

*Tony Hayward, BP CEO, Before Energy & Commerce Subcommittee Today*

WASHINGTON, DC (June 17, 2010) – Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) made the following opening remarks at today's hearing with witness Tony Hayward, CEO of British Petroleum. The hearing, held by the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations was entitled, "The Role of BP in the Deepwater Horizon Explosion and Oil Spill."

Thank you Mr. Chairman for holding today's hearing.

At this very moment, oil is gushing from the Deepwater Horizon blowout, at a rate between 35,000 and 60,000 barrels a day, killing animals, destroying fragile wetlands, and wiping out entire populations of fish – and along with it, the jobs of hundreds of thousands of people.

Most upsetting about this travesty is that it could have been avoided. As the ongoing investigation by this Committee has already discovered, BP executives created an atmosphere where safety concerns were ignored in order to ensure that the company's already staggering profits this year, approximately \$93 million a day, continued unabated.

This appalling disregard for the Gulf Coast and its inhabitants is without question, one of the

most shameful acts by a corporation in American history. Sadly, the Deepwater Horizon spill is just the most significant example of BP's disregard for the environment and the well-being of its workers. A report published by the Center for Public Integrity found that between June 2007 and February 2010, BP received a total of 862 citations from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Of those, a staggering 760 were classified as being "egregious and willful," compared to just 8 at the two oil companies tied for second place.

Inexcusably, this pattern of behavior has continued in the spill's aftermath. I hold in my hands, a document called Voluntary Waiver of Release that BP made unemployed fisherman sign before they could be hired for spill cleanup. The waiver states "I hereby agree on behalf of myself and my representatives, to hold harmless and indemnify, and to release, waive and forever discharge BP Exploration and Production Inc. from all claims and damages that I or my representatives may have with regard to my participation in spill response activities. I know you now say this was an early misstep and that this was just a standard contract. But this was the first response that you had to people who were hired.

Outrage does not begin to express my feelings. These are people who are unemployed because of the recklessness of BP—forced to take jobs cleaning up BP's mess in order to survive-- yet, to qualify for those jobs, they had to hold BP harmless for any further damages they may suffer in BP's employ. This from a company that made \$93 million a day in the first quarter of 2010. Fortunately, a court trumped your fancy lawyers who wrote this document, but still it begs the question: How could you do that?

I am glad that you are here, Mr. Hayward. I expect you to explain why his company has operated in such a wholly unacceptable manner. In the final analysis, the simple fact remains that if BP had thought more about the residents of the Gulf Coast and the workers, whose widows you have heard from, rather than the already exorbitant profits of its share-holders, we wouldn't be here today.

