

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Moderator: Adora Andy, EPA
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Coordinator: Good afternoon everyone. Thank you all for standing by and welcome to today's conference call.

At this time your lines have been placed on listen-only for today's conference. During the question and answer portion of our call you will be limited to one question. Once again, you must limit your questions to only one at this time.

The conference is also being recorded. If you have any objections you may disconnect at this time.

I will now turn conference over to Adora Andy. Ma'am, you may proceed.

Adora Andy: Good afternoon, my name is Adora Andy, I'm the Press Secretary for the Environmental Protection Agency. Thank you for joining us for this press conference call to discuss dispersants.

On the call today are from the Environmental Protection Agency, Administrator Lisa P. Jackson; Paul Anastas, the Assistant Administrator of EPA's Office of Research and Development, Dana Tulis, the Acting Director of EPA's Office of Emergency Management.

From the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration we have Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Under Secretary of Commerce and Oceans and Atmosphere, and Dr. Dave - excuse me, and Dave Westerholm, Director of NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration.

Administrator Jackson will begin with brief remarks and Dr. Lubchenco will give brief remarks and we'll open it up for questions.

Right now I'll turn it over to Administrator Jackson.

Lisa P. Jackson: Thank you Adora and thank you all for joining us.

Last night I returned from my second trip to the Gulf Coast. I've met with local community members, government officials, and local scientists.

What I can tell you from those visits is that we continue to face an extraordinary challenge. Oil is rushing into the Gulf at depths we can't easily access.

We are working with BP and convening our best minds to try and find creative solutions.

We have mobilized on multiple fronts from the drilling of the relief wells to controlled burning to the further attempts to contain the leaks.

This is an all hands on deck challenge and people are working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

We are here today to talk specifically about one of the weapons in our arsenal, the use of dispersants.

Dispersants are chemicals that help break up the oil with the goal of preventing damage in the water and mitigating the potential impact of landfalls.

At current BP has been authorized by EPA and the Coast Guard to use dispersants on the surface of the spill. That came with specific conditions to protect the environment and the health of residents in affected areas.

This is an approach we are familiar with and a strategy we have turned to because one, we know that when they are used on the surface, dispersants biodegrade much more rapidly than oil.

And two, dispersing the oil will help reduce the amount and the intensity of oil that reaches the shores and fragile wetlands, an urgent priority at this time.

As I said, BP is authorized to use dispersants on the surface of the water. EPA is constantly monitoring air quality in the area and keeping local authorities updated on any safety concerns.

If you have any doubts about that monitoring, consider that I just returned from my second visit to the Gulf Coast and spent plenty of time breathing the air there myself, so I am particularly interested in the air monitoring data.

And you can find that air monitoring data that we're collecting. It's posted as it becomes available on www.epa.gov/bpspill.

BP has also been authorized to test the effectiveness dispersants used below the surface.

We believe that the subsurface use of dispersants could mitigate the impact of the spill without increasing the impact on human health and the environment.

That said, that would be an unprecedented use of dispersants. That is why EPA has not authorized the full scale underwater use of dispersants at this time. Instead we are rigorously testing their effectiveness.

So far BP has initiated three tests. For those tests, the EPA and the Coast Guard set limits on the time and the volume of use.

The first two tests were inconclusive and we are awaiting the results of the third test.

Let me be clear that no use of dispersants underwater is authorized until the test results have shown them first to be effective. We absolutely must be aggressive in tackling this spill and at the same time we will take absolute care to ensure that any efforts we take are not just substituting one challenge for another.

The effects of underwater dispersant use on the environment are still widely unknown. If it is determined to reduce the consequences of the spill and BP is authorized to continue its use, EPA and our Federal partners will require regular analysis of water and air quality.

In fact we are working to establish third party monitoring to ensure we are getting all the information we can. We reserve the right to halt the use of

subsurface dispersants if any negative impacts on the environment are seen to outweigh their benefit.

Dispersants are not the silver bullet. They are used to move us towards the lesser of two difficult environmental (unintelligible). Until we find a way to stem the flow of oil we must continue to take any responsible action that will mitigate the impact of the spill, and that is what we are doing.

I'd now like to turn it over to my colleague and an invaluable partner in this effort for certain, Dr. Jane Lubchenco.

Dr. Jane Lubchenco: Thanks Lisa. And let me just say on behalf of the 12,800 employees of NOAA how much we greatly value our close working relationship with you and with everyone at EPA as we respond to this crisis.

Since the early hours of this incident NOAA has been all hands on deck in support of the federal response to the Deepwater BP oil spill.

I've personally been to the Gulf region twice since the initial explosion and quite a few of our NOAA folks have been deployed to that region.

As the nation's leading scientific resource for oil spills, NOAA has been on the scene of the Deepwater Horizon incident from the start, providing coordinated scientific weather and biological response services both on scene and remotely to federal, state, and local organizations.

NOAA has satellites in space, planes in the air, boats on the water, and scientists in the field informing the federal response.

I think it's fair to say that response has been immediate and sustained. It's also been strategic and scientific. And of course when an oil spill occurs there are no good outcomes.

Dispersant use is one of the several tools that may be employed individually or in combination to minimize consequences of an oil spill. Their use is a tradeoff decision based on a belief that if used properly they would result in less overall environmental impact.

Dispersants reduce the impact of oil on shorelines, sensitive habitats, birds, mammals, and other wildlife. They allow for the rapid treatment of large areas, and they break up the sheet of oil into smaller components which allows them to dissipate into the water and degrade more rapidly.

NOAA continues to work closely with EPA and other federal partners to determine the most effective and appropriate use of dispersants. NOAA's scientific support coordinators are working as part of the unified command and advice on when and where dispersants should be used.

This oil is unprecedented and dynamic. As situations change and as we gain new information we need to continually reevaluate our response strategy, actions, and planning.

NOAA stands shoulder to shoulder to gulf communities during these challenging times.

And as we continue to work closely with our partners at EPA and all of the rest of the federal agencies in responding to this spill, as President Obama said when he visited the Gulf, quote, "We're going to do everything in our power to protect our natural resources, compensate those who have been harmed,

rebuild what has been damaged, and help this region persevere like it has done so many times before”, unquote.

Thank you.

Adora Andy: Thank you Administrator Jackson and Administrator Lubchenco. At this time we'll open the line for questions and we'll certainly take as many as time will allow.

(Jill) could you go ahead and open up the line?

Coordinator: Certainly. At this time if you would like to ask a question, please press star 1. Please be sure to record your name and affiliation to ask your question, and please limit your question to one per person.

Once again it is star 1 and please record your name and affiliation and limit yourself to one question. Please stand by.

Our first question comes from David Mattingly with CNN. Sir, your line is open.

David Mattingly: Thank you for taking my call. I'm really curious about quantity here.

With this dispersant what percentage of the oil or the hydrocarbons actually evaporate on the surface, and then what percentage of them sink to the bottom and remain in the environment?

Lisa P. Jackson: David, it's Lisa Jackson.

The long-term (unintelligible) transport of dispersants is one of the questions, especially when it comes to subsidy application, that has some answers but not as many as we would like.

Let me first make sure we all understand how dispersants work. When they're applied from the surface they're applied on a slick with specialized equipment.

They're applied in a plume. They form a plume or a cloud of oil droplets just below the surface of the water. That mixes vertically and horizontally into the water column. Obviously that means you have some pretty rapid dilution.

And the increase in surface area combined with chemical action makes for an ability for a bacterial and microscopic action to happen.

So I don't believe that dispersants have much if any impact on the volatility of the oil at the surface. The oil will volatilize as it weathers at the surface as it goes on.

If we have any other science on that...

Dr. Jane Lubchenco: This is Jane Lubchenco. I do want to emphasize something that Administrator Jackson said.

The question implied that there was oil that was ending up on the seafloor bottom and that's not what happens with dispersants.

The plume that is formed with dispersant use ends up in the water column and then it's degraded more rapidly than would be the case if it were remaining at the surface.

So it's not a case where we're simply transferring oil from the surface to the seafloor.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question comes from Bettina Boxall with the LA Times. Your line is open.

