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ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

MAJORITY (202) 225-2927  
FACSIMILE (202) 225-2525  
MINORITY (202) 225-3641

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June 28, 2010

Mr. James Mulva  
Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer  
ConocoPhillips Co.  
600 North Dairy Ashford  
P.O. Box 2197  
Houston, Texas 77232-2197

Dear Mr. Mulva:

At the June 15, 2010, hearing before the Subcommittee on Energy and Environment entitled "Drilling Down on America's Energy Future: Safety, Security, and Clean Energy," you and other oil company executives agreed that your oil spill response plans contain significant flaws.

Each of the oil companies' oil spill response plans are practically identical to the tragically flawed BP oil spill response plan. These oil spill response plans for the Gulf of Mexico even included references to protecting walrus and other animals that don't inhabit the Gulf and listed a deceased scientist as an emergency resource. You and other witnesses agreed that these flaws were "embarrassing."

No oil company appears to be better prepared for a disastrous oil spill than BP was. As Rex Tillerson of ExxonMobil testified during the hearing, "when these things happen, we are not well-equipped to deal with them." Our view is that the moratorium on drilling new wells in the Gulf should be reinstated until the oil companies can demonstrate that their oil spill response plans are capable of protecting the Gulf region from another subsea blowout.

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To assist the Committee in its investigation, we request that you provide answers to the following four questions no later than Friday, July 2, 2010:

1. Is your company's oil spill response plan for the Gulf of Mexico adequate to protect the Gulf region from the consequences of a subsea blowout similar to the blowout at the Macondo well? If so, please explain how this conclusion is reached.
2. Each of the five oil companies that testified on June 15, 2010, relied upon the Marine Spill Response Corporation (MSRC) and its equipment to respond to potential oil spills. The MSRC is now using its equipment to respond to the BP oil spill. Are there other resources and equipment available to your company in the event of an oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico that are not currently being used to respond to the BP spill?
3. Many resources that had been held in reserve for spills elsewhere in the country, such as the west coast and Alaska, have been transported for use in the Gulf of Mexico. Are there other resources and equipment available to your company in the event of an oil spill outside of the Gulf of Mexico that are not currently being used to respond to the BP spill?
4. Do you plan to revise your oil spill response plan? If so, when will this revision be completed?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman  
Chairman



Edward J. Markey  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Energy  
and Environment



Bart Stupak  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight  
and Investigations

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Joe Barton  
Ranking Member

The Honorable Fred Upton  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Energy  
and Environment

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The Honorable Michael C. Burgess  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight  
and Investigations