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ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
RANKING REPUBLICAN MEMBER
COMMUNICATIONS, TECHNOLOGY,
AND THE INTERNET



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

November 15, 2010

The Honorable Carol Browner
Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ms. Browner:

On May 27, 2010, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) declared a six-month moratorium on deepwater drilling, in conjunction with a 30-Day Report issued by DOI ("the Report") that made initial findings on the potential causes of the *Deepwater Horizon* explosion. The administration proceeded with its moratorium despite the fact that thousands of American jobs would be lost, the offshore oil and gas industry would suffer, and that it would have negative ramifications on U.S. domestic energy supply.

I am concerned that the Report's Executive Summary may have been misleading as drafted as it implied that the decision to impose a six-month deepwater drilling moratorium was peer reviewed by scientists and industry experts, when that was not the case. According to the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) review, it was your staff that was responsible for finalizing the Executive Summary of the report only hours before the Report was issued. The OIG's Investigative Report on the Federal Moratorium on Deepwater Drilling concluded: "After reviewing different drafts of the Executive Summary that were exchanged between DOI and the White House prior to its final issuance, *the OIG determined that the White House edit of the original DOI draft Executive Summary led to the implication that the moratorium recommendation had been peer reviewed by the experts.*" (emphasis added) The misleading nature of the Executive Summary was further noted by a group of peer reviewers that sent a letter to the Department raising their concerns.

I would like to know what prompted any last-minute edits that were made by your staff to the Executive Summary and whether these changes were made to bolster the case for the moratorium. Accordingly, I am seeking your detailed response to the following questions:

1. What edits were made by your staff to the original DOI draft Executive Summary, as determined in the OIG's Investigative Report?
2. What prompted these edits and under whose direction were they made? Please provide all written documentation concerning these changes and their authorization.
3. Was it the intention of you or your staff to misleadingly suggest that the Report's Executive Summary had been peer reviewed by experts, when that was not actually the case?

I look forward to seeing your timely response.

Sincerely,

Fred Upton
Member of Congress

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