Bettina Boxall: Could you please tell me how much dispersant was released sub-surface and what way the tests have so far been inconclusive?

Lisa P. Jackson: The total amount released three tests conducted so far is 28,709 gallons -- this is Lisa Jackson. And the inconclusive is some of it is a matter of logistics.

The very first test there were some concerns with being able to get information data at the same time as dispersants were being applied. There have been some logistical issues.

The good news is that this last test - I think NOAA has done a wonderful job of getting some good data that we're in the process of reviewing. We have some additional sampling results that will be gotten from Louisiana State University from their lab.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question is from Debbie Charles with Reuters. Your line is open.

Debbie Charles: Thank you for taking my question. I have a question about the wildlife that's being reported dead.

I guess people are reporting that dolphins or turtles and other wildlife are showing up dead.

Do you have any - first of all is that true? Do you - have you seen that? And does it have any relationship to dispersants or to the oil?

Dave Westerholm: Yes, this is Dave Westerholm. And if I understood your question you're looking at the reports of the oil wildlife versus that which might have been dispersed oil on the wildlife.

At this point there's been a number of turtles that have been stranded. They have gone to labs for further testing.

There is no evidence that we've found thus far from the external view that they were oil and the internal necropsy of the animals will determine whether or not they were actually - died as a result of oil exposure.

But in that case most of the wildlife and animals you're talking about -- birds, turtles, mammals -- are really coated by surface oil and not the dispersed oil which is out clearly at the Deepwell injection site and right around that fresh oil that's emanating from the holes in the riser pipe.

Coordinator: Our next question comes (Jason Dureen) with The Associated Press. Your line is open.

(Jason Dureen): Hi, thanks for taking my question. This is for Dr. Lubchenco or Mr. Westerholm.

There are a number reefs in the area near the spill -- the pinnacle reef system - - and then a number of other ones moving East towards Florida that could be affected since there's so many dispersants being used in the oil and it's going into the water column.

I wonder if you could talk a little bit about, you know - we're talking about a tradeoff with the oil not reaching the shore from using so much dispersants, but then it does go into the water column and there are a lot of sensitive habitats and reef systems down there.

I'm wondering if you could expand on that and talk a little bit about these reefs that are in harms way?

Dr. Jane Lubchenco: (Jason) this is Jane Lubchenco. The monitoring that we do - that we are doing will enable us to get a better handle on what habitats will be affected if they are. Anything that we would say at this point is speculation.

There are a diversity of types of habitats in the Gulf. Many of them are very important in support of a variety of wildlife and fisheries.

At this point many of them are at risk of being affected but we don't have any direct way to know exactly which ones or in what amount.

I think it's important to note that the dispersants that are being used are one-tenth to one-hundredth the level of toxicity of oil. And so part of the tradeoff that we are using in making this calculation is to make a decision to use less toxic substances with the idea (unintelligible) impact.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question is from Sheila Grissett with Times-Picayune. I'm sorry for the mispronunciation, ma'am, but your line is open.

Sheila Grissett: Thanks. It's Times-Picayune in New Orleans.

I think all of us working on this story are inundated with emails, phone calls, and messages from the manufacturers of products that they claim are more effective and less toxic and even are already on the EPA's list.

Can you please talk about why you're using this - these particular dispersants and not using less toxic dispersants?

And also comment please, on whether there is one on the EPA's list that as proven in laboratory tests to be apparently almost 100% effective. Thank you.

Lisa P. Jackson: It's Lisa Jackson from EPA, I'll go first and then open it up to others who might want to comment as well.

And I just want to say for the record, I knew it was Times-Picayune.

But, you know, the approved list of dispersants - there's an approved list that is part of the Louisiana Plan. And obviously logistics and stockpiles and the ability of the responsibility to pull that material together, I'm sure has a lot to do with the ones that they choose to use.

They had a supply, they have their supplier and our regulatory responsibilities say that if it's on the list and they want to use it then they are preauthorized, if you will, to do so.

