergency Grant from the United States Department of Labor as a part of Florida's response plans to the Deepwater Horizon incident. The following link provides a copy of the letter: http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/files/05062010_letter_obama.pdf.

On May 5, 2010, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) Sector St. Petersburg, DEP, and BP set up a Unified Command (in support of the Unified Area Command) at the USCG Sector St. Petersburg offices in St. Petersburg.

Governor Charlie Crist confirmed on May 4, 2010 that Florida will receive a \$25-million block grant from BP for initial state and local preparation and response costs.

The State Emergency Operations Center remains activated at a Level 2 or Partial activation. Two new support cells have been established to handle supplemental boom requests and alternative technology evaluation.

DEP conducted water and sediment sampling to use as a baseline and is monitoring air quality data. Statewide air quality monitoring is conducted in coordination with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The public can view this data at <http://www.airnow.gov/> or <http://www.epa.gov/bpspill/>. DEP, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), county governments, water management districts and several federal agencies continue to conduct pre-impact assessments, including sampling of water, fish, shellfish and habitats along the Florida coastline and into the Gulf of Mexico.

Analysis

Mark White, P.G., Program Manager with WRS Compass, is the assigned Environmental Consultant through the State of Florida's Emergency Operations Center.

Chuck Wein, is the representative from British Petroleum (BP), as assigned by the State of Florida's Emergency Operations Center.

Current Oil Plume Status

(Updated on May 13, 2010)

The 72-hour NOAA trajectory shows no oil landfall in Florida.

According to the NOAA oil plume model, the oil spill is 80 miles southwest of Pensacola, 172 miles from Port St. Joe, and 317 miles from St. Petersburg.

Moderate southeast winds of 10-15 knots and seas of 3-5 feet will continue today and tomorrow across the north-central Gulf as high pressure lingers across the western Atlantic. Winds will lessen slightly this weekend, but a general pattern of easterly wind flow will continue Sunday, which will continue to push the oil spill to the west-northwest through the next 72 hours. Floridians and visitors are reminded that the state's beaches and other attractions have not been impacted by the oil spill and remain open for public enjoyment.

Boom Placement:

Placement of boom is based on tides and where the oil is threatening, as well as direction given in each region's area contingency plan.

To view the Coast Guard Mobile Area Contingency Plan visit:
<http://ocean.floridamarine.org/ACP/MOBACP/StartHere.html>.

To view the Coast Guard St. Petersburg Area Contingency Plan visit:
http://research.myfwc.com/features/view_article.asp?id=3482

The booming strategy focuses on identified environmentally sensitive areas.

Estuaries and inlets are at the top of the list, not the beach areas.

This is to protect sensitive habitat that support wildlife and fish.

If the oil washes on the beach, the sand can be cleaned.

Note that booms are not a failsafe solution. They can become ineffective in high seas, strong winds, or currents over one knot

Florida's counties are working through the State Emergency Operations Center. Each county provides input, but the operational decisions for supplemental boom plans are made through the Florida Emergency Operations Center. The State Emergency Response Team is working with the counties, BP as well as the federal agencies to maximize protection and minimize impacts.

The Unified Command Operations Group is asking boaters to avoid damaging boom. Boom cut or broken due to boater traffic jeopardizes the protection that has been set up for the environmentally sensitive areas across the coast.

Health Effects:

At this time, there are no indications of any health risks to Floridians due to the Deepwater Horizon incident. The Department of Health (DOH) and DEP are closely monitoring health and environmental impacts to Florida's beaches and will notice an advisory if conditions become unsafe.

For most people, an occasional brief contact with a small amount of oil, while not recommended,

will do no harm. If contact occurs, wash the area with soap and water.

