

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Public and Non-Governmental Organizations Session

Commenter's Affiliation	Comment
General Public	What is your directive? How do you interpret the Executive Order? How does that interface or mesh with the Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA) process?
General Public	What are the death effects associated with the oil spill?
NGO	Disappointed that the African American community did not show up for the listening session.
NGO	Has benzene and toluene in her blood. Was diagnosed with cancer and her daughter had a complete hysterectomy due to exposure to benzene and toluene.
NGO	Are you going to deal with the health effects? We're coming down with cancer, leukemia and others. BP still picking up tar. Children swimming in the water, thirty years from now they'll have cancer. We need health funds for the future, to deal with being poisoned today.
General Public	Clean Water Act (CWA) fines need to be devoted to cleaning up the Gulf, but I'm not confident that fines will be paid. While waiting, there are things we can do. There are things the federal government could do that don't cost a dime, i.e., order an inspection of oil wells, refine old ones, and stop granting permits that don't meet the safety guidelines. The federal government has the power to do that right now. It could probably be done by Presidential Order.
General Public	Don't want anymore greedy, profiting oil companies. The oil companies are irresponsible. Clean up the wells that are out there now. It will be awhile before we get the CWA money, so they don't add to the problem. Please send this message to the Administration.



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NGO	The day before the oil spill happened, we had a healthy Gulf. Some people don't acknowledge that the Gulf has a problem. A lot of the money has been spent on publications, advertising campaigns. We need to put a cap on how much can be spent on advertising campaigns.
NGO	There may be a desire to divert monies on different priorities, i.e. like failing sewer systems, which should be fixed.
NGO	One priority of the Gulf is that 80% of the oil never made it to the surface, it is at the bottom of the water that is integral to the Gulf. The oil that is deeply underwater (the benthic layer) may never wash up.
NGO	We need a vibrant, involved council of local folks who can help in advising the direction of the Task Force Strategy.
NGO	What is the source of funding and how it will be used for? Are you providing guidance to the NRDA? Can any of the activities be directed towards helping the economy recover?
General Public	What will be the health of the Gulf in 30 years? The lawyers will get more money than anyone else. That bothers me greatly.
NGO	What health study will be conducted? We don't have good baseline for studies. Before people were hired to work on oil spill clean up, they should have received physicals and been provided with some type of ventilation. They have symptoms or may develop symptoms. How will health studies help people that have already been exposed to oil spill related chemicals? More tests need to be done on seafood. We need to provide true health care resources. We are also concerned about commercial fisherman and their livelihoods.



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General Public	You can have people tested, and the chemicals from the oil spill clean up will show up in their blood. I have benzene and dioxin in my blood.
NGO	Restore the Mississippi River to its natural flow, so that the sediments can flow back to Mississippi and Louisiana. Need the sediments, this should be a priority. Use sediments to restore wetlands.
NGO	There is a huge lack of knowledge. People tune out when they don't know if the fish and birds are OK. Use the people who are here: the people affiliated with institutions and research labs are waiting to do the work of studying the Gulf. Need long-term studies. For example, the turtles live 30 years before producing offspring: we won't know the impacts on them for 35 years.
General Public	Concerned about long term effects of oil spill as it relates to the environment and health. What is the restoration, what is priority in terms of state and local? What parties or entities are involved? Can we get a list of who is participating in the federal, state and local governments? Who could we call for information?
General Public	BP is being held liable for the incident. The people want to know how they can address their issues. Is there a list? Exxon Valdez was 20 years ago and they are still having issues. People here are having nose bleeds, headaches, etc.
General Public	Health effects of individuals will be measured over years . Will there be funds to measure these effects, and to cover people's health?
General Public	What will be the effect of the oil stirred up by fisherman's nets on the seafood, since 80% of the oil resides at the bottom? Will it be tested so we know it's safe?



