



# Clean Energy Jobs<sup>and</sup> Oil Company Accountability Act

## Oil Spill Response Plans

### **Background**

Under the *Oil Pollution Act*, vessels and oil facilities are required to prepare oil spill response plans and those plans are required to contain assurances about being able to respond to a worst case oil discharge.

### **Need**

The ongoing disaster in the Gulf of Mexico has revealed that the oil spill response plans maintained by BP and other oil companies for the Gulf of Mexico are faulty and inadequate. For instance, the oil spill response plan maintained by BP and a number of other major oil companies for the Gulf of Mexico contain measures to protect walrus and seals – those animals do not live in the Gulf of Mexico.

### **Legislation**

The Clean Energy Jobs and Oil Company Accountability Act also includes provisions as reported by the Committee on Environment and Public Works that require the development of oil spill response plans to address shortcomings identified in the wake of the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster. These new requirements would ensure that oil spill response plans:

- Demonstrate the operator's financial ability to respond to a worst-case discharge;
- Seek, to the maximum extent practicable, to prevent economic damages, job loss, and impacts to natural resources;
- Ensure that the response measures outlined in a plan are determined to be technologically feasible and appropriate to respond to a worst-case discharge; and
- Identify methods to respond to a blowout, performance measures for oil spill cleanup activities, and potential economic and ecological impacts of a worst-case discharge.