



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

June 10, 2010

Admiral Thad W. Allen
Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 2nd Street SW, Stop 7000
Washington, DC 20593-7000

Dear Adm. Allen,

We have heard that at least 17 countries have offered the U.S. assistance in dealing with the massive oil spill polluting the Gulf of Mexico.

The question has been raised as to whether the Jones Act might interfere with acceptance of any such offers, as the Act basically requires that work in the U.S. has to be done with American boats and American crews. The Act rightfully protects U.S. jobs, and under ordinary circumstances, we should be working to strengthen it even further.

But in this time of disaster, I believe we must use the Act's flexibility to put international resources to work protecting the Gulf and our coastline. It is my understanding that, under the Act, foreign oil spill response vessels may operate in U.S. waters on an emergency basis if the federal on-scene coordinator determines U.S. vessels are insufficient.

Admiral, I believe the orange mousse of oil that is now in Florida's waters is more than enough evidence that we need to take advantage of every appropriate global resource. Please advise as to whether we are taking full advantage of the offers of assistance from other countries.

Sincerely,

Bill Nelson