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General Public	The first priority is to to prevent any more oil from being spilled. We have enough. How can we clean up what we have? Fines should be so high that no company would want to do it [allow another spill].
NGO	One of the biggest impediments is funding! How much of the fines will come to the coast? We want to be sure that at least 80% of the fines come to the coast, and be put toward moderate investments in health concerns.
NGO	One of the serious impediments is our own state leadership in Jackson, Mississippi. State government needs to adhere to, or be forced by the federal government to follow strict guidelines to managing federal funds. People Across America Funding, a \$5million recovery effort, was managed out of the governor's office. Those funds were not seen used. A certain amount of that money went to power companies as residents saw a pay increase. We need more oversight to ensure that delivery in resources are to the Gulf Coast and responsible people in charge of distribution.
General Public	BP employees often cover for one another. If you worked on cleaning up the oil, you could not go out when the wind was too high. An area about 60 wide in Horne Island was covered with oil. A BP representative told employees to stop, so that they would not see how severely impacted the island was. Employees, including myself, were treated inhumanely. BP only concerned about the money they're making. Staff workers were told to overlook clean up. Federal protection is needed.



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General Public	One of the main concerns is the red tape! Local agencies responded swiftly to environmental concerns, i.e., dolphins washing ashore. The local agencies were waiting on federal agencies to respond, and EVENTUALLY they did. Things need to be handled more swiftly. The red tape needs to be more simplified . It needs to be simple for the average person.
NGO	Too much red tape. 35,000 volunteers came down after the oil spill. What non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are being looped in with the gathering of the data? There are people with hearts in the right place who need to be involved. Audubon Organization, for instance, needs to be involved in collecting scientific data. There is a system of checks and balances...bring them in.
NGO	Thanks for listening to this talk. All of the impediments are very real and will pose problems. There needs to be transparency across federal, state, and local government. A central database is needed to see what studies show. It would be nice to be present information in a less technical manner for the general public's understanding.
General Public	As a scientist, I am bothered by politicians, especially republicans. We have to make sure that politicians don't create any unnecessary issues and let local scientists be involved. We need to call a constitutional convention.
General Public	One of the important things is transparency, and having people at the table. A regional citizen advisory council that can assist the Task Force in making decisions is needed. Citizens feel that they have been disassociated with the process; they need a sense of ownership. The Task Force needs a citizens advisory comprised of fishermen and other impacted people.



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NGO	Local resources need to be developed; use as many local resources as possible. The outcome would be the skill set to handle this type of disaster in the future. The community needs to be ready to handle a disaster like this in the future. Use a very scientific process and test future impacts.
General Public	The Gulf coast is very prosperous. We need real commercials showing the real Mississippi Gulf coast, not just the pretty beaches; and we need the money sent to us to do that. Need to spend the money properly. Need to support seafood.
NGO	Ultimately, a restored Gulf supports a healthy community. The Gulf is a part of a big science experiment. It has so many oil wells and we gain so much knowledge on how to respond in the future. Scientists needed to make scientific decisions not politicians, use science to guide the policy decisions. We do not need scientists paid by or influenced by BP.
NGO	Recommend the adoption by the Task Force of guiding principles that get local folk involved, thereby creating jobs for them. The Vietnamese community was heavily impacted and in need of jobs. The work needs to be performed by Gulf Coast residents. This can't be another opportunity for people to line up in DC to get contracts.
General Public	Reopen the NRDA clause/need a reopener clause in NRDA so that BP liability is germane. We've seen the acute effects, and now we are seeing the chronic effects associated with the oil spill; more sea turtle deaths and red snappers are not able to reproduce. We need to learn from the Exxon Valdez.
General Public	When a health survey is done in the African American community, the terminology needs to be broken down to commonly used terms e.g. use "sugar" for diabetes.



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General Public	A lot of African Americans are having problems completing applications for jobs. The disabled are told they need fishing license when Mississippi does not require fishing license for disable persons, consequently, these folk are being turned down for jobs.
General Public	Don't forget the barrier islands - Alabama to Louisiana. They are important habitat, protect our sediment as well as provide storm protection, and need the utmost attention.
General Public	Without a clean and healthy Gulf we are nothing and the economic outlook is dismal! We have no tourists, no fishing tournaments, and as a result, no financial gain for the Gulf. The Barrier Islands are critical to the Gulf. We need to clean up this mess properly.
General Public	Another Task Force has been formed: the Oil Spill Task Force. Remember the Sherman Antitrust Act dealing with monopolies? BP may be the largest oil investor in the world due to its size. There is a lot of money at their fingertips. BP will never lose any money so they could care less about the little people. The Task Force and grassroots organizations need to let everyone know what we are up against.