All I'll say about the other emails, and I'm sure you're getting them and we're all getting them and they're by well-meaning people I'm sure for the most part, who are trying to help.

Some might be entrepreneurs -- but that's great too -- is that this process of getting on the list requires toxicity testing, review by both the states that

would be impacted as well as by federal agencies. And there are others besides the two that are - and the Department of Commerce and NOAA that both represented here along with EPA. And so that decision just cannot be made lightly.

Toxicity testing and review is not something that can be done quickly and on the fly although I know that there are lots of people who would like to offer alternatives to the dispersants that have already been pre-approved for use.

Man: Yes, go ahead.

Dave Westerholm: This is Dave Westerholm. I would just like to add one point to that because I think this may be an important point for everybody out there who has an idea.

Admiral Allen, National Incident Commander has said that he does not want to leave any stone unturned. And the unified command down in that area set up what's called the ARTES, A-R-T-E-S System - the Alternative Response, and I believe Technical Evaluation System -- but I've got the acronym correct.

But that - there's a number on the - on our Web site and on the Deepwater Horizon Web site for people to call in with any idea, not just on dispersants.

So obviously as Administrator Jackson pointed out, dispersants have to be - go through an approval process. But for any alternative technology that might be of benefit, there's an evaluation team of federal scientists as well as industry and academic experts that has been put together to look at these ideas.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question is from Juliet Eilperin with The Washington Post. Your line is open.

Juliet Eilperin: Hi there. I was wondering if you could provide, and following up on what Administrator Jackson just said, what exactly you're testing right now.

You know, if you can describe what exactly you're looking for as you look at it's effects to the water column.

And, you know, give any kind of ballpark of how much testing or how much time you think it would take to be confident that this can be used at a broad scale sub-sea without negative environmental impact. Thank you.

Coordinator: Excuse me.

Adora Andy: (Jill), can you hear us?

Coordinator: No, we're not able to hear you.

Adora Andy: Can you hear us now?

Coordinator: I can hear you now.

Adora Andy: Okay, sorry about that, we'll start over.

Lisa P. Jackson: Sorry. Juliet, it's Lisa Jackson, sorry. What I was saying real quickly is that I'll start but I think several people in the room will want to add, particularly NOAA because they're doing a lot of the actual field work themselves.

The questions around the sub-sea dispersant tests, the primary question is, is it effective?

Is it as effective or reasonably effective, otherwise it doesn't make sense for us to introduce a new technique into other response -- a new tool into the kit if you will.

And so those include visual observations from the surface. It includes data that NOAA can speak to that look at issues of changes in particle size within the water columns.

They're also taking an initial look at dissolved oxygen as a first look at whether or not this is having an impact throughout the water column. And of course they're looking - there will be actual chemical testing and that's over at LSU Labs as I understand it.

The only thing I want to point out is that if dispersant sub-sea use of dispersants is used as a tool over time in a more regular manner, already on the EPA Web site, the epa.gov/bpspill, is a testing protocol that NOAA and EPA and other agencies have worked through to govern what I would say is more than that.

It's meant to be a go-no-go kind of testing protocol. Are we finding things as we use this method that lead us to believe we should stop and take a breath and pause or maybe stop entirely?

And we thought that was very important given that as we've said here this is quite novel. But I'll turn it over to others to give you a little bit more granularity on the testing.

Dana Tulis: Yes, this is Dana Tulis. What the Administrator said is right on and we have continued narrowly what we're calling is an adaptive monitoring approach.

So as we learn more about the science we do take the prerogative to continue to have additional reporting requirements.

At this point once the spill is (unintelligible) scale, we will require also biological testing with a 24-hour turnaround test. And we have very conservative indicators right where we would be looking at things like the (unintelligible) oxygen and those switch tests.

Ad before anything - and when I say conservative it means that immediately, if we meet a very conservative trigger we would take the decision back to all the sister agencies, immediately evaluate the data and determine whether or not we need to shut down before anything would actually happen which would harm the environment.

Dr. Jane Lubchenco: Let me just add to that -- this is Jane Lubchenco -- that the sampling that we're doing that complements what EPA is doing includes surface imaging both with satellites and with planes as well as water samples to look at the physical and chemical properties.

We're using thermometry measuring temperature and salinity dissolved oxygen, particle size analysis; a variety of other chemical and physical properties and then also some biological sampling as well.

So it's fairly comprehensive both (unintelligible) as well from the surface - I mean above the surface.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question is from Elisabeth Rosenthal with The New York Times. Your line is open, ma'am.

Elisabeth Rosenthal: Yes, thank you very much. I wanted to hear a little bit more about the reports of animals and dead animals on the - being found on the beaches. There were some reports this morning of some dolphins.

Do we have any sense of whether they're an abnormally number - high number of animals for this time of year? Have any of the autopsies been done yet?

And do you have any sense in which dispersants or oil might be implicated? Any concerns on that front?

Dr. Jane Lubchenco: This is Jane Lubchenco. I think we don't have definitive information for most of the individuals that have been found.

It's not unusual to see a large number of stranded turtles this year so we - you know. And as Dave indicated earlier, for the turtles there has been no evidence -- external evidence of oiling.

But we won't know until the necropsies are performed, what the actual cause of death was.

For the marine mammals I think we also are still in the discovery phase of this and we await results to be able to say something more definitive.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question is from Lee Bowman with Scripps Media. Your line is open.

Lee Bowman: Hi, thank you. I wanted to return just for a moment to the question raised by the Times-Picayune.

We've talked to several of these folks who actually have products that are on list and they're not novel people with innovative ideas, but things that have actually have been tested and put on the list, who are saying, you know, our products are markedly more effective, have been rated more effective, on your list for Louisiana crude.

And their contention is that they may in fact have less toxic side affects so it's not a question of logistics so much as it is a question of quality.

And I'm wondering if this becomes a product that is used over many months until other steps can be made, does it become an issue of a superior product needing to be considered in the interest of safety and efficiency.

Lisa P. Jackson: I -- it's Lisa Jackson. The other concern is also obviously availability and (unintelligible) in volume.

I mean we have already -- I think it's been acknowledged in the press already -- exceed volumes that have been used in other spills in this country. We're using an awful lot of dispersants.

So the other thing is obviously this is going on longer than one might have known on Day 3 or 4 that we would be still dealing with this fresh oil constant lease of oil.

And so we're seeing a need to continue to disburse the new amounts of oil that are coming out. So we are happy to have that conversation with BP about checking again on stockpiles of dispersants and what's available in sufficient

quantities to really be used given that as you heard, at the surface already we're talking over 400,000 gallons used already and in the subsurface.

If we were to use it, it may actually a lesser rate of dispersion which would be a good thing; less introduced into the system. But it would still be significant quantities that have to be stockpiled and brought and available.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question is from Mark Guarino with Christian Science Monitor. Your line is open, sir.

Mark Guarino: Hi, thanks for taking my question. I wanted to find out what exactly - what are the dispersants used? What are those dispersants being used, the 400,000 gallons by BP?

And what are- can you talk to the chemicals that are in those dispersants being used, what's at hand right now and what's inside those dispersants?

Lisa P. Jackson: It's Lisa Jackson. The two that have been used to date are Corexit 9527 and Corexit 9500.

If you want to see information on the constituents of those dispersants, they are available on the EPA Web site. I believe the MSG sheets are on the Joint Information and Command Web site.

The EPA Web site again is www.epa.gov/bpspill. Look for the Dispersant button tab on the EPA Web site.

It is a fact that some of the constituents are considered business confidential information. EPA does have access to that information but is not able to publish it.

And I have had people question whether we look at all the constituents when we look toxicity and when we look at our monitoring plans and I can assure you that we do.

We are looking at those that are publicly known as well as those that are confidential in determining how best to monitor air and water.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question is from Anita Lee with Sun Herald.

Anita Lee: Yes, I was wondering, on the two types of dispersants, the 9527A and then the 9500A, they do contain different things. Are they being used interchangeably or is one used in some circumstances and the other in the other or how is that working?