Consider the following tips for avoiding negative health impacts from an oiled shoreline:

- Avoid entering areas where oil can be seen or smelled.
- Avoid direct skin contact with oil, oil-contaminated water and sediments.
- Do not swim or ski in areas affected by the oil spill, and if traveling through the area by boat, take precautions when hoisting the boat anchor. If oil makes contact with skin, wash it off with soap and water.
- Do not fish in oil spill-affected waters.
- Do not harvest or eat dead fish, fish with oily residue or fish that have a petroleum odor.
- Avoid boating through oil slicks or sheens.
- Young children, pregnant women, people with compromised immune systems, and individuals with underlying respiratory conditions should avoid the area.
- Prevent pets from entering oil-contaminated areas.

To learn more about the potential health impacts and first aid measures regarding the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, download the frequently asked questions at:
http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/files/faq_doh_051010.pdf

Fisheries & Seafood:

Fishermen who wish to contact BP about a claim should call 1-800-440-0858.

FWC is working with DEP, county governments, water management districts and several federal agencies including NOAA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct pre-impact wildlife assessments. These assessments include samples of water, sediments, fish, shellfish and habitats along the Florida coastline and into the Gulf of Mexico. Assessments are needed to provide baseline information prior to the anticipated impact.

FWC urges citizens to report oiled wildlife to the Wildlife Distress Hotline at 1-866-557-1401.

For the safety of the public as well as the safety of animals, rescues should be conducted by trained responders. Untrained rescuers may cause more harm than good.

The following link provides tips FWC:

http://www.myfwc.com/NEWSROOM/10/statewide/News_10_X_OilSpill2.htm

Tips for Businesses and Consumers:

Florida residents are discouraged from signing any documents provided to them in return for money from BP or anyone else until they know the extent of their loss, which may be significantly higher than the money being paid. These may be fraudulent or premature.

The Attorney General's fraud hotline is open to receive any reports of fraud or price gouging. The hotline is 1-866-966-7226.

Be wary of insurance settlement scams -- For businesses who may have already begun the claims filing process with BP, first, make sure you are dealing with authorized representatives from BP and not scam artists; and be careful not to sign waivers of liability too quickly without getting adequate legal and financial counsel.

In all circumstances, affected businesses should file a claim with BP via the hotline number – 1-800-440-0858. Additional guidance to help small businesses survive a disaster can be found at www.MyFloridaCFO.com or by calling 1-850-413-3089 or toll-free at 1-877-MY-FL-CFO (1-877-693-5236).

Citizen Reporting

Report injured or oiled animals to the Wildlife Distress Hotline: 1-866-557-1401.

Report oiled shoreline to: 1-866-448-5816.

Report a change in Air Quality to: <http://www.epa.gov/bpspill/>.

Volunteer Opportunities:

For information on scheduled beach cleanups and other volunteer opportunities, visit www.VolunteerFlorida.org

BP has established a volunteer program and set up a toll-free number for those interested in volunteering. When calling, interested parties should communicate what activities they are volunteering and locations in which they are available to work. For information on assisting with the response efforts, please contact BP's community information line at 1-866-448-5816.

Summary:

The County EOC is currently being operated according to best practices and standing Board Direction. The purpose of this agenda item and Board presentation (during the regular meeting) is for staff and state appointed consultants, led by the County Emergency Manager, to provide the Board of County Commissioners with an up to the minute update regarding ongoing state and local

concerted efforts to address the oil spill incident. This presentation will allow commissioners and citizens the opportunity for interaction with these officials, the opportunity for response to questions and to provide input into the process. It is staff's intention to provide these updates, with associated opportunities for input, regularly throughout this incident during each regular Board meeting. Please also be aware that any actions requiring formal Board approval will be brought forth by the County Emergency Manager's office and in accordance with standard procedures.

Attachments

- #1 - Governor's Executive Order #1
- #2 - Governor's Executive Order #2
- #3 - County BOCC Emergency Proclamation
- #4 - Proposed Coastal Protection Plan – Wakulla County (to be distributed later)
- #5 - Participants and Stakeholders' List