

CHARLIE MELANCON
3RD DISTRICT, LOUISIANA

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY
AND COMMERCE
COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 7, 2010

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President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As I'm sure you are aware, the state of Louisiana and numerous local communities on the Louisiana coast are engaged in ongoing operations to safeguard coastal marshes from the oil leak that began with the Deepwater Horizon disaster two weeks ago.

While the most important priority in minimizing the impact of this massive oil leak is to stop the continuing flow of oil from the Deepwater Horizon well, we must also ensure that the government is doing all it can to support the ongoing efforts of local fishermen and authorities laying protective boom along the coast. The boom-laying operation represents the last line of defense between the sensitive shoreline and the oil slick.

Local fishermen have been contracted by BP to lay lengths of boom to guard the most sensitive areas of the Louisiana coast. The fishermen working to deploy the boom are doing a tremendous job—they know the Louisiana coast better than anyone—but we're running into roadblocks. There simply isn't enough protective boom in Louisiana currently available to match the speed with which it is being deployed.

Reports indicate that shortages of boom have been widespread in the Gulf region, and that local officials are now looking internationally to find enough boom. Manufacturers are swamped with orders, and can't produce boom fast enough. Yet boom stockpiles exist in the US and internationally.

You have pledged the full support of the US military to help fight the spill, and one task military resources can be used in is helping with the mammoth task of transporting boom to the Louisiana coast.

That's why I'm requesting that you deploy military transport aircraft to pick up boom that the Horizon Deepwater Spill Unified Command locates in order to bring it to the Gulf Coast as quickly as possible.

Countless Louisiana jobs and the ecology of the Louisiana marshes depend on the success of our response to this oil leak. Please do not delay in assisting with efforts to locate additional sources of boom.

Sincerely,


Rep. Charlie Melancon

CC:

Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense
Janet Napolitano, Secretary of Homeland Security
Ken Salazar, Secretary of Interior