Dana Tulis: Really -- this is Dana Tulis, EPA -- really, all of the lists on the product lists and many, as the Administrator of EPA said earlier, there's - are similar and they're all approved and either they can be used as a balance of what available in terms of volume.

Earlier on 9527 was used and the - we did run - they did run out of the product.

There is at this point 9500 is being used; a small stockpile. 9527 was just found. So really what we're talking about is just a very, very large volumes and being able to get those volumes that are needed out into the area that's affected.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question is from Tom Philpott with Grist Magazine. Your line is open.

Tom Philpott: Hi. I would like to drill down a little bit on the ingredients in the two dispersants being used.

I know that in 9500 there's a major ingredient called 2-Butoxyethanol. And I'm looking at the Haz-Mat of it right now and it seems to suggest that it's pretty toxic at low concentrations, so if you could talk through that.

And the second part of my question is, could you also talk through the question of supply? As I understood it as of a couple of weeks ago already, we - you guys had about a third of the global supply dispersants down there in the Gulf.

The situation seems to not be ending any time soon. Dispersants seems to be a key part of the strategy for controlling it. How much dispersants are there in the world and are you going to run out before all is said and done?

And what are the implications of running out?

Lisa P. Jackson: To the question, Paul Anastas, our Head of EPA's Office of Research and Development is on the phone. Paul, would you like to talk a little bit about the chemical constituents?

Paul Anastas: Yes, thank you. You are correct that one of the dispersing agents does have 2-Butoxyethanol, but I think you may have confused the number.

The Corexit 9527 does contain 2-Butoxyethanol. The Corexit 9500 does not.

The Corexit 9727 has been around since the '80s and over time the dispersing agents have been coming both more and more effective and also more environmentally friendly.

The 9500 has removed the Butoxyethanol and is using other substances for solvating the dispersant which obviates the need for the Butoxyethanol.

So then 9527 was being used originally but due to supply the 9500 is now being used at the current time.

Lisa P. Jackson: The -- it's Lisa Jackson again -- as far as whether or not we're going to have a limiting factor in terms of the stockpile, we're told by operations that BP, and I believe the Coast Guard has confirmed this, that that is not a limiting factor at this time.

That they are arranging for a sufficient stockpile of the approved dispersant in order to keep using it.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question is from Phil Keating with Fox News. Your line is open.

Phil Keating: All right, thanks everybody. Regarding the third test of the sub-sea dispersant dispersal, last week I believe I recall, it was abandoned because of the environmental concern and the inconclusive data. And then on Monday it was announced that they were conducting this third test.

Did the failure of the underwater dome on Saturday play a role in that, in that suddenly it was clear 85% or thereabouts of the oil was not going to be collected for another further extended period of time and that maybe this measure of doing the sub-sea application suddenly had a little more urgency?

Lisa P. Jackson: Mr. Keating, hi this is Lisa Jackson from EPA.

I don't think you have accurate information with respect to the testings and so then you're drawing erroneous conclusions potentially.

The second test was conducted. There was - when the cofferdam was being deployed there was some need to logistically to bring all hands on deck. And when I say hands I mean robots because they're not people down there deploying it.

And so there was a period of time when the ROVs were not available for other work. But that is not - those two decisions are absolutely not related.

The test was done, there were some logistics in getting sample results, but then the third test was envisioned. And I imagine it's true that if the cofferdam had been successful we would have a much smaller amount potentially to be worried about.

But there's always been a desire to test sub-sea dispersant use because again, I repeat, it is a tool in the toolkit.

The other tools, things like (unintelligible) burning; things like skimming, things like aerial dispersing are weather and time dependent, and there is some attractiveness to the idea that sub-sea dispersant could be done during non-daylight hours and with some independence from surface weather conditions.

And so it has been something that has been in our conscious from fairly early on.

There's also some belief that you can use less dispersant if you use it in the sub-sea that you need to apply at the surface.

And we also know that research shows that dispersant is most effective on younger oil and so obviously the oil is pretty young when it comes out in the sub-sea.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question is from Ben Raines with Press-Register in Mobile, Alabama. Your line is open.

Ben Raines: Thank you. I was talking to Dr. (Stone) over at LSU today and he said that Alabama and Mississippi are almost certain to see some sort of slick coming ashore within the week and may be diluted.

I'm wondering how close to shore are you all considering using dispersants and whether we're talking even inside the barrier islands.

Lisa P. Jackson: So I'll turn it over -- this is Lisa Jackson -- I'll turn it over to Dana in a minute to give some details.

Obviously, the sub-sea dispersant is being used at the point of the leak in the tests that have done and so I assume you mean on the surface, the aerial applications.

The plan under which the use of aerial dispersants was approved prohibits any application within three miles of shore.

That being said, the Coast Guard has been looking for dispersant use as close to the new oil -- the slick new oil that's coming out of the ground -- as possible.

So in general, because this rig -- the former rig -- was located so far offshore, we're talking about distances significantly greater than three miles. There's been nowhere near three miles. I think it's probably in order of magnitude more like 30 miles.

Dana Tulis: Right, so -- this is Dana Tulis -- so in addition to the - we do not closer than three miles to the shore regardless, although as the Administrator said, what we're trying to do is get at the source which is much further out anyway. And there's also a depth of no further down than ten meters.

So if it's shallower than ten meters we can't have effective distribution of the dispersant within the subsurface and we cannot apply it.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question is from Andy Segal with CNN. Your line is open.

Andy Segal: Yes, hi I had a question about the standards that you use for approving dispersant.

It doesn't sound that all dispersants are created equal, so my question is who made the standards? Did the industry have a role in these standards and do you think you need to revisit the standards so that you're not using a dispersant like 9527 when you could be using 9500?

I mean why are they using the one that has the toxic chemical in it when there's another one around that doesn't? Thank you.

Lisa P. Jackson: Hi, this is Lisa Jackson. The process for approving dispersant which obviously happens outside of our normal emergency response operations, requires the

company to submit that makes dispersants -- not the companies who use it -- but the companies who manufacture it -- to submit to EPA toxicity data and the results of tests that they do on the material for which they are looking for approval.

That information is reviewed by EPA against the number of criteria and decisions are made based on looking at how those tests compared to criteria that EPA has.

I'm happy to give you some more information on that but we don't want me personally to do that.

What I'll say is that there are many other considerations I think, that go into looking at the list of available approved dispersants and then deciding which one actually gets used.

And those decisions are made between the suppliers and the responsible party who is required by law to take action on responding to this spill and they're responsible for.

And so the idea of a pre-approved list came out of the concept that we didn't want to be in the field trying to decide what to use and where it might be used and where best to use it.

We're doing that in the case of the sub-sea dispersant because we don't have a pre-approved list for that. It is a novel technique.

But the idea of aerial application of dispersant being used - a common tool in the toolkit, it's well accepted; it was before this.

The only difference here is that the aerial extent and the amount in the ongoing nature of the response, it's been effective but it means that we're using large quantities of it.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question comes from Jeff Young with PRI's Living on Earth. Your line is open.

Jeff Young: Hi. First a quick word of thanks. I think this has been very helpful.

If the flow of oil can't be stopped for some time, how long do you foresee using dispersants at the level that you're using them? Is there some point at which the total volume used becomes problematic?

And is there any precedent you can look to for guidance on using dispersants at this kind of volume?

Lisa P. Jackson: Lisa Jackson again. Dispersants has certainly been applied to much smaller spills off the coast of the U.S. and certainly off the Louisiana and Texas coast over the last 15 years.

In terms of precedent, there was a well blowout near Veracruz, Mexico in 1979 between one million and 2-1/2 million gallons but mostly Corexit products were applied over a five month period on that oil discharge.

That was the IXTOC 1 well blowout near Veracruz, Mexico 1979.

Australia last year 50,000 - 50,000 gallons of dispersants were used on the oil platform spill.

And in the United Kingdom dispersants are considered first line of defense because they high seas and rugged coastlines.

In 1996 118,000 gallons of dispersants were used on the 20 million gallon Sea Empress oil spill in Wales.

So that's just a brief history of some - history of dispersant use.

I think it is fair to say that when it comes to these volumes we're in uncharted waters, to use a bad pun.

And, you know, every spill is different and one of the tasks of the Federal On-Scene Coordinator and the National Response Team with EPA chairs, the National Incident Commander that the President has now put in charge of this, is to try to constantly be adapting our sampling and our management strategy to look to the issues of the day.

We're certainly aware that we're running up a large gallonage of use here but again, we're looking at continued release and an all hands on deck effort to try to minimize the likelihood that this stuff hits those very fragile wetlands and marshes and those valuable and much beloved shorelines along the Gulf Coast region.

Adora Andy: (Jill) it's Adora. We can probably take just two more questions.

Coordinator: Okay. Our next question will be from Paul Quinlan with Greenwire. Your line is open.

Paul Quinlan: thanks for taking my question. Just two very basic questions.

Do you know how much of the total gallons that have been put out, how much 9500 versus how much is 9527?

And then how much more is on order at this point from Nalco or from whoever else you might be trying to obtain it from?

Lisa P. Jackson: We'll probably need to defer the Coast Guard Operational Command on gallonages used of each one.

We had heard roughly 50/50 but we can't confirm that so we're a little uncomfortable with giving you -- this is Lisa Jackson, sorry -- giving you numbers.

The data we had as of May 10, is that there another 805,000 gallons ordered and there were already 500,000 gallons staged.

Obviously if you recall, we planned for the absolute worse and we hoped for the best. So the hope we be that we're not going to have to use all that. But those are approximate levels of what's already been ordered.

I can't confirm that it's all from - of the corrected product but we'll try to get you a little bit more information on that.

I cannot confirm sorry, that it's all corrected. But I do know that those are total dispersant volumes.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from Natasha Loder with The Economist. Ma'am, your line is open.

Natasha Loder: Oh hi, can you hear me? When you do a scientific test properly, it's supposed to be conclusive either way.

Would I be correct in saying that your first two tests to the undersea dispersant, there was some kind of sampling issue. And if that is correct, have the third test results resolved this?

And if it's not correct then (unintelligible) first two tests?

Lisa P. Jackson: Lisa Jackson - I think it would be fair to say that the first two tests had varying degrees of logistical difficulty in getting the sample, getting them at the right time, getting them to the lab in a timely manner, and getting results back.

And they were not done in a way that allowed us to get the kind of data that we already know we'll be able to look for this third test.

So again the good news is that we know samples at the LSU laboratory. But we also have a fairly good database of raw information and data that NOAA collected that scientists are right now pouring over and trying to correlate in order to make a recommendation.

I don't know if anyone wants to add anything to that.

Dana Tulis: And of course the other complication was going down for the 5000 feet. And so what was done is samples were taken at steps further up, up to 1500 feet.

And so that enabled us to be able to get more data at different depths as well because it was logistically difficult at the 5000 feet.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from Kevin Gallagher with LA Radio Network News. One moment.

Kevin Gallagher: ...coming from the Gulf right now?

Coordinator: Mr. Gallagher I apologize, could you repeat your question, please?

Kevin Gallagher: My question is the Corexit products that are being used, are they the same Corexit products that the British have banned for potential threat to humans and to animal life?

And for Ms. Jackson, would you eat seafood coming from the Gulf right now?

Lisa P. Jackson: Seafood yesterday in New Orleans so - and yes, if it's coming from a place and it's being caught from those areas where NOAA or the state have not banned it so it's not being illegally caught, I would certainly eat it and I would enjoy it.

As to the answer to your other question, I can't answer it so I'll ask if anyone knows which products Britain has banned?

Dave Westerholm: This is Dave Westerholm. I'm sure which ones they've banned but there are a number of previous Corexit products that EPA no longer allows on their current list.

So the list continues to get updated. I would - I think we have to check on that but my guess would be that the ones that EPA now longer allows to be used are the same ones the British people no longer are allowed to use.

Adora Andy: All right (Jill), thank you very much. And thank you to our participants on this call.

Coordinator: That does conclude today's conference call. We thank you all for participating. You may now disconnect and have a great afternoon.

END