

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 227

BY SENATOR CROWE

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Health and Hospitals to study the medium- and long-term health effects of the British Petroleum oil spill on the health of the residents of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, on April 21, 2010, the Deepwater Horizon oil platform operated for the benefit of British Petroleum (BP) and located about fifty miles southeast of Southwest Pass at the mouth of the Mississippi River exploded, killing eleven platform workers and instigating an oil leak that continues to gush crude oil and natural gas into the depths of the Gulf of Mexico in amounts not adequately measured at this point; and

WHEREAS, the estimates of the amount of oil and gas being leaked into the Gulf of Mexico range from five thousand barrels a day to an estimate given by scientists watching video of the oil and gas leak which is nearly five times the official estimate by BP, the responsible party for the drilling accident; and

WHEREAS, several months after the spill, an estimated thirty million gallons of oil had already leaked into the Gulf of Mexico, exceeding the eleven million gallons of oil that resulted from the Exxon Valdez disaster; and

WHEREAS, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill is the worst oil spill in Louisiana and United States history and is the worst environmental disaster the United States has faced; and

WHEREAS, in response to the oil spill, BP tried for months to stop oil from spewing into the Gulf of Mexico; and

WHEREAS, BP has tried to stop the oil by using all of the following means: (1) a containment dome to cover the leak and funnel the oil to the surface, which was unsuccessful; (2) an insertion tube to pump oil to the surface, which at best appears to be capturing only about twenty percent of the oil; (3) the "top kill" method in which viscous drilling fluid is pumped into the leak, which was unsuccessful; and (4) the lower marine riser package cap containment system, which required cutting off the damaged riser pipe at the

top of the failed blow-out preventer, and this procedure has been successful to some degree but it has not completely stopped the leak; and

WHEREAS, as part of its oil leak response, BP has been using dispersants that contain human health hazards, in particular, Corexit 9500, containing solvents that are listed as hazardous substances, and Corexit 9527a, containing 2-butoxyethanol, a known acute human health hazard that may cause injury to red blood cells, the kidney, or the liver; and

WHEREAS, under fire conditions, both of these Corexit products may evolve into and emit noxious oxides, which further endangers response workers; and

WHEREAS, BP is simultaneously burning the oil slick and applying Corexit dispersants, resulting in the poisoning of the air and water along Louisiana's coast; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Agency ordered BP to find a nontoxic dispersant to use on the oil leak due to concerns about the long-term effects of Corexit; and

WHEREAS, BP agreed to reduce the amount of Corexit used in the Gulf of Mexico but has continued to use Corexit in its response efforts; and

WHEREAS, in 2010 more than five hundred birds had already been found dead across the leak region, and since that year more than two hundred sea turtles and thirty mammals have also been discovered dead; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana's commercial and recreational seafood industries represent four billion dollars annually in economic impact to Louisiana and its coastal communities; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the seafood industries, Louisiana's restaurants, tourism, and other small businesses have sustained economic impacts due to the oil leak; and

WHEREAS, over one hundred miles of Louisiana's shoreline have been impacted by oil coming ashore; and

WHEREAS, the efforts of BP have thus far failed to protect the coast, marshes, and estuaries of Louisiana, its citizens and businesses, which failure has resulted in an economic crisis for this state, its citizens and businesses; and

WHEREAS, the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana has serious concerns related to the medium- and long-term effects of the BP oil spill and the use of Corexit on the health of the residents of Louisiana.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Health and Hospitals to study the medium- and long-term health effects of the British Petroleum oil spill on the health of the residents of Louisiana and report back to the Senate prior to the 2016 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the attorney general and the secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE