

CHARLIE MELANCON
3RD DISTRICT, LOUISIANA



WASHINGTON OFFICE:
404 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4031

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY
AND COMMERCE
COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

DISTRICT OFFICES:
8201 WEST JUDGE PEREZ DRIVE
CHALMETTE, LA 70043
(504) 271-1707
828 SOUTH IRMA BLVD., SUITE 107
GONZALES, LA 70737
(225) 621-8490
423 LAFAYETTE STREET, SUITE 107
HOUMA, LA 70360
(985) 876-3033
124 EAST MAIN STREET
SUITE 220-A
NEW IBERIA, LA 70560
(337) 367-8231

Congress of the United States House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

April 29, 2010

Eric C. Schwaab
Assistant Administrator
NOAA Fisheries Service
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Assistant Administrator Schwaab,

As repeated efforts to close the open well head at the Deepwater Horizon disaster site have failed, I urge you to prepare to direct disaster funding for the commercial and recreational fisheries industries in South Louisiana. Many of our fisheries and oyster beds are slated to open in the coming days and weeks. This hazardous oil intrusion will almost certainly have a detrimental impact on the fragile ecosystems that our seafood industry relies on.

As you know, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the Department of Commerce have authority under the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act (16 U.S.C. § 4107) and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C § 1861) to provide assistance to fishing communities affected by a disaster. NMFS will play a key role in designating this accident as a disaster and allocating funding to Louisiana and our fisheries. I will work in Congress to be sure the appropriate funds are available to draw down.

Every effort must be made – and made quickly -- to restrain the growing environmental and economic disaster off the coast of my state. But following these exhaustive efforts, it is imperative that we quickly enact all appropriate disaster funding for Louisiana's fisherman, oystermen and shrimpers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charlie Melancon".

Charlie Melancon
Member of Congress

cc: U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke