

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COUNCIL (NEJAC)
Public Teleconference Meeting
June 15, 2010

Victoria Robinson: Hello everyone. Welcome...

Female: (Inaudible).

Victoria Robinson: Welcome to the 32nd Public Meeting of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council. NEJAC is the Federal Advisory Committee of the US Environmental Protection Agency and has been providing valued advice to the agency for 16 years.

My name is Victoria Robinson. I'm EPA's Designated Federal Officer for the NEJAC.

To the members of the NEJAC, welcome and thank you for taking time to participate in this important call. Your dedication as volunteers and willingness to serve are greatly appreciated as with your input to EPA about how to strengthen our environmental (inaudible) efforts. I'd also like to extend a thank you to all the members of the public who are listening, those who will be participating as presenters today and those who will be providing statements during the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

More than 360 people have registered to listen to today's call, the purpose of which is to share information about EPA's activities related to the Gulf of Mexico – Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

As far as EPA's continuing efforts in transparency and access to information, this teleconference meeting is being audio recorded and a verbatim transcript is being prepared.

We will also prepare a written summary of the meeting. We anticipate posting an MP3 file along with individual podcast segments and a written meeting summary within the next two to three weeks.

That information, as well as past meeting recordings and NEJAC reports, can be found on the NEJAC website at www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/NEJAC.

I would like to remind all NEJAC members and presenters to please state your name and affiliation clearly for the record, before you begin speaking. And please talk directly into the handset so that note takers can clearly hear you and so we can clearly discern who is speaking when creating the podcast for the meeting.

We need to be able to make sure we can capture this information for the official record. Also, because this call is being recorded, we have asked that the NEJAC members and those who will be participating in the discussion and public commentary to please refrain from using speaker phones, which can distort the quality of the recording.

Members, if we must use a cell phone or a speaker phone, please mute your line until you would like to ask a question and make a comment.

At this time, I'd like to do a quorum call to make sure we have all the members onboard. And as we do that, we'd like to especially welcome and acknowledge our 10 new members.

I'm going to ask Aaron Bell, the Program Manager for the NEJAC to do – conduct the quorum call.

Aaron Bell: Good afternoon council members. Please acknowledge your presence by saying "here".

Elizabeth Yeampierre.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Here.

Aaron Bell: John Ridgway.

John Ridgway: Here.

Aaron Bell: Kathryn Brown.

Kathryn Brown: Here.

Aaron Bell: Paul Mohai, Patricia Salkin, Chuck Barlow.

Chuck Barlow: Here.

Aaron Bell: Sue Briggum.

Sue Briggum: Here.

Aaron Bell: Hilton Kelly.

Hilton Kelly: Here.

Aaron Bell: Langdon Marsh, Shankar Prasad.

Shankar Prasad: Yes.

Aaron Bell: Wynecta Fisher.

Wynecta Fisher: Here.

Aaron Bell: Jodena Henneke.

Jodena Henneke: Here.

Aaron Bell: Don Aragon, Peter Captain, Sr., Jolene Catron.

Jolene Catron: Here.

Victoria Robinson: OK. I also know that we – that Langdon, he may not – he may be on mute but Lang was on the line and so was Don Aragon. They were (led in). OK.

Langdon Marsh: I'm – I'm here. This is Lang. I'm here.

Victoria Robinson: OK, wonderful.

Savi Horne: Savi Horne. I'm here.

Victoria Robinson: We're going to – we're going to go ahead in the quorum call with the new members now Savi. We're going to go ahead have Aaron call those names out. Aaron, call those names out.

Savi Horne: OK.

Aaron Bell: Teri Blanton.

Teri Blanton: Here.

Aaron Bell: Father Vien T. Nguyen, Margaret May.

Margaret May: Here.

Aaron Bell: Kimberly Wasserman, Stephanie Hall, Savi Horne.

Savi Horne: Here

Aaron Bell: Vernice Miller-Travis, Nia Robinson.

Nia Robinson: Here.

Aaron Bell: Nicholas Targ.

Nicholas Targ: Here.

Aaron Bell: Edith Pestana. That's all the council members.

Victoria Robinson: OK. That's – I believe 17 individuals. We've established quorum. I would also like, at this time, to acknowledge and congratulate the new chair of the NEJAC, Ms. Elizabeth Yeampierre, and the new vice-chair, John Ridgway.

Elizabeth is the Executive Director of UPROSE, Brooklyn's oldest Latino Organization and she's been a member of the NEJAC for several years.

John is a manager of the State of Washington, the Department of Ecology and he's also serving the NEJAC for several years. If there are no questions at this point, I'd like – I'd like to turn this over to the NEJAC Chair, Elizabeth Yeampierre.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you, Victoria. It did, well, peace and blessings (inaudible). It is indeed an honor and a privilege to serve in this capacity, particularly, because I am the first Latina to serve as the Chair in the NEJAC's history and given our demographics in this country and our long history in this nation and the development in states like Arizona, the importance of this position and what it represents is not lost on me.

As a Latina of African and indigenous ancestry, I've always tried to work to build community and build differences, and bridge differences between people. But it is something that cannot be done if we are underrepresented. So, consequently, I hope that as Chair, I'll be able to ensure that we are all at the same table.

I want to welcome all the new members of the NEJAC and say a warm hello to all the older ones that are with us today. Today, we're gathered as an Environmental Justice Community allied and supportive to discuss the Environmental Justice implications of one of the worst environmental disasters in our nation's history.

And it wasn't that long ago that the NEJAC submitted a report to EPA which Charles will be talking about entitled the "2005 Gulf Coast Hurricanes and Vulnerable Populations, Recommendations for Future Disaster Preparedness and Response".

We know that a visit to Louisiana, the Gulf, will tell you that this disaster – that after Katrina that there has been unfinished business. And this new offense against the citizenry and ecosystems of the region has only exacerbated an already fragile community.

So, today, it's an extremely important gathering to discuss what the implications are. Before we begin today's discussion, everyone should have received a discussion framework and agenda with you, your registration confirmation.

First, we'll hear remarks from Mr. Charles Lee, director of EPA's Office of Environmental Justice followed by presentations from Ms. Sharon Gauthé and Mr. Derrick Evans who will provide a local community perspective on the recent oil spill.

Before proceeding to the Q&A for members, we'll hear brief presentations about EPA's response activities from Lisa Garcia, Senior Policy Advisor to the EPA Administrator for Environmental Justice.

Mathy Stanislaus, assistant administrator for EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response. Mathy is also a former NEJAC member. Cynthia Giles, assistant administrator for EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance.

Peter Silva, assistant administrator for EPA's Office of Water. And, Beth Craig, deputy assistant administrator for EPA's Office of Air and Radiation. Those remarks will be followed by questions from NEJAC members and a Public Comment period.

We will begin the Public Comment period promptly at 2:30. We will ask members to hold questions until after all presenters have had an opportunity to speak. We want to make sure that there is plenty of time for the public to be able to comment as well.

And then, we will have EPA Administrator, Lisa Jackson joining us. She will be participating in the call today, and she will speak immediately following the Public Comment period.

The meeting will wrap up and adjourn following the administrator's remarks. Are there any questions about the agenda?

Jolene Catron: This is Jolene Catron: I have no questions about the agenda. But could you please remind us how we mute online, please?

Victoria Robinson: This is Victoria. To mute and unmute your line is star six.

Jolene Catron: Thank you.

Victoria Robinson: OK. Also there is a slight change in the order, Elizabeth. After Lisa Garcia will be Mathy Stanislaus and then it will be Cynthia Giles.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: That's the order I had.

Victoria Robinson: OK.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: OK. So the order is the same. OK. So, we'll begin now with the presentation from Charles Lee. Charles?

Charles Lee: Thank you, Elizabeth. And I want to start by congratulating you on being appointed as the NEJAC Chair. We are really excited about your serving in that capacity.

I want to welcome all the NEJAC members, especially those of you who are newly appointed. And we look to – forward to working with you as well. I want to welcome the EPA Senior Assistants who are here – Lisa Garcia, Mathy Stanislaus, Cynthia Giles, Pete – Peter Silva, Beth Craig and the administrator's going to be joining us later.

I direct the Office of Environmental Justice and we are responsible for supporting the NEJAC. I'm going to keep my remarks very short. Also, you can hear from the officials I identified before.

I want to acknowledge the fact that disaster response in the Gulf Coast of the United States is an issue that the NEJAC cares deeply about and has dealt within the past. As Elizabeth said in 2005, the NEJAC produced the report in the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The main recommendation of that report is that Environmental Justice should be a critical part of the EPA Disaster Response System, and the NEJAC met with groups, community groups in Louisiana and Mississippi to develop these recommendations.

I will highlight three of these. The first is that EPA should identify vulnerable populations and the environmental and health needs through the use of mapping tools. The second is that EPA should engage – should ensure community engagement with Environmental Justice communities in developing, implementing disaster response plans.

And thirdly, EPA should incorporate an Environmental Justice function in the disaster response Incident Command System Structure. As you will hear from the speakers today, EPA has taken these recommendations very seriously and is addressing issues of environmental justice and community engagement in our activities around the Gulf Coast oil spill.

You will learn many examples of this and the commitment that EPA has. So with – so with that, Elizabeth, I will turn it back to you. And we look forward to a very productive conference call today.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you. Thank you, Charles. And that's a – that's a great way to start because you know, we're all concerned about the fact that this disaster happened on the heels of another disaster that no one has recovered from.

So we're going to begin with a presentation from Sharon Gauthé. Sharon worked with BISCO, which is Bayou Interfaith Shared Community Organizing, Organization, which works with 17 congregation members and affiliated with 20 other congregations. Sharon?

Sharon Gauthé: Thank you. Thank you for having me on this call. I want to start off and ask each member of the NEJAC as well as the communities that's listening to recall the presentations we have made to you over the last five years about our environmental justice issue of coastal land loss. And I need to have this addressed.

As you can now see what a devastation that has and will continue to affect our coastal areas, we're now on the fast track to complete destruction. Without our barrier islands, we are being destroyed in an even faster rate.

There is no need to repeat what you've been hearing on TV citing the various amounts of oil that are putting our coastal wetlands and habitat for our fish and wildlife. It is however important that I share with you how this has affected our community members.

Our people are not only out of work all along the coast but their way of life maybe destroyed forever. They're concerned now with the fisherman who are going to work for the clean-up especially in concerns to the safety equipment use and their exposure to the oil and the dispersants.

People have many questions and they need answers. BISCO has held four community meetings or better called "Listening Sessions," in which two of them included officials from EPA who are on this phone call, along with other agency officials to answer the folk's questions.

These meetings are necessary to continue. BISCO put these on and they were held in a respectful manner and appreciated by all the audiences as well as the officials in BP. And I'm sure that they will verify that on this call.

We need to continue those. People think that BP should pay for everything and, of course, they are responsible. But in the meantime, we do not have the funds needed to continue conducting these events.

NEJAC can request to the community meetings to continue and that the non-profits, like BISCO and other groups who are putting these on throughout the Gulf Coast, receive some type of compensations for arranging, coordinating and doing everything it takes, except this moved up.

My non profit is just about out of funds and my staff is on three-fourths pay because of the economy and the effects that have caused our funding to stop – to be less. To add these community efforts to our work has completely used all of our resources.

Federal agencies need to support our work with grants or emergency funds to assist them to bring these community members together and share the information they need. The communities who live along at the coast do not have the Internet services, and if they did, they don't know how to use it or how to access the information.

We have to do this in our churches and our community centers and in person, one-to-one. Right now, the biggest fear at this time is the hurricanes. People want to know

what will happen if all this comes ashore. They've been flooded with every hurricane since Katrina with as much as five feet of water.

Can they return home as this happens with the oil in their homes. How did they clean that? They want hazmat training and can't afford the cost of it now. They believe that all the community needs this training, not just the ones cleaning up now.

People are not prepared and they all need to be. As far as health concerns, we need to know the air quality and where it is being measured. We need it to be measured in more locations. I myself have been to Grand Island a week at a time doing emergency case management services.

And each time, I don't smell anything different and don't get in contact at all with the oil. Yet, each time I've returned with sinus infections, light nosebleeds and sore throats. Is this coincidental? I really don't know. I do know that I've not had this before.

This is the information that I have prepared but I also have Patty Whitney here with me who'll share a couple of more remarks.

Patty Whitney: Good Afternoon. Thank you for allowing us to speak on behalf of coastal community. The history of our communities is very, very unique. We are a population who is actually the least transient population in the country.

We've been here. Most of the people here can trace their ancestry back for many, many generations in the – part of our Native American populations who are part of the farthest south on the Coast, even before European colonization.

And with the European colonization, even those have been here for hundreds of years, we don't go anywhere. We like it here. We want to stay here. We traditionally do not have a voice. We're people who have a unique ability to not be heard. We're fighting Goliath.

In that – the voice in our community has been for almost a century, the oil and gas companies, and we can't do anything about it. And now, we're being completely wiped out because of it. So we feel that we're a regional environmental justice community.

Our fence line is the Gulf of Mexico. And we're with industry that is destroying our ability to fight and now our ability to live as well. So, we need as much help as we can to readjust, to recover, and hopefully to just save our communities. Thank you.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you Patty. Thank you Sharon. You know, a lot of us are thinking about this 24/7 and you're living it, so thank you for sharing those comments with us.

Next, I'd like to introduce Derrick Evans who is with the Turkey Creek Community Initiative in Gulfport, Mississippi. The Turkey Creek estuary was settled following the civil war by African-American freedmen and women. And it is now struggling to survive a myriad of environmental abuses and it's now faced with this disaster. Derrick?

Derrick Evans: All right, thank you. I should say that, like everyone else who's so deeply troubled and disturbed by the current oil drilling disaster that's reaching our shores, I'm

additionally troubled by the timing of this event because it just so happens that it occurs – in the midst of what I think has been a historic efforts by the Environmental Protection Agency to reach out to environmental justice communities, particularly in Regions 4 and 6 in recent months, following of course the – appointment of supervisor – of administrator Jackson.

And I said that that the timing troubles me, because out of daily and weekly basis, I see a lot of the hard won – hard-earned faith in a new EPA gradually and some instances rapidly eroding because of folks here in the region's perceptions that the Obama administration in general and the EPA in particular, is not proactively following the level of leadership in community-centric community mindedness that we were really looking forward to prior to this event.

In fact, I was very much looking forward but due to recent successes in the Turkey Creek watershed that has certainly been a helped along by the Environmental Protection Agency – excuse me – reaching for in particular a multiple – a multi divisions of – and offices within there, and being sort of a model that can reach out and help liaise with other environmental justice communities across Mississippi and the Gulf Coast, which we still do, in terms of encouraging – both to approach the EPA in a less skeptical or cynical way.

Yet, at the same time, I'm very much involved with the Gulf Coast fund for community renewal and ecological health and most of my work in the last, well, 55 days has largely been under the auspices of this important regional group, of which I'm a key advisor.

We have over 160 grantee organizations, including BISCO, who just spoke on this call, who basically represent the most underserved, marginalized and vulnerable environmental justice communities across the region.

And from the moment that this disaster struck, we recognized – it is our role to make sure that the world understood the overlay between the social and the environmental – excuse me – dimensions of this disaster.

So far, I believe we've allocated almost \$200,000 of emergency funding to over 30 organizations who are on the front line, including BISCO and Mobile Baykeeper and Louisiana Bayoukeeper and others, to really keep the local fishing communities, local officials and leaders, and even the federal agencies and so forth, better informed and put their feet to the fires, if you will, on what's really going on and trying to separate facts and fiction.

I think that we have a very dangerous position now that as far as just within the context of the history of EJ and the progress that could be made uniquely in this region as a model for the rest of the country.

Because – and I don't know it's because of the interpretation of (inaudible) 90 or what, but again, both at EPA and NOAA and elsewhere in federal governmental, are increasingly being mistaken for the bad guys.

There's references to, you know, BPs as far as the math and science, as well as the unnecessary euphemism of the previous Bush administration during the recovery from initial days after hurricane Katrina. And in many ways sort of the self (inaudible) center of much of what we hear in the reports echoes those.

And what I guess I should say is and I've mentioned this to Administrator Jackson the other night who's become a good friend and I admire her immensely, is that EPA is definitely, definitely really busting its hump if you will to be visible and accessible to these communities.

The problem right now seems to be the exchange back in the community based information that doesn't appear to be making its way in most folks' view into, you know, policy or action in response to this disaster.

So, on the one hand while we were very grateful for the availability of government – excuse me – officials, we don't see the return on that investment of time as we would like to see.

But I guess I should say that, you know, we do – as we speak right now, I've spent the – I've been in the last week not in Turkey Creek but in Batavia, Louisiana and I've been observing for myself some aspects of this disaster that is almost – as if it's only a matter of time before they're confirm or acknowledged and ultimately dealt with by EPA and others.

I guess, I hope that this call will help to expedite the – again, the return on the investment of time and words into the partnership because the fact of the matter is this is not – the Gulf Coast is like Appalachia.

It is an environmental justice region. It is a brownfield. Its persistent poverty and persistent environmental destruction and vulnerabilities of national and man-made disasters is regional.

And unfortunately, going forward, we know from experience that the correctives by government to these things should they occur will likely not best be facilitated on a state-by-state basis.

This region is carved up very inefficiently I think into multiple EPA and Army Corps Districts and regions that don't always bode well for comprehensive EJ and other, you know restorative efforts on a regional basis. And I hope maybe one of the things that will come out of this is that we will work together to improve that paradigm. Thank you.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you, Derrick. I know that it doesn't help but I just want to express our gratitude for your relentless commitment and for staying centered because I think that, that's what the times require.

We were – we wanted you, Sharon and Patty to go first because we thought coming from an environmental justice perspective that it was important for the community perspective to frame the discussion.

And we wanted to make sure that that happened from the ground and you raised the number of valiant concerns that hopefully will be addressed by the presentations that are coming up next.

We have with us in the next section is entitled "Overview of EPA Response Activities". We have with us Lisa Garcia who is senior policy advisor/administrator for

environmental justice. And Lisa will be providing an overview about outreach efforts. Lisa?

Lisa Garcia: Thank you. I want to quickly thank the NEJAC and welcome to the new members. And, of course, a welcome – and you know, warm felicitades to Elizabeth.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you.

Lisa Garcia: (Inaudible) need that. And, of course, a special thank you to Sharon and Patty and Derrick for opening up this meeting and I do hope that we continue as Derrick said that, "We continue to work together on improving our efforts."

And you know, as we know, that there's a lot of work to be done. So, I'm going to start by sharing with you some of the information about the feral response that is currently going on in the Gulf.

As you all know, the BP spill could be potentially one of the greatest environmental challenges of our time and what Sharon and Patty and Derrick spoke about was really how it's affecting your community.

But the administration has been really responding with all its resources at our disposal. More than 24,000 federal responders are continuing to work on response and solutions. And in support of that, EPA staff are focused on this crisis.

Administrator Lisa Jackson is a native of New Orleans and is deeply concerned about the impact that the spill is having on communities throughout the Gulf region and has – she has traveled to the regions five times since the spill and she's spoken to many of you on the phone.

She's also sent her deputy administrator and senior officials to meet with Gulf Coast residents, local and state officials and those others managing the environmental response on the ground.

The administration will continue to do all we can to address this crisis in the most aggressive and responsible way. The EPA and the federal government continue to work around the clock to do everything possible to ensure both the citizens of the Gulf are protected and that BP is putting every resource at their disposal to stop this leak.

EPA's role on the federal team is to provide technical assistance, including air and water sampling, monitoring the use of chemical dispersants and planning for shoreline clean-up activities. And hopefully – the next speakers will be speak a little bit more to that but I want to briefly talk about – are we – our week's activities which was partly informed and developed from the 2005 NEJAC report and recommendations.

My focus is really to be responsive to the needs of the communities as working with our EPA Office of Public Affairs. As part of that effort we've taken a number of steps to ensure that communities are participating in and represented during this clean-up process.

First we've added an environmental justice and tribal community liaison to the environmental operation center here at EPA. And this is on the management team to

ensure that EJ perspective is represented in the agency's decision making processes.

We've also invited environmental justice organizations to participate in the weekly White House Gulf Coast Outreach call which happens on Friday. And as some of you know, Mathy Stanislaus and I, along with other – working with local groups such as BISCO and staff, participated in focused environmental justice community meetings in the Gulf Coast regions.

These meetings provided an opportunity for face-to-face interaction and with communities to actively solicit their concerns and suggestions and have face-to-face informational meetings. And we're also in the process of planning for local and regional outreach as some of you are – that needs to be ramped up and also weekly EJ and tribal calls.

These calls will provide access to information and help educate community stakeholders on the BP oil spill and hope is that the call will also provide information to those as someone mentioned who don't have Internet access on surfing the Web.

But for those who do have access to the Internet or to computers. EPA also has added or made all of our information available to the public through daily updates on our website at epa.gov/bpspill and I would encourage everyone to go to that website. It does have a lot of information in questions and answers format.

So those are some of our ongoing efforts and we will continue to work on our outreach efforts and I heard loud and clear that we need to improve that outreach, and so we will continue to work with everyone including holding more meetings as I think Sharon mentioned which I think were very productive.

So once again we appreciate this opportunity to engage the NEJAC and other stakeholders to solicit input as we continue to advise the EPA in our effort to advance environmental justice and especially in these areas. Thank you.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Gracias, Lisa. So now we have Mathy Stanislaus who's the assistant administrator for the office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response who will be providing an overview of the EPA's role in responding to environmental disasters. We'll also be providing an overview of the planned clean up and remediation efforts. Mathy?

Mathy Stanislaus: Hi, Elizabeth. And thanks for your leadership. I also want to say welcome to all the NEJAC members, and thank you for your hard work having served in the NEJAC. I know how hard it is to volunteer your time to really advance environmental justice, and I want to thank you all for your hard work.

Particularly, I want to thank Sharon and Patty for facilitating the meeting that BISCO I organized and that they engage you – and Derrick, I've met you before the event and after the event because we the administrator recognizes that the Gulf Coast is an generally impacted, significantly impacted area of the country that requires the dedicated attention at the highest levels and it's our commitment to go forward and do that.

I thought I'd first do is to walk – is to walk people through the structure for our response and then touch on a few specific issues before I turn it over to my

colleagues. Under the authority of The National Contingency Plan, the federal on-scene coordinator is the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard directs the response efforts, provides access to federal resources on technical assistance for the response actions.

The Coast Guard has established a unified area of command that includes an environmental unit to identify and analyze environmental issues pertinent to the response. The environmental unit is comprised of representatives from EPA and NOAA and the Coast Guard working to oversee the work of the responsible party, British Petroleum, BP.

Under the authority of The National Contingency Plan there is a regional response team co-chaired by EPA and the Coast Guard, and consisting of 16 federal agencies to evaluate and provide recommendations on specific response actions to the on-scene coordinator, the Coast Guard.

The regional response team must be consulted to gain its approval before employing alternative treatment methods such as chemical countermeasures to respond to it spill if that that option has not been pre-approved. The Regional Response Team provides oversight and consistency reviews the areas within a region through the development and implementation of a regional contingency plan that would enable the Coast Guard, the on-scene coordinator to address among other items, damage assessments, waste disposal, conservation, and prioritization of natural resources requiring protection.

Under the authority of the National Contingency Plan, The National Response Team is shared by EPA and the Coast Guard serves as its vice chair. It is also comprised of 16 federal agencies to look at national policy implications arising from this disaster. The National Incident Commander serves to provide strategic coordination with the governors, the government agencies and the responsible party, BP. The National Incident Command does not direct response operations direct, they're done locally by the on-scene coordinator.

I will next turn to dispersants. And in responding to the spill the EPA has had to make tough decisions including the use of dispersing chemical, to break up the oil and speed its natural degradation. But in all of this it's critical to remember that the number one issue is oil and to limit the impact from this disaster. You know until we find a way to stop and stem the oil we must take responsible action to mitigate the impact of the spill. The steps we are taking in full recognition of bad choices under this circumstance, and the trade off that we're forced to make because of the platform fire and the disaster.

We know that dispersants are less toxic than oil. We know that surface use of dispersants decreases the risk to shorelines and organisms at the surface. And we know that dispersants break down over weeks rather than remaining for several years as untreated oil might.

After testing and authorizing dispersant use underwater we also remain optimistic that we are achieving similar results with the use of less chemicals. Let me be clear, in the approval of the dispersant the Federal Government has put in place an aggressive monitoring program and we regularly check and post that data on our website (usepa.gov/bpspill). We have through the on-scene coordinator directed BP to do a number of things to reduce the overall volume of dispersant use.

For one we've directed BP to stop using surface dispersant without prior approval, and so, everyday a BP has to demonstrate to the federal government that it maximized higher priority items for addressing oil. This includes skimming and burning as the first two priorities. And if there is a volume of oil on the surface, BP will have to request in writing the use of surface dispersant and only after an adequate demonstration made to EPA will it approve the use of surface dispersant.

We also, as the result of our directive have resulted in our overall with substantial reduction to the total volume of dispersant. Separately with respect to deep sea dispersant there was not any pre-approval or preauthorization of deep sea dispersing because it was never contemplated. So the EPA working with the Coast Guard required a series of testing to look at the effectiveness, the efficacy of dispersants, of the dispersant applied deep sea to disperse the oil deep sea.

After a series of tests, once BP has demonstrated it to be effective to disperse oil, there was an approval granted with a fixed volume, maximum volume coupled with an aggressive environmental monitoring program that looks at a number of parameters, dissolved oxygen for one, as well as toxicity parameters.

We reserved the right to cut off the application of deep sea dispersant applications should the threshold set forth in the directive be exceeded. All of the directives are found on our website or we can separately email these directives to you. We have separately directed BP to look at Corexit, the current dispersant, as well as other alternatives and to evaluate both the effect and toxicity determined whether another product would or should be used for this, for this spill.

Separate from that EPA is conducting independent testing of Corexit and all of its products. And once we have completed the laboratory work, we will be, we will be presenting to the public our conclusion regarding them.

Let me last talk about waste disposal. With respect to waste – first of all, oil that can be easily separated out is being recovered as a product. Or that cannot be easily separated out is being managed as a waste.

Based on EPA's review of sampling data that it required be performed, no samples have indicated that the waste is a hazardous waste. Since the waste has not tested as hazardous, it is being handled as a Solid Waste and disposed of in appropriate permanent landfills.

EPA has worked with the State of Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida to develop a waste management plan to address the waste from the BP spill response. The Coast Guard in consultation with the EPA and the state and has approved the waste management plans.

Let me specifically note that the state has signed off on this waste management plans – waste management plans. The waste management plans of – let me just summarize, it was – it consists of a review of applicable federal, state and local regulations, waste characterization, a community environment plan, as well as the identification of oil landfills where the waste would be sent.

EPA has evaluated the compliance history and (inaudible) environmental justice and community impact issues with respect to the waste plan, comment, and approval by

the Coast Guard. Let me pause, before I turn it over that I, and the entire EPA team and administrative is committed to engage the local communities – from the very beginning we want to engage the local community and impact to communities as much as we've - we can.

We mentioned that in the 2005 NEJAC report, we would want to move forward, and want to move forward aggressively in implementing a number of those items, we've sought to reach out and convey information that impact the communities, make environmental justice and community impact as the core of our response action, our response planning. We've sought to translate information, and get information out, and not rely on the internet. And get the information out to local community groups.

We sought to reach out the NGOs, working locally, but we are open you know the one thing that I'm very clear is half of what we need to do in EJ is to listen. So one of the things I want to do is what can we do better, so I look forward to your comments in that regard. Thank you, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you so much Mathy. We're really fortunate to have you there. It's – it really does make a difference to have someone who has a history of commitment to environmental justice that gets us. We now have with us Cynthia Giles, assistant administrator for Enforcement and Compliance Assurance. Cynthia?

Cynthia Giles: Thank you Elizabeth. I want to first say, congratulations to you on your position as chair of the NEJAC. And I look forward to working with you and the other members of the NEJAC to advance environmental justice.

And you've stated, I serve as the assistant administrator for Enforcement and Compliance Assurance at EPA. But I also have another role that's relevant in here which is as a National Program Manager for Environmental Justice, because the office of Environmental Justice is located in my office.

We are here today to listen to the issues, concerns and the advice of the NEJAC as well as the members of the public on this call regarding how the communities are disproportionately impacted by the BP oil spill can be heard and their concerns about the spill addressed. As you've seen in the news reports, and as Mathy Stanislaus was recently describing the disaster that's unfolding daily in the Gulf of Mexico is reaching monumental proportion.

The EPA in partnership with United States Coast Guard and other federal state and local agencies as well as other community stakeholders is working actively to respond to the continuing oil spill. At this point in time the government's first priority is to stop the spill and clean up the oil. However, as the attorney general has already publicly stated, there are civil and criminal investigations ongoing into the BP spill.

The EPA is working actively with the Department of Justice and other federal agencies on criminal and civil environmental investigations of the BP oil spill. We're not prepared to discuss those investigations on this call. And it's essential to protecting the integrity of those investigations, and assuring the ultimate success of these enforcement actions, but we did want to say that we are engaged with Department of Justice in those investigations.

So I look forward to hearing the comments from the NEJAC, and the members of the public, and listening to your questions and concerns.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you so much, Cynthia. Peter Silva is the Assistant Administrator for Water. And he provides – and he will hopefully provide an overview of water monitoring efforts. Is Peter with us?

Peter Silva: Yes, I am.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Oh, great, Peter, welcome.

Peter Silva: Thank you, Elizabeth. First of all, I note – I felt (inaudible) and I want just thank you and the rest of the NEJAC for this opportunity to give an overview of what the Office of Water is doing in respect to sampling and monitoring along the coast and offshore with respect to the spill.

As you mentioned, I am the assistant administrator for the Office of Water. And the Office of Water is engaged very actively in water sampling along the coast. And we'll also provide an assistance in other matters, for example, we provide comments, and suggestions to the – who's in command on project related to berms, barriers and booms – but today is my focus will be more on the monitoring program.

And as you all know, well you know we are committed to transparency and just to let you know we would – we have been posting all of our data as soon it's available on the – on our EPA website, and we already mentioned the website there.

And also, I'd just want you to know that the way that the process works for EPA for the collection of this data is one you know we have to go out in the field and to sample – collect the samples again as in on the coast and then off site, it can be a challenge at times. Then we have to take it to into a laboratory for analysis, and then we have to verify the data. That's a very important step to make sure that we're all comfortable with the result before we're going to post it on the, on the website.

Also just to point out that the sampling on the field is done in Louisiana, by our regional – region IV staff. And then in Mississippi, Alabama and Florida by a region, I'm sorry, it's the reverse, Region VI in Louisiana, Region IV in Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida. They used a combination of EPA labs and private labs to analyze the data. And given all the requirements for the samples that they can take anywhere from five to seven days by the time that they are collected, analyzed and then put on the website.

And I want to be clear that, so given that I just want to make sure that you all understand that it's not a – the data not is not an indication of what's going on at the – you know at this moment, but it is a snapshot in time, but when the sample is taken. So it's such – I mean, you have to take that into account when you look at that data.

And another thing to remember and to point out is that we've collected baseline samples for the coast and offshore to help within the long term determination of the impact. And again, we used that – both that baseline information and then current data and that we get future sampling data that we obtain. Again, to deter- to give us a broader perspective on the potential impact to human lives and aquatic life of – from the spill.

And again, we recognized that you know there's coral on the beaches right now and again just given the limitations of our sampling – again our sample is more of a

reflection of data that we've gotten you know seven days back. Although I want to point out that we are taking – as we take the samples and analyze for 22 – a contaminant that is associated with oil.

We also – just last week we begun analyzing for dispersants, I wanted to point out for dispersants and it was a little bit difficult because we didn't have analytical methods for some of the – some of the dispersants used. As of about a week ago, we have started sampling, we have not found dispersants yet in those samples. And we continue to develop analytical methods for the dispersants but we don't have those currently.

As the example of our effort to give an idea of what happened, we just – for the samples collected on June fourth and June seventh, we did find some elevated levels of nickel. But the level is there is that we cannot directly relate it to the BP oil spill. It could be from the spill or it could be from legacy matters in the Gulf. As you know there's a lot of legacy issues related to the Gulf. And so again we're trying to use this data for long – in term and long term analysis of the impact.

And one more thing as we've mentioned, we are posting the data on the website but again we want to emphasize that the water data – from EPA it's just one tool that you have. There's other information if you're interested in visiting the beaches, there's a website that we – web links that we have on the site that you can go to the state for beach information. There's other information for example from the FDA on fish consumption. And there's obviously OSHA as related to workers' safety.

And so with that I just wanted to give you that broad overview of our sampling program and be happy to work with you as we roll this out and also obviously as has been mentioned before these suggestions from you on how we could better work with the community in getting that information out and how it can relate to the individual on the ground. Thank you very much.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Peter, that's very useful information. We also have with us Beth Craig who is the deputy assistant administrator for Air and Radiation. Beth will be providing you an overview of air monitoring efforts. Beth?

Beth Craig: Yes. Thank you Elizabeth. And I want to join my colleagues in wishing you congratulations.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you.

Beth Craig: And I'm here today to talk about the air monitoring efforts that we're taking. And also to discuss what we've learned about the results of that monitoring from a public health perspective. The Air office and the regions are working very closely with the states to monitor for these impacts. And what we're doing is we're monitoring the air on the land and evaluating the potential for health effects.

As Pete and others have said, OSHA's responsible for worker safety on the Gulf and we're trying to work very closely with them so we understand what they're finding from their work. We're monitoring the air and evaluating the potential for health impacts from pollutants from four different perspectives. One is from the – that may come from burning oil out at sea so what is the impact on the communities along the Gulf.

The monitoring from a pollutant that may evaporate from the fresh oil as well as from the weathered oil near the shore or on the shore and then whether – we did some monitoring for a couple of the constituents of dispersants as well. We're using a variety of methods to do that. We have our existing monitors that are in place as part of the nationwide monitoring network.

We have set up temporary monitors in specific areas in response to the spill. We are using mobile monitoring, we have a – we have a couple of trace atmospheric gas analyzer buses that drives along the coast. And we have two of those buses and we're actually checking in with some states to see if we can get some additional buses to help. And then of course the agency has an – a plane and we've use that from – some aerial monitoring as well.

We've monitored and sampled at more than 400 locations with the stationary monitors. And we've – as I said, we've monitored along the coastline with the mobile labs. We've taken more than a thousand samples and have analyzed nearly 900 of them. As Pete said, some of these samples have to go to the laboratory and so there – for us it's about a five-day lag period between the samples, when the sample is taken and when we can post the data ensuring that it's been quality assured. We do have – some of our monitors are more real time. They're part of the fixed network and we're able to post that data relatively quickly.

What we're finding is that we're not finding levels of chemicals in the air that we would expect to see long term health problems. But we know that people are experiencing eye and throat irritation even when the monitors report these low levels. And so one of the things that we're trying to do is be able to communicate with folks and there are obviously individuals who are more sensitive to these pollutants than to – than other individuals.

So, that's kind of a summary of what type of monitoring we're doing. We are also working very hard with the rest of the individuals in the agency to not only post the data but on a regular basis see how we can improve the information we've posted. Because we know that the data can sometimes be unwieldy. So that's something we're trying to work on as well.

So I'm going to do a quick results from the different types of monitoring. But the types of when we have a monitored for the burning oil out at sea, we looked for particles and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon, PAHs, which are carcinogens. And what we're finding is pretty typical levels of particulate matter for this time of year in the Gulf region.

So we're not – because of the fact that we're trying to do all burning when the air currents are going away from the coast, we're not seeing a lot of problems from that for the communities. We are concerned about the fresh oil out at sea. We've put in place – we've been looking at volatile organic compounds and we're using the TAGA bus to do some of that. And at this point we're not measuring high levels but as I said, we do have issues where people are feeling it because they can smell the constituents but those were – but we are measuring for things like benzene, toluene, ethyl benzene, et cetera.

And then we are monitoring for what we call the weathered oils. And we're looking at the semi-volatile organic compounds. And we are seeing low levels of these as well. And so – to which is all very positive.

And then we've been looking at the constituents of dispersants and we have measured for two compounds in the Corexit and – that we think would be the most likely to be found in the air. And we have found very low levels of these chemicals well below a health concern, and even then sometimes only for seconds during an entire day of monitoring.

We also put in place, because of concerns from the communities, some monitoring for hydrogen sulfide. And we do know that that's common when you have an oil spill that you may have or any type of oil and gas extractions. And of course we all know what that smells like with that rotten odor, it's a burnt rotten egg like odor. And what we are – we are finding that we're detecting some hydrogen sulfide in areas like Venice. And those - and that can cause eye and throat irritation and headaches. However, what we're finding is it's not at multiple monitors at the same time so there could be some other sources which are causing that.

As we talked about earlier, we've used the TAGA bus to do some coastline monitoring. We use it to respond to odor complaints in particular communities and we're looking for benzene, toluene, and xylene. And – but – and we've seen and we're able to post the monitoring results for that.

We did use some of the aspect airplane to do some checking for burnings early on. And now they're not using it for that purpose right now because they're using it for other types of looking at the oil spill. But, we did not have significant levels of areas of concern in that area as well.

So, thank you Elizabeth.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you. I'd like to really extend a heartfelt thank you to – for the hard work and commitment of all the presenters. You know we – what I'd urge you to do is to stay and to hear the questions, provide some answers, listen to the public comment. It's our responsibility often as organizers to call the questions, and raise the ante because there's so much at stake. And so we hope that – that you take the comments in the spirit in which they're delivered. We don't doubt your goodwill but I think that there will be a lot of questions and a lot of comments coming from people directly impacted who are just concerned or you know more so because it's affecting their families, their livelihood, their children.

But I want to thank all of you for providing such a comprehensive overview and for all of you for being available on this important call. And again, I want to urge all of you to stay so that you can listen in and provide some responses. I want to acknowledge that Region IV and Region VI, the deputy regional administrators are on the call. Then Stan Meiburg from Region 4 and Larry Starfield from Region 6, I don't know if you would like to take a moment and share comments before we take the questions and answers from our members.

Stan Meiburg: This is Stan Meiburg, thank you Madame Chairman and I have really no particular comments to add to the overview. Other than that, we in region four are very sensitive and aware of the impact that this event had have on the communities along our shores now all the way from Mississippi, Alabama and then to Florida. And that is of great concern to us. We are working as Mathy said in conjunction with the unified command, in our case in Mobile to carry out our missions with respect to air and water monitoring that Pete and Beth outlined.

As well as assisting in the overall response of the Coast Guard – with the Coast Guard – for example, the Coast Guard tasked us a week ago to try to make additional people available to help supervise the beach clean-up crews that are going around trying to clean up oil as it hits on shore. And we were able to mobilize staff from throughout EPA to help and do that and carry out that part of the mission so that we can ensure that those clean-ups are being done responsibly.

Other than that, again I just want to extend my particular concern to the communities along the coast. Derrick, it was particularly good to hear your voice again and thank you for the support you've been providing in all sorts of activities as we've tried to expand our environmental justice activities here in region IV.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you Stan. Is Larry available? If not, we'll move on and again I just want to say, thank you to all of you. It's a monumental challenge and we couldn't have a better team of people working as hard as you are.

So, for the members of the NEJAC we're now going to take some questions of – for about half an hour, 2:30 – maybe 2:35 we'll be opening for public comments. And I'd like to remind the members to ask clarifying questions.

Hilton Kelly: Yes. This is Hilton Kelly on Port Arthur, Texas along the Gulf Coast. And one of the questions that I have is, what efforts are being exerted to try to protect some of the wildlife in the marshland areas along Louisiana coastline, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida?

Mathy Stanislaus: Well, this is Mathy Stanislaus. The wildlife effort protection is really led by NOAA and the Coast Guard. So we can probably get back to you with more specifics on that.

Hilton Kelly: Because one of the concerns is this and as we know in Mississippi, Louisiana, there are some very unique animals out there, wildlife wise. I mean you have some really ancient snapping turtles, you have alligator garfish and they're really, really sensitive. And I was wondering is there an effort being put forward to try to preserve some of those animals that are out there by gathering some of them up and possibly moving them to another location because it's imperative that we try to preserve that wildlife and some of the creatures that live there.

The marsh areas are some of the areas that – some of the only areas where they can live. And I was just curious to know what kind of effort was being put forward to try to save those animals because as that oil encroaches up on the marshland in those areas, almost every living thing in that particular region on that area will be destroyed. And it's important that we try to gather up some of those creatures that are indigenous to that area and only those areas and do what we can to preserve for future generations.

Mathy Stanislaus: Yes. I would say the administration overall shares that deep concern and we're aggressively taking actions. Again, NOAA and the Coast Guard is leading that effort and so I know the Coast Guard has basic information on their website. But we'll kind of – let's pull together some information and we'll send it out to NEJAC members.

Hilton Kelly: And also the last question is, we know that the oil spill has traveled more easterly than west. But in the event that the winds changed and things start to push westward or towards the Texas coastline, are there some precautionary measures that we can take here or that the EPA is looking into try to protect those areas?

Mathy Stanislaus: Yes. Again the hurricane planning is led by NOAA, but the hurricane planning is – it includes all of the Gulf Coastal states. And so – and just yesterday – and, Stan, do you want to speak a little bit about the hurricane planning?

Stan Meiburg: Yes. First to answer the question as this is applied on the eastern side, one of the things, I think, that many folks have been urging the unified command to do is to step up this degree of skimming so that oil is captured off shores. In fact, that's generally been the coastguard's mantra on this, is they want to try to fight the oil off shore absolutely as much as possible.

I attended the meeting yesterday in Florida which was talking about the issue of hurricane planning and one of the most important messages to come out of that on the hurricane side is to make sure that people get the message that they need to be – if a hurricane should occur, we need to address and fight the hurricane first so that folks should comply with messages or urging that they evacuate so that they avoid those kind of damages.

For better or for worse, anytime you get a large kind of storm, you do have incidences where hazardous materials or oil or other kind of things may be released. We certainly saw that as all of you in Louisiana know in the Murphy oil spill in Katrina.

And that assessments like that may need to be occurring, but the first thing really is to make sure that all of the preparedness is in place for a hurricane and the folks work with their local authorities to make sure they know what they need to be doing.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you Hilton for good questions. Anyone else?

Wynecta Fisher: Yes. This is Wynecta Fisher, I have actually two and a half questions.

Female: OK.

Wynecta Fisher: Hello. This actually is a question for EPA. It's actually a question and a plea. Most of the coastal parishes that are working on the spill, they're generally very small offices and they're not going to have time to develop those plans that you spoke of Mathy.

Is it possible that EPA could prepare some type of template for municipalities and states to use so that once there are disasters like this, they basically can just plug in that information instead of waiting for it to happen and then trying to develop the document later.

I saw that with Katrina. The City of New Orleans did not have a debris management plan prior to Katrina. And then after it happened, you try to create one and then the state didn't really have one.

So it would be nice if you know if you guys have some type of template that you could just make it available and there are people choose to use it, great, and if they don't, shame on them.

Male: Yes.

Male: Great recommendation.

Male: Yes.

Wynecta Fisher: Yes. That was one. And then the other one is, I was wondering how is EPA identifying EJ groups in the area. My concern really is in Plaquemines Parish. Over 50 percent of the fishermen in Plaquemines Parish are minority and it's taken a lot of those guys two and three years, just to get their money to get their boats fixed so that they can continue their way of life. And we're talking three and four generations, from Katrina.

So, if you can reach out for some people in Plaquemines Parish, there's a group called the South Plaquemines United Fisheries Coop that might be a good place for you guys to look – to look at. And here – then here's a question; is it possible for EPA to work with other federal agencies to look at multiple stressors because we had the storm five years ago coming in August?

We now have this oil spill. You have people, who financially, given the economy, they don't know how they're going to make it. And so, I'm wondering is it now a time to maybe set up – I don't want to use study because people in this area are studied to death. But you know, we're talking about not just multiple environmental stresses but other stresses as well.

Is it possible that maybe you guys can work with some other federal agencies to see you know what are some of the health impacts? If you came – if you came back directly after Katrina and you did some clean up and then two or three later – two or three years later you went back to your way of life and now, a year and a half later you're doing more cleanup. How's that impacting your health?

Mathy Stanislaus: OK. So, let me answer the first question first. In terms of assisting on local emergency planning, one of the things that I'm emphasizing is actually to do that, to really work – to reinvigorate the work with local emergency planning. Are there local emergency planning committees and state emergency response commissions that we really want to reinvigorate?

So let me – and I know that in the NEJAC recommendation, it specifically talks about really reinvigorating that. So we'll take a focused look at that.

In terms of health impact – yes, so the federal government, the interagency federal government process to really right now look at those health impacts, look at shorter-term or longer-term impact. So, let us connect with you in terms of that process. And there is going to be some local community meetings around that topic. So let's get back to you on specific details.

Wynecta Fisher: OK, thank you.

Mathy Stanislaus: You're welcome.

Vernice Miller-Travis: This is Vernice Miller-Travis. Hello?

Female: Hi.

Male: Hello.

Vernice Miller-Travis: Hi. I have a couple of, well, actually one question. Should I go ahead?

Male: Yes, you go ahead.

Vernice Miller-Travis: Hi everybody. My question Mathy is, and I got on the call late. I'm sorry I'm out in Crystal City at a rule making public comment period. But my question concerns the plans for the disposal of or storage of the materials that you – that are being used to sop up the oil and where is it going?

So, as you probably know there was an article in the front page of the New York Times today with communities expressing concern about landfills that are now taking in a lot of those materials. Some of those landfills are landfills that these communities have had long concern about with their state agency, in particular former tribal chief Brenda Robichaux of the Houma nation in Louisiana was quoted in the article as saying that they've been having long standing problems with Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality about a particular landfill on their tribal land that now is going to be used to absorb and store some of these materials that are being used to sop up the oil.

There are concerns about communities in New Orleans East and the clay pits that some of that material may go into. And there are legacy issues around cow waste has been stored at landfills that are not properly maintained in the past.

And are we now opening the door because of an emergency circumstance to exacerbate that issue? What's the plan Mathy and what's the plan for dialogue with these communities about their concerns about that waste, that whether or not that waste constitutes hazardous waste in an aggregate form?

Mathy Stanislaus: So, from the very beginning we've recognized the need to have an aggressive waste management plan. So we have worked with you know through the (inaudible) command, through Coast Guard and all the states to kind of have a comprehensive plan. So the plan consists of characterization of upfront, to characterize where, what kind of waste it is and what kind of facility should go to.

Separate from that, we've asked for a listing of every potential facility that could be the recipient of waste, EPA led by regions, working with the state, look at the compliance history of those facilities and also looked at potential environmental justice impacts of that.

So there are landfills, there are facilities that process the product, these oily products. But there's also – because there's a need for staging areas, so staging areas are essentially going to be internal areas to do the characterization and from the staging areas they will go to the proper facility.

So these are staging areas that are (essentially) sighted for the spill itself. So we've asked – we requested air monitoring and oversight planning for that. So we post that air monitoring data on the website. And in terms of any specific issues that communities have in terms of impact that, we want to know.

And our commitment is to look at that. That we are led by the regions and working with the states, have visited landfills, have visited staging areas to ensure not just on a short term, but in the midterm that it continues to be operated in the safest way possible.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Other questions from our members?

Vernice Miller-Travis: Thank you Mathy.

Mathy Stanislaus: You're welcome.

John Ridgway: Elizabeth, this is John Ridgway. I've got a question.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Go ahead.

John Ridgway: And again this is – I think Mathy would go to you. This is in regarding the report from NEJAC to EPA in 2006. And one of the recommendations is in the context of waivers and recognizing that waivers are given some time dealing with emergency situations.

And my question is, can you tell us anything about waivers that have already been issued and/or under consideration? And how the community and states are going to be – I shouldn't say just states, tribes, all branches of organization – are tracking or understanding how these waivers are being considered and if given, what the implications are for tracking them?

Mathy Stanislaus: Yes. So, I'm very familiar with the issue of waivers in Katrina and the issues associated with that. There have not been any waivers granted in the BP spill nor am I aware of any request for waivers today.

Should we get that? No, we don't anticipate that at this point. We (clearly) would notice the public regarding that before we make any decisions. But at this point there have not been either any waivers granted nor any were requested.

John Ridgway: In follow up, if waivers are requested would it be your procedures to be sure the communities and interested parties are aware of those before decisions are made?

Mathy Stanislaus: Absolutely.

John Ridgway: Great. Thank you.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you. Just a reminder that we have about 14 minutes to go. So that's not bad. We're actually doing really well. We're moving along. So if there is anyone who hasn't asked a question, this will be a good time.

Jolene Catron: Hi. This is Jolene Catron and I serve as a – from Wind River Alliance in Wyoming. I have a question regarding the – on a lot of these discussions. There's a mention of tribes just kind of in a general sense.

And one of the issues I'm well aware of is the fact that there are several many non-federally recognized tribes in the Gulf States Area. And the federally recognized tribes, they qualify for a certain level of funding or a government-to-government relationship, and that's been established with EPA and other federal agencies, whereas the non-federally recognized tribes did not necessarily fall under that.

And so my question is, in a general sense when we're talking tribes, are we also including the non-recognized – non-federally recognized tribes?

Lisa Garcia: Hi, this is Lisa Garcia. Yes, we've been including the tribes, federally recognized tribes and definitely in our outreach. And region VI has been kind of taking the lead on holding tribal meetings on certain reservations. But the outreach, the general outreach has been to the federal and state recognized and then the non-recognized tribes also.

Jolene Catron: OK, thank you.

Lisa Garcia: I'm sorry, not on reservations.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Is there anyone else?

Hilton Kelly: Yes, this is Hilton Kelly again here in Port Arthur, Texas on the Gulf Coast. My last question is – all right, does the Environmental Protection Agency involved with coming up with ideas for models that can potentially help to stop this leak?

Mathy Stanislaus: Well, so there is an incident command, and so the Coast Guard working with Department of Interior. In terms of the wellhead issues is really led by those agencies.

Clearly, we have a response related obligations for the consequence of those decisions.

Hilton Kelly: But I mean, are we making any recommendations, I mean, with all of the specialists we have? And here in the Gulf Coast region, we have oil wells that stretches for miles and miles, and yet I find it very disturbing that we don't have specialists within our region to try to address this issue.

For what I understand, British Petroleum has been left with the burden of having to come up with models and ideas, even though we know that is their mess. But at the same time, I think that we should have – especially we should have someone in the area that can help address this issue and to get this resolved.

Mathy Stanislaus: Yes. So within the structure, we have the Coast Guard as the on-scene coordinator with EPA and the 16 agencies in here, we discussed the regional response team.

So we oversee all of the development of the recommendations of the – with respect to response to the spill. Clearly, there are certain agencies with different expertise and different statutory obligations.

So you know, so BP, we oversee all of the proposed actions by BP, and no actions can move forward without the federal government approving those actions.

Hilton Kelly: How can someone with a possible idea could work? How can we make recommendations to the Environmental Protection Agency? Who is the person to contact to propose a solution to this issue?

Mathy Stanislaus: So we have a – I don't know the website right now. We have a dedicated website for solutions of – we'll get back to you.

Lisa Garcia: There's a link on the epa.gov/bpspill website to you know link for suggestions that are going into the unified command. And they are definitely taking suggestions.

Hilton Kelly: OK, great. I'll look into that.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you (inaudible). Anyone else has any questions? We have about nine minutes left.

Lisa Garcia: Elizabeth. I think we have like four.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Four? Oh, OK. You know we started about five minutes late so I added another five, but it's all good.

Mathy Stanislaus: It must be Brooklyn time.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: It's always Brooklyn time.

Derrick Evans: This is Derrick Evans and I have a question that I hope will maybe be a part of the discussion sections that follows this. The question is proactive measures are being taken to access the community experience and wisdom of NGOs of business regions in addition to state and local officials to make sure that the EPA or others in the government, federal government, are adequately apprised beforehand rather than after.

Some mistake has been made about things that community knowledge could have prevented, such as getting one of these potential landfill sites where I thought it was pretty important that Bernith pointed that it was from Chief Brenda Robichaux who's one of the Gulf Coast Fund advisors that there was some issue sort of a historic issue that sort of predates this disaster that could well be exacerbated.

Mathy Stanislaus: So, I mean, in terms of engagement with the community, generally, the community experience, I (inaudible) as policy. You know the EPA is committed to doing that in a number of funds. You know the administrator has made that what would a top priority in terms of environmental justice and expanding the conversation to environmentalism.

So if there is a specific way that we can engage the community knowledge we're really open to it, I mean, clearly, with respect to response to the spill and the need to respond and engage to communities, they're trying to engage them at every level.

Frankly, there are specific recommendations you have, or anyone has in terms of how we can engage the community better, we're open to it. You know we've added a series of community meetings. The administrator has gone down there five times. I've gone down there. And Lisa Garcia has gone down there.

We try to make information more – or less technical and more understandable. We translated information. We've not relied on the Internet. So there are other ways of getting their message out and creating a mechanism for – us gaining that community knowledge, we're open to it.

Derrick Evans: Great. Well, when we get to that portion of this meeting, I think I do have some specific recommendations.

Mathy Stanislaus: OK.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Hey, Derrick, was that you?

Derrick Evans: Yes.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: OK. We have about one minute left, so if you want to wrap it up and ask your – make your recommendations, then, we can move on to the public comment period. Do you want to do that?

Derrick Evans: Well, sure. Why don't I just again point out that all of this is occurring within a preexisting context that includes a pervasive paradigm of citizen voices being unheard and unheeded across coastal zones of these states. These are not states that are famous for their rigorous enforcement of federal or state environmental laws.

And as I said before, this is essentially an environmental justice region as opposed to a patch work of EJ communities. And I think that the Environmental Protection Agency is uniquely suited because of its size, its demonstrated availability and sincerity as far as interfacing with underserved communities to help shift this paradigm, particularly now, as this crisis grows worse every day.

I think that the EPA is also uniquely poised to help us minimize these (inaudible) of government discussions about the scientific and the social issues that are sort of interwoven in here.

And I think the key to all of that is to empower citizens through their community-based organizations and NGOs to not only receive intelligible and accurate and actionable information from EPA, from the website, or from meetings, et cetera, but also to share or to upload.

I think this is not just a matter of outreach, but as the equally valuable goal of inreach or input from citizen experts like, say, Dr. Wilma Subra, who is a MacArthur Fellow here in the region who many of us are familiar with, Dr. Beverly Wright, even Dr. Riki Ott, a survivor of the Exxon Valdez who's down here working with us now.

We feel that you know these are but a few non-industry, non-government people, persons who are amply familiar with this region's past and current challenges, and that you know getting the EPA could really help by tapping this base of community experience and the wisdom for the benefit of all.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you, Derrick. And I hope that everyone heard that and incorporated that into their (inaudible) figure out how to incorporate that into the work moving forward.

We're now going to move towards the public comment period. And I just want to go over three questions. The NEJAC is seeking input and guidance on the following:

How should EPA engage other federal state tribal and local governments to ensure that coastal planning and protection efforts are high priority?

Two, how should EPA engage communities around the environmental cleanup and recovery action? Three, the scope of disaster preparedness efforts within coastal communities, so do you – could you incorporate that into your public comments?

I want to remind our members to ask clarifying questions. And I'd like to turn this over to Victoria to review the process.

Victoria Robinson: Thank you, Elizabeth.

Let me just make a quick check. Operator, are you on the line?

Operator: Yes, I am.

Victoria Robinson: Wonderful. Great.

The purpose for the comment period is to inform the deliberations of the NEJAC. We have a list of speakers who registered in advance to provide us comments. And when it's your time to speak, we will call your name and the operator will unmute your line.

Operator, I will be calling three names at a time so that you can queue up the lines appropriately.

Speakers, as well as members, remember, as I call your name, please state your affiliation to make sure we have an accurate recording for the record, and then provide your comment.

And to ensure that we keep within the time limits of the call, please keep your comments to five minutes. We do have a time keeper who will be keeping track of time and you may hear the time keeper interrupt to give you time warning such as two minutes or one minute from time to time. That is just to let you know how much time you have remaining.

We also have received several written comments from people have requested that we leave their comments into the record. And we're going to have those read in interspersed throughout the comment. Most of those have been – are very short and these are the ones that would have been received prior to our deadline.

Any other written comments will also be added to the official transcript that will be posted on the Web. And members of the council will receive copies of those statements or have (inaudible) copy to those statements.

The first person – first three names are Wilma Subra, Steven Brittle, and Debra Ramirez.

Operator, can you open up Wilma Subra?

Operator: Ms. Subra, your line is open.

Wilma Subra: Thank you. Shall I go, Victoria?

Victoria Robinson: Yes, go ahead, Wilma.

Wilma Subra: OK. My name is Wilma Subra and I'm representing Subra Company and Louisiana Environmental Action Network. And I'd like to thank the NEJAC for this opportunity to address the council.

Once again, the NGO community was then the first to respond to the BP disaster and interact with the research communities and continue that interaction in a long-term basis.

We really appreciate all the visits and all the involvement of EPA and their commitment to working with these communities and also being available so that we can ask questions and get clarification to situations. But day in and day out, we are the ones working day and night with these communities.

The issue of protecting of the community's on land and impacts on the community on land, I'd like to point out that it extends from Pensacola, Florida all the way over into New Iberia and Iberia Parish, Louisiana. That's states of Florida and Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana.

And even in the new areas where it (inaudible) in Mississippi, Alabama and Florida, people have been telling me, they look at the weather station each day, whether – and make a decision whether or not to go out and do activities outside.

When the winds are blowing from the south, southeast, or southwest, that's when they have the odors and that's when they get the health impact. So, there's a real need to address this broad spectrum of human health impact on the basis of the community.

And then as most of you know, I've been looking out for the protection of the workers and still insist that the workers are being made very sick when they work out over the slick, putting out the booms, bringing in the absorbent pads, and they're being made sick and scared to speak out because they desperately need those jobs.

Two issues I'd like to (inaudible) that are fairly new. When we talked about the management of the waste, Mathy when you were talking about it, there is a plan. And if you look at the plan, there are facilities that are appropriate to accept this waste.

Yesterday, in the newspaper, Waste Management announced that it had received contract from BP, and it was identifying appropriate landfills, one each in Louisiana and Mississippi and Alabama. And that's where they were going to be taking the waste.

If you look at Louisiana's plan, Waste Management landfills are not listed on that plan. So this is something that goes against what is in the plan and doesn't seem like it was an appropriate move as according to looking at the plans that we have available and saying what the issues are.

And then the other question is, any day now, they're proposing to start burning some of the crude mixed with water and mixed with natural gas that's coming to the surface that they hope to bring up soon from another source from the well head.

And my question is, will you all be doing additional monitoring air and water as this new burning, which will go on constantly will occur offshore? And the other thing is when you talked about local management in St. Mary, Iberia, and Vermilion, our plan was actually to only boom the passes and not boom the shorelines. And it seems appropriate that the shorelines which are wetlands and marshes also be boomed.

And so apparently someone didn't review these plans and say whether or not at the state level these were adequate plans. Now all of the sudden that the slick is moving inshore, now they want enough booms to boom the whole shore but it wasn't in their plan. And so, that's a really big disconnect. And then in our area we have a lot of Vietnamese fishers who – the older ones do not speak English. And they've been having real problems figuring out which fishing ground to open and which are closed. Frequently they stock up their boat and go out. And they get towed once they get out in the fishing ground – as opposed – or if they actually trawl, collect shrimp and then get fined because they were trawling in an area that was closed for fishing.

And so, this communication process and a lot of it is regulated by Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries but yes there needs to be a mechanism to communicate with all these environmental justice communities. And so, thank you very much and I really in the long term appreciate all the work that EPA is doing, the interaction that EPA is conducting between their agency and the communities and working with (inaudible).

It made this process a lot easier and a lot more transparent and open. Thank you.

Victoria Robinson: Thanks, (inaudible). It's great to hear – Stephen?

Operator: Thank you. Stephen Brittle and Debra Ramirez on the line.

Victoria Robinson: Thank you, Operator. We do have a written statement from Stephen Brittle which we'll read in a few moments. We'll queue up Lori Latimar, Rebecca Templeton and Lauren Butz.

Operator: Lori Latimar, your line is open.

Lori Latimer: Hello, thank you very much for this opportunity. I am a student at the University of Arkansas, at Little Rock. And my interest is in environmental justice. And having worked in the regulatory industry of the state and environmental agency I do understand the technical language and one of the goals in my daily life is to break down technical government language into language on about fifth grade level so that – so that the common everyday person can understand hopefully what's going on.

I really do appreciate and I'm thankful for Lisa P. Jackson as the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency due to the appointment by President Obama. And we do have a whole different agency I believe and I'm really thankful for all the work that every one of you do because I know every one of you worked really hard.

My biggest concern in this is to go back to the beginning and for environmental justice. I think that it begins in the permeating agencies. From what I can gather and from the news reports and everything that we have learned BP maybe actually operating outside the limits of a legal permit if what I understand is correct.

After having researched the MSDS forms on the Corexit dispersant and looking at the directions for handling of dispersants I'm wondering have they actually legally been permitted to use this dispersant. And the other thing is that whenever there is an accident, an industrial accident or a disaster one of the things that we know is that if you have an accident you are pulled off the job, you're pulled off of what you are doing, you are taken out from behind the wheel, you are tested.

And then if there are – if you are found to not be in control and to not be operating correctly, then charges are filed.

Female: (Inaudible).

Lori Latimer: And from what I can see, the person – the company who is – who is responsible for this accident or disaster has been left in charge. And that to me is – it's hard to see that we can get environmental justice from a person driving so recklessly.

And, again, I want to thank every single one of you—all the citizens groups, everyone, and thank you – the environmental justice for allowing me to speak.

And have a wonderful day everyone.

Female: Thank you.

Victoria Robinson: Does anybody have any questions? OK. We're going to go ahead and have Christine Guitar here at EPA, she's going to read the statements from Stephen Brittle, Don't Waste Arizona.

He submitted a written comment and he's unavailable to be on the call.

Christine Guitar: Shortly after the Exxon-Valdez oil spill, attention was focused on Dr. Ralph Portier of LSU. He talked about using microbes/bioremediation to eat the oil. The problem at that time was the water where the spill had occurred was too cold for the microbes to propagate quickly enough.

But the Gulf of Mexico is warm. The microbes eat their way through the oil, hydrocarbons versus carbohydrates and then die off after their meal is gone. The microbes that can be utilized not as harmful and yet I hear no one speaking about this strategy.

EPA did approach LSU about strategies to utilize bioremediation and LSU's array of microbes to digest and breakdown the oil in the marshes and along the coast and even under the water.

Victoria Robinson: Thank you. Operator, next person is Rebecca Templeton.

Rebecca Templeton: Thank you.

Operator: Your line is open.

Rebecca Templeton: I'm with Bayou Grace Community services. And on behalf of Bayou Grace Community services I'd like to thank NEJAC for allowing me the opportunity to lift the concerns that we and members of our community have specific to this disaster.

Our organization is focused on hope and sustainability in the five bayou communities in lower Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana. And in working and communicating directly with members of our communities, we've identified many concerns that folks in our communities have and it really do echo many of the concerns that have already been brought forth today.

Many in our community are as concerned about the high use of dispersants and the long term effects of the use of these dispersants. They're – and we are especially concerned about the continued use of Corexit. And many feel that BP should be told to stop using this dispersant and perhaps all dispersants.

Secondly, people are very concerned.

Female: (Inaudible).

Rebecca Templeton: Hello? (Inaudible) hear me?

Female: OK. Go on. I'm sorry. I apologize for that. I think someone was on there cell phone.

Rebecca Templeton: Oh, OK. OK. Thank you. People are very concerned about the lack of ambient air quality monitoring. In Terrebonne Parish, the Louisiana DEQ does have a permanent ambient air monitoring station but it's in the northern part of our parish.

To our knowledge, there is no temporary ambient air monitoring station in the most coastal parts of the parish where oil is washing ashore.

Thirdly, we're very concerned about water quality. There have been reports that oil has been found in our water supply in Terrebonne parish. The questions that we have are who is testing the water quality, where can this information be found and what specifically is being done to protect our water supply?

We're very concerned also about where collected oil and used booms are being disposed of. And we'd like more specific information of where specifically this is being disposed of and we're also concerned that perhaps this oil is not treated as a toxic material.

It is our community's opinion that oil waste needs to be treated as a toxic material and discarded of in a safe way. We feel that there need to be stricter limits on chemical exposure and we're looking to the National Institute for Occupational and Health standards in hoping that consideration is taken, that are people are being exposed to chemicals far beyond the normal eight-hour workday.

We feel that people need to be protected to a greater extent and be allowed to use respirators. Also, each boat involved in cleanup in laying out boom should be equipped with an air monitoring device that constantly measures the level of exposure that people working are exposed to.

We understand that providing stricter standards for protection and limits to chemical exposure is opposed by many at the industry level. However, this is the largest environmental disaster that this country has ever faced. So, so much about this disaster is unprecedented, that we feel unprecedented measures for protection need to be taken.

We feel that this disaster in the Gulf Coast needs to be granted an exception so that there are stricter limits to chemical exposure so our people can be protected to a greater degree.

So on behalf of Terrebonne Parish and the people in our community that we represent, thank you for this opportunity to address the NEJAC.

Victoria Robinson: Thank you.

Does anyone have any questions?

Katie Brown: This is Katie Brown. I don't have a question but does anybody from EPA available to respond to some of the issues she raised?

Lisa Garcia: Hi. This is Lisa. So I guess I'm vigorously taking down notes as everyone is speaking. But I will definitely say that – oh, Beth, you want to respond to this person (inaudible)?

Female: For the air.

Lisa: For the air monitoring? I mean ...

Beth Craig: I guess what I was going to do is go back and look at the concerns that Rebecca was raising and make sure that we've – that we've done the monitoring (inaudible) that she's raised.

So, Rebecca, we'll go back and follow up. And obviously, we have contact information for you.

Rebecca Templeton: Thank you.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Rebecca, have you submitted your testimony in writing?

Rebecca Templeton: No. I can do that.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: OK. That would be helpful.

Rebecca Templeton: Great.

Lisa Garcia: As far as the oil – potential for oil in the drinking water supply, we you know on our website, we have (inaudible) drinking water but we have not – to my knowledge, we haven't heard those concerns. But I will definitely take that back.

Rebecca Templeton: OK.

Lisa Garcia: So that's the first time I've heard that. So I'm going to make sure that we go back and say that they're focusing – there may be oil in the drinking supply.

Rebecca Templeton: All right. Thank you.

Victoria Robinson: OK. And let me give you the email address, Rebecca, in which to send your statement.

Rebecca Templeton: OK.

Victoria Robinson: Send it Robinson.Victoria at epa.gov, that's R-O-B-I-N-S-O-N, dot V-I-C-T-O-R-I-A, at epa.gov. And Aaron will get that then out with the members as well as distributed to the appropriate folks here in EPA including Beth and Lisa.

Lisa Garcia: Yes, I just want the ones that add on the Corexit, the dispersant that's being used. If you go on to our website there's also a letter that was sent to EP, discussing dispersants and looking at alternatives, less toxic alternatives for use in surface and subsurface dispersion but all applications.

But also there has been a decrease in the surface application of dispersant, so. And those numbers are on our website also.

Rebecca Templeton: Great, thank you.

Victoria Robinson: Any other questions? OK, we're going to go ahead and then move to the written submitted testimony for Mr. Mike Smith and again Christine Guitar is going to read his statement.

Christine Guitar: OK, this comment is from Mike Smith, a concerned citizen from Alabama. My name is Mike Smith and I have some first hand information and some conclusions based upon my personal experience in the oil field and oil spill clean-up. It is my opinion that the main piece missing from these calls and the actions of the president is a common vocabulary/lexicon for the items and methods in question.

One particular item is the "hat" in quotation marks, that BP said they were trying to put on the well to "siphon off", also in quotation the oil. In the oil field it is called "an attempt to recase the well heads." And it was being done not to staunch the flow or cap the well but to salvage the well for BP's continued use of that well. Had BP wanted to they could have placed a dome over the end of the – the well pipe AKA casing and filled it with fast drying cement that is used in the oil field every day.

It would have set faster than the ice crystals could have increased the buoyancy of the recasing tool. In fact the recasing tool that they have could be pressed into action and filled with cement. Should all else fail the recasing tool could be fitted with nozzles and lowered onto the leak and filled with cement should the current strategy fail. The term "top kill" is a coined phrase just for this exercise. It is in fact the standard method for controlling oil well blow-outs and the method that went wrong on the rig and led us to this disaster and the exact same disaster that happened on the Ixtoc oil rig sinking in Campeche Mexico in 1979.

Victoria Robinson: Thank you. All right. Operator, we'll queue up the next speakers. Albert Huang and Joe Yarkin and Ellen Bateman.

Operator: Mr. Huang, your line is open.

Albert Huang: Hi, everyone, this is Al Huang from Natural Resources Defense Council and we've been providing legal and technical assistance to allow the Gulf Coast fund grantees that Derrick spoke about earlier including BISCO who also spoke earlier as well. And I just want to take this opportunity to read a letter which was co-written by NRDC, Dr. Wilma Subra, (Will Spoucus) from Louisiana Bucket Brigade or (CNS) and signed on to by about 20 (inaudible) based groups from the Gulf Coast that will be going to EPA this afternoon.

And I'm seeing – and regarding air monitoring, so here's the greatest hits list. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to protecting the people (inaudible) to the Gulf Coast from environmental hazards, including those associated with the BP oil

disaster, we appreciate that you have come down several times a week to the Gulf to hear community concerns.

And we also appreciate your efforts to respond to issues raised about the EPA air quality monitoring. We do have continued concerns about gaps from the air quality monitoring being conducted in the Gulf Coast.

As the duration of this environmental and public health disaster continues, it's essential that there's comprehensive monitoring that captures the full spectrum of short term and long term health risks.

EPA must redouble its efforts to work with communities to ensure that air quality monitoring is responsive to local concerns and that the findings are communicated effectively.

Oil spill (inaudible) communities have been experiencing odors and health complaints consistent with exposure to oil spill chemicals. At the very same time, EPA's reporting typical air quality for the areas monitored.

This disconnect reflects gaps in the current monitoring and communication plans employed by EPA that must be remedied. To that end, we make the following recommendations. One, air sampling in places where folks are most likely to be exposed needs to occur so that would be in places where people are most likely to come in contact with oil, either working – workers out in the water. We understand some jurisdiction issues with that, or workers on land or residential folks who have oil creeping into their residential areas.

Number two, improved response to community complaints and follow-up testing. To facilitate this, EPA should dedicate a portion of the website to providing information on how to report a complaint, locate the results of any monitoring conducted in response to complaint and related relevant information on odors and health effects.

And you can do this in two ways by creating an EPA Rapid Response team that responds to call (inaudible), and two, working with communities on environmental health action plans. We invite EPA to partner with local non-profit groups and local universities to develop additional methods for documenting problems, communicating risks and recommending interim solutions.

This collaboration could include development of an environmental health action plan for the region that includes documentation of community experiences as part of the data necessary to understand the impact of the disaster. A number of other speakers earlier I spoke about this documentation of community experiences.

Number three, expand monitoring to include semi volatile organic compounds. Currently, this data is only available for monitoring flights to region four and only for a limited suite of compounds, expanding this monitoring to the most highly impacted areas of region six as urgently needed.

Four, monitoring wind patterns to estimate most impacted areas. Neurological data on wind conditions and weather patterns should be assessed to evaluate the degree to which existing fixed (inaudible) stations are capturing the areas of highest impact.

Five, ensure public disclosure of monitoring data. All data collected on air quality both offshore and onshore should be made public regardless of where it originated. EPA is the agency best suited to be a clearing house for this data and make it available to the public.

We strongly encourage EPA to seek out the data being collected by other entities and agencies and make this information available to the public on its website. For example, BP has been collecting data and posting on their website in limited format and oftentimes, in hidden ways where it is very difficult for public to find.

So this (inaudible) include information on both the oil-related compounds and disbursements. It is essential that the public and medical advisors, in particular, have access to health relevant information on all chemicals released into environment.

We greatly appreciate the fact that EPA made ingredients of the dispersive products publicly available. Data are also needed on chemical make-up on Louisiana crude oil and the oil-dispersant mixture.

And finally, six, communicate monitoring results effectively. The result of this monitoring effort is daunting and we appreciate the efforts of EPA staff and the contractors who are working to collect the data and make it available to the public.

However, the current presentation of the data on the website is confusing and very difficult to assess. We recommend the websites improve to facilitate queries by specific location. Also, all data files including enough information to enable a user to determine what was sampled, where it was sampled, so that (inaudible) city, county and state, when it was sampled, date and time, and what method was used with sample collection analysis and the relevant limit of detection.

The conclusion that air quality is normal for this time of year is not supported by empirical data since this is the first time that (inaudible) of this scope for air toxicity is talking place in this region. With personal experience, smelling odors during spikes see that odd with EPA's assessment, community members lose trust in the agency.

EPA's communication of the monitoring results should reflect an honest assessment of the situation and include explicit recondition of limitations inherent in sampling results.

In addition, the EPA should conduct community forums to explain the monitoring efforts and results to community members. Such forums should be conducted in collaboration with local community and environmental groups and should include presenters from relevant agencies, local universities and outside experts, another point that someone made earlier.

Given the scope of the disaster, we understand the challenges your staff face and we appreciate the hard work being conducted to collect information and communicate it to the public.

The recommendation included in this letter, if enacted, would greatly improve the monitoring and communication of health risk associated with the oil spill.

Thank you for your commitment to air quality in the Gulf Coast and we look forward to continue to work with you to ensure the protection of all communities.

We'll provide that testimony in writing, the letter of writing as well and invite EPA folks to respond directly to the authors of the letter and the Gulf Coast communities that have signed on to it.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you (inaudible). I think that what you've laid out is a template on how EPA may respond to disasters, not just for this particular disaster, but for things that may be coming our way because of climate change.

Is there anyone from the agency who would like to respond?

Beth Craig: Hi, this is Beth Craig. I want to say thank you for the very thoughtful and constructive letter.

Obviously, some of this is a heavier lift than other pieces of it so we'd like to sit down and review it. And then as you say respond to the authors.

Victoria Robinson: Any questions from the (inaudible)?

Lisa Garcia: Oh this – sorry. This is Lisa. I was just going to say that ...

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Lisa, I can barely hear you. I don't know if you can be closer to the ...

Lisa Garcia: Hi. I just wanted to tell Al that we'll definitely get the letter to folks around here to be able to look at the recommendations there. You know they're well-thought out and we appreciate the work that went into it you know as we're looking at the NEJAC report and the recommendations coming in. So we appreciate the work by you and Beverly and all the other groups working on this.

Victoria Robinson: Any questions from the members, from Mr. Huang?

Albert Huang: Well, thank you for that responses and – again you'll get the letter in writing. And it was written by Miriam Rotkin-Ellman who is a staff scientist here in NRDC.

Katie Brown: Well, this is Katie Brown. As a member of the NEJAC, I say thank you very, very much.

Victoria Robinson: OK. Hearing no questions for Mr., for Al, I'm going to go ahead and we've got one more statement that we're going to have read by Christine for an individual who is not going to be able to speak but submitted a very short (inaudible) statement.

Christine Guitar: This is from Lauren Butz. She's the environmental justice coordinator with Mary Queen of Viet Nam Community Development Corporation. "With the understanding that there have been 71 cases of illnesses reported by cleanup workers, lack of efficient, effective training, and protections for the workers, reports of oil leaking through the gloves provided by BP, no respirators when they are thought to be necessary. Can we begin the discussion to mandate BP provide health insurance for those working on the drilling disaster?"

Victoria Robinson: Thank you. Yes, go ahead, Lisa.

Lisa Garcia: Oh, I'm just going to say that we are definitely working closely with (inaudible) and that sentiment has been raised on the other calls that we have with representatives

from the White House and also the other agencies. And so I know it is a big concern and others have raised it.

So we appreciate that. And hopefully, I know (inaudible) is ramping up its monitoring. But hopefully, it will have some more data to share with everyone on addressing those concerns.

Victoria Robinson: OK, wonderful. And just to make sure, Lauren, you're not on the – operator, is Lauren Butz on the call? I just want to make sure I get the right message because she was not on the call.

Operator: That's correct. She's not on the conference.

Victoria Robinson: All right, thank you.

The next, Joe Yarkin, is he on the line?

Operator: Mr. Yarkin is not on the line.

Victoria Robinson: OK, thank you.

Ellen Bateman.

Operator: Ms. Bateman, your line is open.

Ellen Bateman: Thank you. I wanted to say thank you to NEJAC and thank you for EPA for allowing me the opportunity to share my thoughts regarding what we see the EPA response to engagement for communities.

I am with the Environment and Conflict Working Group at Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University. And one of the value commitments of Environmental Justice to my knowledge is collaboration and participation and I'm hoping that the EPA will engage local communities in the spirit of collaboration, participation, and transparency.

And I'd like to echo Mr. Huang's for open lines of communications. The EPA should engage local communities, honoring local knowledge and concerns into serious consideration. And the EPA should lead the way to implement the design of methods to utilize the workforce in the Gulf region to work on the cleanup, recovery, education, and green energy transformation.

The EPA should take a leadership role in designing partnerships with states and localities to create and designate jobs related to the cleanup recovery renewal as green jobs.

In the 21st century, so rich with diverse thought and approaches better solutions-oriented including technological advances, the EPA should advocate for companies and constituents outside of the circle of culprits, including Cameron, Trans Ocean, Halliburton and BP to press ahead double pace to remedy this disaster and learn about the effects of the spill on ecosystems, animals, and humans.

The EPA should insist that knowledge resources are dispatched to the spill site immediately. Neither BP nor EPA prohibits scientists from learning about the BP spill and BP spill response now.

More expertise is clearly needed in those situations. The EPA with its power and authority must assert itself in ways that it has not dared to imagine in the past. Rather than accommodating big business, the EPA should serve the environment and the living organisms that are inseparable from their environment.

The EPA must be a strong advocate for the scientific community and the knowledge community to allow expertise from the academy to interact as respondents during this pressing (inaudible) to address the necessary solutions to the damaged well and the impacted ecosystems. The EPA should engage alternative dispute resolution techniques to resolve the conflicts that will surely arise as many communities come together to respond the BP spill and the BP spill response.

Organization and coalitions with expertise in collaborative process, alternative dispute (inaudible) and dialogic technique should be represented in the list of regional agencies involved in the (inaudible) response and on-going recovery in the region that will surely last for generations. Please make available to those without Internet access the information that is shared to the general public who can use Internet.

And I want to thank you so much for the opportunity to share this information. I am happy to send my comment to robinson.victoria@EPA.com. Thank you.

Female: Any questions?

Victoria Robinson: Okay. We have I think. We have four more persons in the list. Operator is Reverend Steve Jamison on the line?

Operator: Bear with me one moment. No, ma'am, I do not show Reverend Jamison on line.

Victoria Robinson: Okay. Thank you. Then, Sherri Jones.

Operator: Bear with me one moment. I do not show a line connected for Sherri Jones.

Victoria Robinson: Okay. Sherri, S-H-E-R-R-I, Jones. I was told that she was on the line. Well, while you look for her, Tennie White, should be on the line.

Operator: Okay. We do have Tennie White.

Victoria Robinson: OK.

Operator: Your line is open. Tennie White, your line is open.

Victoria Robinson: Ms. White, do you have it on mute? You might need to unmute your line either with star six or if you don't have a mute button.

Sherri Jones: Hello.

Victoria Robinson: Hi.

Sherri Jones: Hello.

Victoria Robinson: Who is speaking?

Sherri Jones: Sherri Jones. Sherri Jones.

Victoria Robinson: Oh, Mr. Jones.

Sherri Jones: Evidently we got a problem with the identifications of the lines. I'm here.

Victoria Robinson: OK.

Sherri Jones: You might have Ms. White on mute now instead of Sherri Jones. But first of all, I would like to say, thank you guys on behalf of (inaudible) in Hattiesburg Mississippi, thank all EPA officials for the work that you are doing with respect to this unprecedented crisis.

We have concerns here in Mississippi to begin with the workers. We had 22 young men that graduated from a training class prior to this incident and immediately a company called and requested that they be sent to the Gulf Coast region to begin this process and participate in these activities. We know that this is an opportunity for our people to lead the communities and to become employed. But certainly we want to make sure that they return to the community safely.

Since that time, you have a host of companies that come in from all over the country here and we don't believe that they are properly training the people because of the time period. Initially, they started out with 40 hours of training, eight hours of OSHA training, now they are actually training people and beginning to dispatch them to the Gulf Coast with training two and a half hours of training.

We certainly want to have somebody to look at that. We also are very concerned with respect to EJ and we won't take up time today to discuss all of the issues. But we are concerned that we need to make sure that we develop relationships throughout the rural states even this call today and ever since the emergency crisis have been ongoing, people continue to have conversations and dialogues about the Gulf Coast region and rightfully so.

But when Hurricane Katrina hit, it's our understanding that the wind speed in Hattiesburg Mississippi was over 200 miles per hour, we still have people here in Hattiesburg with blew roof. We still had people in the community today trying to recover from Hurricane Katrina. But one of the saddest events is when people move all over the country – move from all over the country to come in to more or less pimp our people here.

These jobs initially started out paying \$22 an hour, \$24 an hour. We believe that EPA, OSHA or somebody need to make sure that the Department of Justice is looking into how these companies is coming in here, placing people on these hazardous jobs and paying them just a little above minimum wages.

Some of these companies now are employing these people telling them they're going to get paid \$8 and \$10 an hour, no per diem, no hotel room. And several people have mentioned the fact that healthcare certainly, people need healthcare if possible.

But these people are being exposed and treated and exposed to some of environments that's raising some concern. And we need some help and support. And again to Mr. Mathy to Ms. Lisa Jackson, to the president, we know and we – that they are representing well and they're doing all that they can do.

But still, we have some people – we have some – we have some people in EPA – there are some left over Bush appointees that we have concerns about. We still got some clogs in the pipe lines from the White House to my house. And we don't have a whole lot of time people to try and make some adjustments and try to get some relationship established. Derrick made some comments initially about 200 and some odd organizations. He talked about 200 and some odds thousands of dollars that's been given out to organizations and communities.

Well certainly, Crystal Springs Mississippi, Columbus Mississippi, Hattiesburg Mississippi, Columbia Mississippi certainly weren't a recipient of any of those grant money. We need to develop relationships where people in the community can start getting funds to help up there (inaudible) community.

I don't know if Ms. White is on the line. Ms. White is a technical adviser that's supporting four, five different communities.

Now, she's done work for the past three years pro bono because we can't get money for technical assistance to help pay her. So we got a lot of issues that was taking place prior to the oil spill. And certainly we're going to have some after the oil spill. But one thing that we would ask in my last comment is for somebody to stand out who need to be monitoring these companies that should be protecting the health and welfare of our young men and women and some of them going down here and going on this job for the first time – first time employment. They need to work. But certainly, we don't need them to go down there and the result be – the same result from that explosion on the oil rig and that was eleven lives lost that we can't ever replace. And I thank you.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Mr. Jones, thank you. I think in part – this is Elizabeth Yeampierre speaking. I think in part, you raised the need for inter-agency coordination – the Department of Justice, the Department of Labor, the Department of Health, OSHA. And Lisa, you're on the call?

Lisa Garcia: Yes.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: If you could – there are maybe other questions raised by the members of the NEJAC but if you could in part answer the question of the attempt to work with the other agencies and how they might be able to be better coordinated to address some of these concerns?

Lisa Garcia: Yes. I can. There's actually a lot of (inaudible). Let me – can you hear me on this microphone?

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Yes (inaudible).

Male: Well, is that a speakerphone or?

Lisa Garcia: Hello?

Elizabeth Yeampierre: We're going to move Lisa down to another microphone because we're having problems at the end that – where she's at. So she's going to try speaking over here now.

Lisa Garcia: Hi, sorry about that.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: That's excellent.

Lisa Garcia: So I was going to say that there is – there is definitely a lot of inter-agency work going on. Obviously, as Mathy mentioned and others, everyone's working out of the unified commands and the joint incident commanders, a lot of efforts to work jointly.

But on responding to community concerns, I think initially, everyone was trying to respond to this spill and had to deal with the leak. And now, the efforts to speak to communities to gather all those concerned is also, I guess, coming to fruition and there is an inter-agency group that's working on that.

One of them is the Deepwater Integrated Services and they are – I think it was just on Sunday, they put in community relations team out of the unified command to begin to really work with local groups.

They have limited English proficiency specialists there who are going to be working on, you know, issues of language and making sure that things are translated. So there is that inter-agency effort and like I said, it just started.

But I think I am certainly going to bring back the concern that was raised on DOJ and some of these other issues as we continue to work through conference calls and with these inter-agency work groups.

Oh, and the number of people that were trained for the community relations team is a hundred people. They're all federal staff people working through the FEMA Training Program and they're going to be on the ground.

Like I said, they started – they're kind of setting up shop in the unified command as of Sunday, this past Sunday.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Any questions? Thank you Lisa. Any questions?

Katie Brown: This is Katie Brown. Lisa, I think one of the facts that the gentleman mentioned was the shift and the amount of training that people are getting before they actually get down to the beach and work on clean-up.

And that really is of concern. And like I realize in some of ways this is out of our purview but we're hearing it so many times and the fact that it is – is an economic issue and it's hitting communities that are EJ communities.

I guess somehow rather this is live for the NEJAC and maybe this is a part of our later discussions to talk about these work-related issues even though it's not an EPA issue per se.

But I've listened to these comments and wondered whether we learned anything from 9/11 and first responders there. And those first responders were different than the folks who were or taking the brunt here with this spill, in terms of – that they don't

have the health plans and the insurance and other support mechanisms in place that many of the fire fighters and the police had in New York.

So, I guess, I do have a question then and that is, how do you all track into the expertise that was created after 9/11, in terms of how do you track illnesses and how do you monitor folks as part of the clean-up process?

Lisa Garcia: This is Lisa Garcia again. So I think two things. One is I have not heard anything about the tracking of health for workers but that is an excellent point and I'll make sure to bring it back.

The other thing is OSHA has been very involved in working with EPA and the Coast Guard and other agencies responding to this to make sure that all the protective gear that's required is being used, that they're responding to the worker illnesses issues and then, I guess, assessing the – you know what happened to the workers and trying to figure out more about the health and safety of the workers out there.

But instead of me kind of relaying the information that I have heard, I'm going to try to speak with someone from OSHA and see if we can get a fact sheet responding to many of these concerns, the issues, and the statements made here are certainly not the first, you know, the concerns with the use of respirators and the concerns for overall health of the worker.

So, I will try to provide that to, I guess, the – how do I – to the NEJAC and then they send it on....?

Victoria Robinson: No, no. You help the NEJAC but also I think you might want to use the mechanism of (inaudible) Operation Center, their outreach and how they're reaching out to the very people who are working to that stuff.

Lisa Garcia: OK. Sorry about that. We're just figuring out logistics but I will try to get that fact sheet and make sure that we get it out there and also post something either a link or the actual fact sheet on our website in some way. Or you know, we usually have links to some of the information.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: OK.

Derrick Evans: (Inaudible). I'd like to point out that the first respirators that were distributed to workers out there in the bayous, working on the clean-up were distributed by the Louisiana Environmental Action Network, LEAN and Louisianan Bayoukeeper and other maritime-based Gulf Coast fund grantees.

Likewise, Sherri Jones, who recently, who just spoke earlier, was one of the first group – I think it was the seven trained (inaudible) responders, first in line immediate responders was trained by the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, which is Dr. Beverly Wright's organization based in New Orleans in Dillard University and which is also a Gulf Coast Fund founding organization.

In fact, I say that, I point those few things out to reiterate that whether you're talking about the scientific and environmental or public health, as well as the other social dimensions of this disaster, it is our NGO's in those regions that are the best re – untapped resource for ideas, information and paradigms that I think has been alluded to or mentioned directly on this call.

In fact, Environmental Justice is, if nothing else, the intersection of environmental law and science as well as that of sociology, OK. And we're very familiar with both the ecological, environmental and social pretexts, impacts and very likely long term legacy of this disaster.

So again, I would point out that through our constant contact with over 160 impacted groups that the Gulf Coast fund – I'm talking about groups in Texas – Florida has this world's best and most complete access to real time and corroborable community observation of these disasters reaching impacts.

And there are, in fact, EJ ambassadors to the Gulf of Mexico program, all from the Gulf Coast fund grantees, but they don't meet with the governors until August second. Likewise, the Governor's representatives for fisheries in the respective states and for wetlands in the respective states are also Gulf Coast fund affiliated folks.

So I would invite EPA to accelerate or to expeditiously engage the Gulf Coast fund advisory group and its grantees to ultimately perhaps, hopefully, would result sometime soon in a Regional Citizens Advisory Council similar to that that was formed in Alaska after the Exxon Valdez oil spill there.

Because again, like we said, the safe delegated powers from EPA and others in this part of the country are not at best long term source of current or future assessment and actions. Thank you.

Male: For the record, who was that speaking please?

Derrick Evans: That was Derrick Evans.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: That was Derrick Evans. That was Derrick Evans. Is – Victoria, do we have any more...?

Victoria Robinson: Yes, we have. We've got basically 30 minutes before the administrative. We have two presenters left to go and then we can use that time – remaining time to start on the next step stuff.

Operator, can you tee up Tennie White? I know it's confusing about the phone line. Is she available now?

Operator: OK, the line is open.

And can you bear with me one moment?

Female: Hello?

Male: Yes, is everybody still there?

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Yes, we are.

Female: (Inaudible).

Sherri Jones: OK. I think (Davis) is trying to get – there's Ms. White's promise in last year. But I've had opportunity to make my comment.

Victoria Robinson: Right. Thank you. And I think the issue that you both are linking under the same line or something like that. Operator, why don't you go ahead and link in Mr. Luke Funchess. I hope I'm pronouncing that correct, F-U-N-C-H-E-S-S.

Operator: Thank you. Bear with me one moment?

OK and the line is open for Luke.

Luke Funchess: Well, hello?

Operator: All right, Mr. Luke, you can go.

Luke Funchess: OK. My name is Luke Funchess. I'm from Crystal Springs, Mississippi. I'd like to thank you all for the opportunity to be able to speak about some of the problems that we are having. And, probably, going to have from this oil spill, we at the crossroads of one of the worst disasters that I can imagine that the United States have had.

We are an organization along with Mr. Sherri Jones. We are also a coalition organization for the state of Mississippi cocwebs.com. We have had problems in our community, which I can understand about this problem that we're having with the oil spill. There are a lot of things that's known and there are a lot of things that's unknown. As Brother Jones said, hazmat training is important for the people that are going to be out there in those fields working and stuff.

They help here and everything. It's going to be down the road maybe five, 10 years, maybe not that long that, but we're going to see some results where people are going to get sick.

I remember back when 9/11 happened they did health assessments on what type of problems that were going to occur and were occurring during that time. Now, people are dying from asbestos and all sorts of other things that came from the 9/11 incident.

I wonder how we learned anything. We had people that (inaudible) people and the citizens in New York and other places (inaudible) monitoring and stuff are going on (inaudible) as far as I can remember on the news that there were no problems. EPA and other people that listened and was doing the study and stuff told all the people (inaudible) having a problem.

But I don't understand now that people are being – having lung problems and other kind of problems from that. OK, we got this oil spill now. We don't know what's going to be the outcome of what's going on. We don't know what type of chemicals they are using to disperse this oil. We don't know what type of things that's going to occur from this.

We need to take a serious look at what's going on and start to listen to people. (Inaudible) we've been crying out for years. We found out back in 2000 that there was some chemical things that were done here in Crystal Springs where we had a company, an electric company named Kuhlman Electric had spills and chemical, environmental things that were you know let out in the neighborhood.

We have been hard and nobody heard us. But the thing is about it. Now we got a large problem where people going to be impacted from what's going on from this oil spill. I wondering if people are going to look at it any different from the way they looked at the small communities. It impacted the people (inaudible) whether it's small community or large community or you're talking about the United States. This is a huge problem.

People need to take – and those people that have those jobs that are supposed to be protecting the people, if they're not going to their job, they need to step down. If they have a problem telling somebody, if somebody reports to them that this community got problems, send somebody out to listen to what they're saying and not go there with the attitude that these people don't know what they're talking about. I'm speaking from experience. I live in a neighborhood where it's happening, and I know that there's going to be some huge problems that's going to come from this oil spill.

I think we need to wake up and smell the coffee. We're at the crossroad. Where are we going from here? That's all that I have to say. And I'd like to thank you all for listening to my concern. And you all have a blessed day.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you. Any – any comments, questions?

Hilton Kelly: Yes, this is Hilton Kelly. I'm from Port Arthur, Texas, (inaudible). I'd like to echo the gentleman's concerns. Here in Port Arthur, Texas, we have a company that just opened a – a plant that makes the cushions and the absorbent pads for this oil spill. And a lot of folks that are coming to Port Arthur from the New Orleans, Louisiana area for these jobs, a lot of folks are not being paid adequately. And I have a lot of concerns about that here in the city of Port Arthur for these workers.

Also, I think that it's imperative that we do everything we can to try to protect the health of those who are doing their best, to try to help alleviate this problem by working those oil spills. I mean, what would it take for – for the BP industry to equip each and every person with some type of a respirator. And if they have to partner with our government to get this done, I think that we should put forth every effort to protect those folks who are out there working on the frontlines trying to do a good job at keeping our – our country clean.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you. Victoria, do we have – I thought we had one more...

Victoria Robinson: Right. We have one more person and then while the operator is trying to tee up (inaudible) Ms. White, I'm going to have to see Christine start to read the last brief comment that had been submitted.

Christine Guitar: All right, thank you. This comment is from Hoyt Hillman, with the Arkansas River Coalition. Three suggestions for the Gulf oil waste: It is not a good idea to put the oil-contaminated waste in permanent landfills. Number one, temporarily store the waste in sedimentation tanks and pump top half into spare strategic reserve caverns.

Number two, gulf-dredged sediment bottom half that are contaminated with petroleum compounds could be recycled as an aggregate replacement in asphalt mixes help lower costs for highways.

Number three, the waste oil collection could also be economically useful as an industrial fuel supplement in coal-fired public utilities and lower rates for consumers.

Victoria Robinson: Thank you, Christine. I understand that Ms. White is actually recalling back in.

Operator, has she called back in yet?

Operator: Yes, ma'am. And the line is open.

Victoria Robinson: Thank you.

Go ahead, Ms. White.

Female: Bear with me one moment.

Victoria Robinson: Elizabeth, while she's doing that, we'll just then go in and move to the next step section while we wait for (inaudible). He'll be here at four o'clock.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: OK.

Male: Operator, can you hear me?

Female: Hello? Should we be...

Victoria Robinson: I don't think we're getting Ms. White. She has tried calling in (inaudible) apparently seem to get the same connection with – with Mr. Jones again.

Operator, were you able to get Ms. White?

Operator: One moment, presenters.

Female: So this is being – this is being processed. We are – we should be thinking about next steps. And, I don't know, we should start the discussion now. I'm a little concerned that we'll start in the middle of our rhythm, the presenter will show up. But I guess we can begin just throwing some ideas out there about next steps.

Katie Brown: Hello. This is – this is Katie Brown, for...

Victoria Robinson: Yes?

Katie Brown: I have one more question.

Victoria Robinson: Yes, sure.

Katie Brown: It really goes back to Sharon when she opened the discussions and some stuff that Derrick has said. And Derrick just probably said most eloquently how the NGOs and the CBOs are – are really on the frontlines. They've – they've been the first responders and continuing to provide resources and expertise and are sort of the window on the communities.

But Sharon spoke very specifically about the need for support, the need for financial support. This is for her organizations and I presume for others like her organization. And I guess such the question in the report from 2006 was a discussion about some small grants that went to community groups in the midst of disasters.

Is there a mechanism that could be considered about channeling some money to groups that are really in the forefront and are serving sort of an important liaison role in helping to bring expertise, whether it's from the community or it's outside, independent expertise to bear on what's going on?

Charles Lee: This is Charles. In 2006, EPA did a number of grants, environmental justice grants in the wake of the hurricanes. And so, that is – that was one actual – one of the – one of the responses that EPA gave to the 2000 – to the NEJAC report. So there is that vehicle. Whether or not that vehicle is appropriate for these current circumstances is something we're looking at. So – and so, you know, that's as much as we could say at this point.

Female: OK, thank you.

Sharon Gauthier: All right, this is Sharon again. I just want to mention that BISCO was one of the groups that got one of those grants right after Hurricane Katrina and actually did a lot of work because I know we were very, received a lot of praise from Mr. Charles Lee on the work we did at that time. And, like he said, it's not just BISCO but it's the other non-profits along the (inaudible) groups. You know, a lot of work (inaudible) funds that – that are in need of funds.

But the other – the other thing that we didn't – I really heard mentioned again was our concern about the plans for families and the community for evacuation or return after evacuation, all this information the community needs to know, what the dangers are of the oil and the possibilities especially after a storm, you know, the evacuation procedures, if they're planning just as they plan for hurricanes by having these shelters with food and whatever, are they having them with these air monitors? I mean, I'm trying to think of the word I'm looking for. But the things you wear on your nose that (inaudible).

Any of the equipment that would be needed after a disaster for people to be able to go home, gloves, suits, hazmat suits, whatever.

So I'm just saying that there are other things the community is really concerned about that you know we're trying to be proactive and look ahead and say, "What are those things that you know could happen any minute you know in any – in the next week, we could have a hurricane." And then all of a sudden, we are faced with this disaster like we were after Katrina. Are we ready for it? Are we prepared for it?

And those are the kind of things that as people on the ground we feel like we could be getting that information to the community if that was made available. And certainly, with all the expertise that's there in Region 6 and throughout EPA, the knowledge is there but it's not getting to the people. And that's the kind of stuff that we're really interested in.

Listening to what the people have to say, what their concerns are and then also providing information to them that can help them to prepare for the worst disaster they'll probably ever have in their lives.

Derrick Evans: This is Derrick Evans. I would like to put it out there succinctly that the Gulf Coast Fund is very able and interested to be involved in a dialogue with EPA or anyone else. We would like to talk about ways of resourcing these organizations across the

Gulf Coast that have been and continue to be the first responders to the – both environmental and social implications of these disasters.

Charles: This is Charles. I mean, that's a great recommendation. And so, we'll follow up on that. And you should know that we also have been in dialogue with other foundations and have been working on the foundations in trying to support the community groups.

So this is just another aspect we've had and something we really – we'll look forward to working on.

Derrick Evans: Let me just say that in the world of social and environmental philanthropy ...

Female: I'm sorry, who's this?

Derrick Evans: I'm sorry, this is Derrick Evans again.

Female: OK.

Derrick Evans: I would like to point out that in recent work weeks in the world of social and environmental philanthropy, it has one of the, I guess, you might say, silver linings to this disasters as evidenced by NRDC and others that there has been a noticeable marriage or convergence between previously disparate or isolated groups.

We now understand that this is inseparably an environmental and social catastrophe. And that is evidenced by the decision of NRDC and others who have (inaudible) or dedicate all – almost all of the money that they've raised in response to this disaster to the Gulf Coast fund for redistribution to communities—the fishermen's communities and others in a way that it does not privilege environmental losses at the expense of (inaudible).

Margaret May: This is Margaret May in Kansas City, one of the new council members. And in listening to all of the discussion this afternoon, I have a suggestion that may not be perfectly helpful at the moment to the current situation, but perhaps would be helpful as we move forward. It seems that our world is subject to more disastrous situations or conditions in recent times than maybe, I recall, in my lifetime.

I think it's time for us to begin to be more proactive in planning for events like this into the future so that we're not always in the reactionary mode. It seems to me, and I'm certainly not knowledgeable about the area where the oil spill has occurred, but I am aware that across in various places in the United States, we have areas that could have the same kind of disasters to occur. And it seems that we need to be developing a best practices or a step by step process that should be followed, so that actions could be taken more quickly.

You know, regarding communication strategies and equipment that would be needed and that should be used from the first day, formation of an advisory counsel, things that we convey, perhaps be doing and get accomplished within a week or so as opposed to looking at months and two months of time and we're still talking about things that we need to get accomplished.

I really think that we need to get a group of people with the knowledge and experience in these areas and actually come up with, so to speak, a playbook.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Margaret, this is Elizabeth. I couldn't agree with you more. It's the reason I reacted to Al Huang's testimony because I think we need to incorporate climate adaptation and community resilience model into the environmental justice work that we're doing because this is really the beginning of a series of events that are going to hurt our communities.

And a lot of our communities live along the waterfront, but even for land-locked communities, there are going to be disasters that are really (inaudible) of the changing climate. And so this really serves as an opportunity not just to address the disaster, but to also really shore up and develop the resources that are necessary to address them in a holistic way and interagency way. Thank you.

Sharon Gauthé: This is Sharon one more time and I'll promise to be quiet afterwards.

Female: (Inaudible).

Sharon Gauthé: This is Sharon Gauthé.

Female: OK.

Sharon Gauthé: The administration to the president has formed that interagency group that EPA is on. And I think it's really important that Lisa Jackson's recommendations go to that committee as well because we're asking EPA to do these things for us. But a lot of this can also be done through that interagency groups that is working on the ground that EPA is a part of that Matt and Lisa are a part of. I just want to make sure that Lisa Jackson (inaudible) is aware that we need to make sure that that group is aware of all of this. Thank you.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: So I've heard there may be other things – I'd like your help in this – I've heard that there's a need for targeted funding, that there's a need for an interagency approach, that there's a need for us to be proactive and developing templates to address these issues. Can someone help me with providing me with – in case I miss anything? Because this is where we're talking about next steps and what we want to do with these.

Derrick Evans: This is Derrick Evans.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Yes.

Derrick Evans: And on each of those three points that you succinctly reiterated (inaudible) for NGO leadership, it's framing and implementing task, those discussions.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Is there anything else so far that we may have left out?

John Ridgway: Elizabeth, this is John Ridgway. I have some that hasn't been touched on here if we got a few minutes and I think it's related again to the 2006 study. (Inaudible) a recommendation (inaudible) around coastal wetlands and barrier islands. And I'm wondering if anybody from EPA could address either now or we can consider in July when we meet, the recommendation is to protect these wetlands and the barrier islands for hurricane protection.

But we're also hearing that the oil is having environmental impacts and there's still not known. I'm just wondering when we can hear as to what EPA is doing to help

those barrier islands stay environmentally sound or repaired given what's going on and how that may relate to hurricane protection, lead abatement, as well as the obvious clean-up with the oil itself.

Charles Lee: Yes, John, this is Charles. You know, EPA does have a wetlands office and they have a field office in the Gulf. And so, we'll talk – we'll get in touch with them and get that information back to you.

But the other thing I want to share is that the White House recently concluded and I think (that) the report is done now on oceans and coastal policy and they – as part of that, they really reached out to the communities and the environmental justice communities in particular.

And they have hearings in Alaska and the West Coast in New Orleans as well as, I think in some parts of the East Coast. So that is you know is a really a lot about climate change and community resilience and disasters so we'll get information on that for you.

John Ridgway: Thank you very much. I appreciate it, Charles.

Victoria Robinson: This is Victoria. Elizabeth, we have 12 minutes before the administrator comes on the line. So I think we have concluded with the public comments.

Charles Lee: One last one.

Victoria Robinson: Charles has one last ...

Charles Lee: You know the other item that – when you – Elizabeth you were going through the issues of importance and you are talking about climate change and community resilience.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: And climate adaptation.

Charles Lee: And adaptation, yes. So you know ...

Elizabeth Yeampierre: I mentioned specifically adaptation because of the – because it's a waterfront community...

Charles Lee: Right.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: And these disasters can continue to happen and there needs to be something put in place to prevent things from going you know from moving forward. (Inaudible) sorry.

Charles Lee: So, (no), so I just wanted to make sure you didn't – you have that on the list.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: OK, all right.

Charles Lee: I know that every time that we have asked you and others you know around issues and importance, that one comes up.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Yes, it is a priority for me in particular, but I think it resonates with this particular issue. And it also speaks to some of the concerns that have been raised with some

of the (inaudible) members and some of the communities that's testified about trying to not only address current issues, but the progression of the change in weather and how it's going to continue to affect communities like – communities from the Gulf.

Lisa Garcia: Hi, Elizabeth, this is Lisa Garcia. I just wanted to mention something quickly?

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Yes.

Lisa Garcia: We just got some of the information from OSHA and they said that they do have some fact sheets available. You can find on the Internet at osha.gov/oilspill/index.htm.

And I will try to get that around also but there's OSHA heat stress and OSHA activity fact sheet. So I just wanted to mention that while we're on the call since there are a lot of questions about the worker's safety and what OSHA is doing.

Victoria Robinson: OK. Lisa is stepping out of the room to go meet and to link the administrator in. So we've got about 10 minutes, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Yes.

Victoria Robinson: Do you want – do you want to go ahead and wrap up public comment and then maybe kind of give a – the members a sense of what the next step conversation would be like after we speak with the administrator.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Yes. I think – I think that the conversation with the administrator will be really helpful to the members unless anyone disagrees. And then at the end we can – we can lay out what think the next steps are. What do people think?

Victoria Robinson: Some of the next steps I think, Elizabeth, that we have talked about is the potential that whether the NEJAC would want to promulgate a letter of advice, some kind of follow up to this meeting ...

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Right.

Victoria Robinson: Or what we'd like to see is next step at the July meeting regarding this issue. So the next ...

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Yes. Yes. I'm looking – I'm looking at some of the things that came out of this discussion and it could be a letter or it could be a recommendation. It could be a charge that the NEJAC takes up. So what I'm hoping is that at the end of the administrator's presentation that I can hear from the NEJAC members about what they would like us to look like because it could be a series of things that we do.

It could be – it doesn't have to be any one thing but it could be a variety of things. And it could be things that are at time sensitive between now and the time that the NEJAC meets again. So just for all of you to think about until she presents and then after that we can meet for I think for about half an hour and come up with some steps.

Lang Marsh: So this Lang Marsh. That sounds good and I just wanted to add one kind of request or issue that relates to a lot of the things that have been said today and that is to in terms of lessons learned from large impact whether EPA has looked at or would look

at the circumstances around the, Ixtoc spill in 1979 at Campeche to see if there are things that could be applied to the both short and long term monitoring and whether there were impacts on local communities and populations analogous to our (inaudible) impact that we're concerned about that happened afterwards – it's either during or after the initial impact that we might do some additional monitoring or investigation about.

I just wanted to put that on the table because I think it relates to a number of the issues that have been placed about how we monitor and how we address long term impact.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: I find that really helpful and the question that I had and maybe – and I didn't raise it because I didn't know if it was just not clear to me was that given what happened with Katrina and where we were in terms of the cleanup and in terms of the remediation and the economic development of the community, how this has specifically exacerbated that and what that means for the status of that remediation.

It just wasn't really clear to me what remained – what we have to do now specifically given what was happening then. So I know I got the impression that this is what we're doing right now to address the spill. But I see it still within the context of you know post Katrina. So I don't know. I don't know if I was the only one who felt like that.

Female: Anybody else have any comment?

Jody Henneke: This is Jody and I really regret this but I'm going to have to go in to another meeting very quickly and as far as – will we be able to get some sort of summary of the administrator's presentation and what we need to be prepared for as far as what comes next in advance of the July meeting?

Female: Yes.

Female: Yes. Yes.

Jody Henneke: OK.

Victoria Robinson: Actually what you'll have Jody is after this call starting tomorrow, the audio what they call an Encore presentation audio recording of this teleconference call will be available for people to actually call in and listen to it.

Jody Henneke: OK.

Victoria Robinson: We are expecting in two to three weeks that we will have – and that's going to be up until July 25th. We will also have within 10 working days our goal is to post the audio podcast files for all the different (portions) of today's call along with transcripts.

Jody Henneke: OK.

Victoria Robinson: And soon after that would be the meeting summary. So a transcript ...

Jody Henneke: Thanks.

Victoria Robinson: Would be up soon, OK?

Jody Henneke: Thank you so much. And I will see – I will see everybody in July.

Female: See you in July Jody.

Jody Henneke: Thank you.

John Ridgway: Elizabeth this is John Ridgway I'm thinking this may be a quick time to also acknowledge the many hundreds of people that have dialed in and called to listen in on this call and maybe again ask them if they have any advice for the NEJAC and our EPA and how to make these conference calls work well, any problems that they observed that we're not maybe aware of because of the technical challenges, can we invite that from the public at large?

Elizabeth Yeampierre: You've already done so. No, well put – I mean I was going to do that at the end of the – of the meeting but you're right, this is a good time. And (inaudible) it is you know definitely there've been not only the presenters but the folks who testified, the people who are listening in that I know a lot of environmental justice advocated from all over the country, any comments, any concerns, any guidance that you could offer us is welcome.

You know, we're here to listen and to really use your guidance as a way of representing the interest of our communities as best as we can. And this is an opportunity to do that. So after this call you know how to reach us and we would definitely appreciate you know your guidance and your vision on how we can move forward in a way that's going to advance our community's interest. So – yes absolutely.

Victoria Robinson: Elizabeth let me add – this is Victoria.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Yes.

Victoria Robinson: Let me add that all the participants on the call already have the email address that they used to register for this meeting. And they can go ahead and send your comments you know (inaudible) to my email robinson.victoria@epa.gov or you can send it to the email that you registered – to which you sent your registration.

And our contractor will get that to us. And then we will make sure that we – I bring it to the NEJAC as a body when we have conversations and look for ways to try to improve the process. We definitely want to make something like this go as smoothly as possible because it's a learning process for the agency and that they can use to replicate in other forums that are not necessarily the NEJAC or federal advisor committee but through some other kind of outreach mechanisms. So ...

Elizabeth Yeampierre: And there are other advisory councils that are – that are addressing this issue right now. But Victoria, there were 363 people on the call. Are you sure you want them all to have your email?

Victoria Robinson: They already have it and (inaudible).

Elizabeth Yeampierre: I just mean in terms of responding in times is that the best – is that the best way for them to communicate with us.

Victoria Robinson: The best way would be to send it to the address – email address that they sent their registrations to.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: OK.

Victoria Robinson: Right, that is the best way. But some folks will think that's impersonal but you're right. And I would be for – anyway I would be forwarding it back to my contractor to compile them. So it will save an extra step.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: OK.

Victoria Robinson: (Inaudible): It's a good point. OK. Operator, have we received Lisa Jackson yet? Has she called in?

Operator: Bear with me one moment.

Victoria Robinson: She'll be on the speaker line. She won't be on the participant line.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: So, well, let me ask the members what – there a number of things as we mentioned earlier that we could do – some things could be taken up on the July meeting. I'm just really concerned that we have a course of action between now and that meeting whether it's writing a letter or making a recommendation and that we take advantage of the month that we have in between just because that this disaster is unfolding as we speak.

So I just don't think we have the benefit of time to hold off some issues. Is there anything that you think that we should be moving on right away in terms of recommendation coming from the NEJAC.

Margaret May: This is Margaret May Kansas City. I think certainly we should make sure that we mentioned the need for resources for those communities that are involving – the people are sharing information with people in the community. Communication I think is essential.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: So maybe we should send a letter requesting that targeted resources for NGOs and other grassroots organizations that are addressing this issue.

Margaret May: Margaret again. Yes.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: OK.

Hilton Kelly: Yes. This is Hilton Kelly Community In-Power and Development Association NEJAC (inaudible) Texas. I think it's imperative that we try to pull together a meeting of some sort because as we know the event is unfolding as you said earlier as we speak.

And I think that there are ideas out there that need to be heard. I think that we need to come together as soon as possible possibly before July to further discuss this and look at ways in which we can help protect folks that are out there working now on the ground. And also you know we have to ensure that the right ears hear the cries of the people that are out there working to help get this cleaned up.

And also we have to push to see about getting the resources to the national groups that are on the ground trying to make a difference. So I think we're going to do – we have to do more than just write letters. But I think we need to come together at some point, a few of us, I know everybody may not be able to attend but I think we need to pick the location preferably somewhere in Mississippi or in New Orleans where we can go on the ground and kind of look at some of the things that are going on so we can get a greater understanding.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: So, Hilton, you know obviously we are going to differ to local leadership on an issue like this as an EJ issue. Would you and Derrick and maybe some of the other callers maybe (inaudible) set up a conference call so that you can decide where, how, and who should be at the meeting and so that we can send a letter to EPA requesting their presence at that meeting.

Hilton Kelly: Yes. I would love to do that and for Derrick and Rebecca on this. Because we are here on the (inaudible).

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Can anyone else – I don't know Margaret may yet. Hi, Margaret. I don't know who else is in that area, but anyone else. I'm sure Victoria can help you identify the folks on the call who would be relevant to reach out to.

Hilton Kelly: Okay. Excellent. Because we definitely need to come with the other, I mean, I could drive to New Orleans, Derrick or in Mississippi or whatever. But I think we need to have a more aggressive approach to this and since Derrick and I and a few others are in this area, yes, we need to come together, ASAP.

Victoria Robinson: So far, so we're talking about a letter requesting additional or resources that are targeted to the organizations that are doing the work on the ground, a request for a meeting with the principals that are involved in doing this work and addressing the issues in our community. Is there anything else that people want to put on the table at this point?

Teri Blanton: I think I would – this is Teri Blanton in Kentucky.

Victoria Robinson: Great.

Teri Blanton: And I hear of – and know of the important of the wetlands and the barrier islands. And I think that we should urge the EPA and urge them use local NGOs or whatever to protect those barrier islands and which is social justice issue because the barrier islands have protected people from the hurricanes. And those should be like the first and foremost in people's mind.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: John Ridgway?

John Ridgway: Yes.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Could you get in touch with – who was the person in the call (inaudible)?

Teri Blanton: Teri Blanton.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Could you speak to her about putting together of description of what that request that look like?

John Ridgway: I'd be glad too.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Because I know this is a concern of yours as well.

John Ridgway: Yes, I'd be glad too. I'm also interested in some follow-up in this comes from my state government background in – how does spill waste is being managed? How it's being designated? We heard that's not a hazardous waste, but I think most people don't necessarily understand how that characterization is made and understanding the thing that's changed.

And when you put a lot of it one place that can create some other challenges for local governments as well as, you know, the federal hazardous waste laws. So that seems to be an unfolding story that I think we want to pay close attention too.

Teri Blanton: I think I sort of agree with the one written comment that we got in the email of the gentleman that was talking about, "Let's not put this in just solid waste dumps. Let's think about where we put this waste."

I mean, I'm sitting here watching this unfold on the TV and Kentucky and I'm thinking, "What are they doing with those (inaudible)?" And knowing that solid waste is such an issue and we're facing you know fossil fuels everyday. What do we do with coal ash? So what do we do these (inaudible)? And do we really just throw them in waste bins where they're going to leak sometime in the future or do we try to use them in way that for (inaudible) or whatever.

Lisa Jackson: Elizabeth?

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Yes. This is Lisa Jackson? Hi, everybody.

Lisa Jackson: I just want (inaudible) Madam Chair – let you know I joined.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: We're so happy to have you. Well, folks, our administrator has joined us. Our administrator Lisa Jackson.

Lisa Jackson: Well, (inaudible), thank you. Thank you to (inaudible) and congratulations to you ...

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you.

Lisa Jackson: In the (Interior) that's wonderful news for us and for everyone on the call. If you don't know Elizabeth you'll know how great that is. And welcome to our new NEJAC members.

And I wanted to say thank Sharon Gauthe and Patty Whitney and Derrick, who I saw not long ago in New Orleans, Derrick Evans for the community perspective on this issue and for joining us as well.

And I'm here with Lisa Garcia and we're happy to answer questions. I just want to make a couple of remarks on this continuing issue, obviously, the president is going to speak tonight so those are the big remarks. But EPA's perspective is something that I hope you guys leave or understand it with a better understanding of.

I just want to start with a quick rundown of the ongoing cleanup and recovery efforts at large last week. And I took my own fifth trip to the Gulf Coast region this week.

The president is making his fourth visit and of course he's scheduled to address the nation tonight from the oval office.

It goes without saying but let me say it anyway. This is or administration's top priority domestically. There are things we're still learning and adjusting to but one thing I know without a doubt is that we doing everything in our power to respond.

Now our colleagues at the Coast Guard coordinate our overall response. And while they do that, the administration has a tremendous amount of personnel mobilized from across the federal government to address a full range of challenges that we're seeing.

There are more than 20,000 federal responders on the scene working around the clock that's Homeland security, that's NOAA, that's Interior, that's the National Institute for Occupational Self Safety and Health, that's OSHA, that's small business administration and of course that's EPA.

Now, when it comes to EPA, our primary role here is to monitor air, water, and sediment to first and foremost alert local officials and alert the public if there are any health threats as a result of the release or the response, to keep the public updated and ensure the fullest level of transparency. We have made a commitment that all the data we collect, each and every piece we collect is being posted on a website we've set up from very early for that purpose, it's www.epa.gov/bpspill.

So our team is gathering and studying and posting all the information as quickly as we can. If there appear to be a lag in posting of data, and I've heard from folks that they're concerned about that lag, it's because it does take time to take raw samples, turn them into analysis and then take those raw data and put them into a format that's workable and usable information for most people who wouldn't be able to use the data if we just put it up in it's raw form.

It's a challenge but the challenge is one we welcome and we are hopeful that our work on data becomes a new standard for the federal government during crisis response and we're pushing that and appreciate any help from people if you happen to agree pushing that standard as well.

This challenge is also about making some tough decisions probably the one that's most notable from EPA's perspective and for my own personal perspective is on the use of dispersants. I want to be clear that the steps that we've taken are in full recognition that the use of dispersants represents a trade off.

It's actually true that our number one enemy is the oil. I would go further, our number one enemy is oil washing up in (sheets) and slicks where it can do tremendous amount of damage in shallow water to wildlife and also to (inaudible) and into tidal systems.

Until we find a way to stem the flow of oil, we must continue to take actions to first and foremost keep it out at the (inaudible) at sea, to try not to fight it on the shoreline because if it makes it to the shoreline depending on what shoreline that is, we're going to be differently able to stop impact (and mitigate) it in any way.

So that's the whole basis of the use of dispersants. So I've heard people talk about dispersions being a – just used to keep it off the surface so people can't see it. It's

actually more than that. That was just a matter of what people can see that wouldn't be an issue. Dispersants are less toxic than oil and may break down over weeks. For a continuance of study, their breakdown, their toxicity and their (inaudible) disrupter in our own lab but we feel confident that the data we're getting so far indicates that they are less toxic than the oil and they break down over weeks whereas untreated oil might remain in the ecosystem for months if not years.

EPA has taken steps to ensure that dispersants are used only when they're absolutely necessary. We found – we responded to a request from BP, they wanted to use dispersants in the (sub-sea). It was EPA's work to say no, not unless we can assure ourselves that there's sufficient testing in place to ensure that using it at the source of the leak requires less chemical and is effective.

That's the method we've been using in recent weeks. We rely on surface dispersants only when other methods like skimming or burning aren't feasible. And that decision is made by the U.S. Coast Guards, that's where that authority lies in terms of dispersant use. But EPA has taken a very hands-on and aggressive role in advising the Coast Guard on the dispersant use. And we've also called on BP to ramp down the amount of dispersant being applied which they have generally complied with.

Now, finally, we're looking ahead at how we can assist impacted communities as they work through the long term challenges of the spills. That's going to require serious commitment from the federal government. So we're going to have to stay engaged in this effort and tell families and businesses of the Gulf Coast they're back on the path to recovery. And we fully understand that that commitment is likely (to be) measured in years.

For many of us who work on environmental justice, this is an all too familiar moment. The people of the Gulf Coast need our support today more than ever before. So it's critical that every community is engaged in the discussions on how we recover from this crisis. The people who are most vulnerable to the impacts of this spill must be empowered in the response – must be empowered in the response and long term rebuilding.

And so far we've taken a number of steps to ensure that those voices are heard. EPA's emergency operations center, we call it our EOC has added an environmental justice member to its management team. So that person's job is to ensure that environmental justice perspectives are represented in the day to day decisions that are made whether it's on sampling or analytical results or as I heard when we're getting on the phone, issue around waste. And community concern is one thing that EPA prides itself on bringing to the (fort).

A number of environmental justice organizations have been invited to participate in the weekly White House Gulf Coast outreach calls and we are in the process of launching weekly EJ and tribal calls ourselves. From EPA members of our senior management have participated in three focused EJ community meetings in the Gulf Coast even glad to meet face to face with these communities and hear their concerns. And of course we're asking for the assistance of NEJAC and all of the stakeholders on the call today.

Probably just one last thought in closing for the last 18 months, EPA has been working to make environmental justice an integral part of every decision we make. And to do that, we have to rely on science and the expertise of our people. And

those two things—science and our folks will make sure environmental justice is not just a good idea but becomes standard operating procedure here.

That's our goal, that when new leadership comes to this agency or when this agency faces its next challenge, there'll be an infrastructure for environmental justice in place. And as we're seeing in this crisis, environmental justice is as important in an emergency as it is in any other time when we do our work.

So I hope that we are all watching closely so that out this tragedy we learn how to strengthen our work together. Going forward, I hope that we are experiencing things now that will better prepare us to serve our most overburden populations not just day to day but also in times like these when they can be most vulnerable. So, I want to thank you all for your dedication and I think we're going to open it up to questions, aren't we?

Female: Yes.

Lisa Jackson: OK.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Yes. Administrator Jackson, I just – you know there are times in our community where we really should just say, "Enough said." But we can't help ourselves because we're activists. So I just really want to say on the behalf of the NEJAC if I could that we want to thank you for your leadership and your unquestionable commitment to addressing the needs of our most vulnerable communities because the things that you've said about environmental justice and making it part of the you know the standard operating procedure, that language, well, that message has never been delivered to our communities.

And it isn't just about the talk, you have in fact hired people and made decisions and there's been changes and access that we have seen on the ground. And we have never had this experience before. So (inaudible) I just really – I just really want to say before I open it up to questions, thank you. So, questions ...

Hilton Kelly: Yes. This is Hilton Kelly (inaudible) you know (inaudible). Yes, Ms. Jackson, how are you doing?

Lisa Jackson: I'm well. How are you?

Hilton Kelly: Good, good. I was just wondering are there any new development as far as stopping the leak itself, I mean, have there been some models that have been moved forward that could potentially work to stop this leak?

Lisa Jackson: Well I think that that's' probably the most frustrating aspect of the response which is the only thing that has been proven in the past to work without doubt are these interceptor wells, these relief wells, there are two of them being drilled. When you hear people – when you hear the president talk about (inaudible) that's because under probably somewhat optimistic scenario that's when the first relief well will intercept the actual well head of the – of the oil well that's gushing.

In the interim there are several things that have been done of course right now there's a containment dome which I probably should know the number off the top of my head but I think over the past few days has been running around 15,000 barrels a

day that they're able to pump up to the surface. They flare the gas so there's a big gas flare on operation going on there.

And they collect the oil and BP has been ordered to move their capacity up to 48 or 50,000 barrels a day in terms of their ability to recover oil. So that hopefully they'll have 100 percent recovery capability. Right now they can't – they cannot – they cannot recover all the oil that's coming out that they can't suck it up because they wouldn't have a place to put it on the surface.

So, I think over the next week or two BP has been ordered to increase their ability to collect oil at the surface, to suck it out of the broken riser pipe. Only other thing I'll say is that what we've learned is that dispersants are not the first choice. They're not the first choice anywhere in this process but they're clearly not the first choice now when we have in place a physical operation to try to collect as much oil as possible.

So first line of defense is the top hat that's pulling about 15,000 barrels a day, hopefully we'll move up to closer to 40, 48, 50,000 whatever the capacity of that – whatever the flow rate of the actual spill is.

The second is that we know right now it's not collecting that and so by far what seems to be the most effective are surface burns. Burn oil by using these fire booms and looking at yesterday's number, the Coast Guard ordered I think 14 or 13 burns and they burned, they estimate 15,000 barrels of oil. So they're burning as much as they're collecting.

Male: (Inaudible).

Lisa Jackson: Then you skim it. Of course when you skim, now you get ineffective because the skimmers bring in water as well as oil because you're skimming off the top and I think they skimmed another 5,000 barrels of oily water mixture. And then there were some spraying of dispersant. We have really cut back on that. There are days when they use more I think today they're not using any. It depends on the date but what we say is dispersants have to be the absolute last resort after those other methods because we're very much aware of the fact that so much of it has been used already in the Gulf.

Hilton Kelly: And the second part of my question is has there been a lot of language going on concerning the unique wildlife in our wetlands and we know that a lot of that oil is reaching our coast lines and is getting in to the marsh areas. We have a lot of animals out there that are very unique to the South, to the marshes, are there any efforts going on to help get some of those animals out of that area to try to preserve them for future generations because we know it could be some time before the marsh lands and the wetlands recover from this.

Lisa Jackson: Right. So, you know yes, EPA doesn't lead those efforts. Those are mainly led by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Louisiana Department of Fish and Wildlife as well as NOAA. They do aquatic creatures, creatures out in the deep ocean, marine mammals, things like that. And then – I think that's it.

And then of course NGOs and private groups that are working as part of the response. BP has hired, when you see people watching birds and other things like that, that is actually a private contractor that's been hired as part of by law BP is supposed to have them on contract to deal with these issues.

I would say just being 100 percent honest, we can still improve there. The Coast Guard is focused a long time – for a long time on this response on making sure to do everything they could to keep oil out of the marshes. But once the oil hits the marshes, I'm not talking about beaches separately, but the marshes themselves, we learn – we know a couple of things. The first is that, oftentimes the best thing to do is to leave it alone, to skim out as much as you physically can. And I don't think we've hit that standard yet. There are still too many places where it takes too long to get the oil out if it hits the marshes.

To use the tidal action, what happens is the oil washes in but the tides will take it out. The ebb tide will take it out. That's when you want to catch – you want to be standing there with a boom to catch it as it comes out. Possibly use low-pressure water to try to flush it out and catch it again with skimming, but anything more intrusive than that, you really have to be very careful before you decide to use it because you do lose the critters who live in the marsh. But you don't want to do is actually lose their habitat, the actual rhizomes, the actual marsh itself because, that, if you lose it, that open water becomes something very different.

So, in terms of wildlife rescue, I think that we are still perfecting the craft of actual delivering what we'd like to see, which is a very quick response, and also to try to be proactive. I know that there are efforts right now. For instance, in about another few weeks, the entire Louisiana coastline will become what it does every year, which is part of the flyway for the vast majority of birds that fly – begin to fly south.

And so how do you make sure that when those bird populations arrive, many of which are either endangered or very precious species, they don't end up in the marsh? So there is – Fish and Wildlife was telling me the other day, they're talking about leaving a second crop in some of the rice fields so that hopefully the birds will stop there instead of going on to the marsh where they're used to going.

So, those are the kinds of things that we're trying to (inaudible) about now. And I think our folks are thinking about in terms of managing the land in a way that might help minimize the impact to birds.

Hilton Kelley: Thank you.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Any other questions?

Margaret May: I'm Margaret May in Kansas City. My question concerns some talks I hear periodically on the TV news about the news of nuclear power to stop the spill, which frightens me to death, I'd like to hear you talk about that (inaudible).

Lisa Jackson: Well, I think part of what we're all very frustrated with but it certainly shows up on – on TV coverage is wanting to do something about the picture that confronts us every time we turn on the screen, which is this gushing wellhead – you know, it turns our stomach. Anybody who works in the environmental field, I tell people it's like a new oil spill every morning. You know, you might be able to fight one but we're on the 57th one in a row and it's just very difficult.

And so I think people have called for all manner of ideas and things to happen. One of the things they do is they look at what you would do if this same situation happened on land. And probably the most recent memory that people have is the

Iraqi war where we had all those oil wells that were purposely allowed to basically blow out. And when wildcatters and others go in, they oftentimes can use explosives to close the formation up. So that's what I think that whole line of thinking comes from. Why can't we just blow up the Gulf of Mexico?

I can assure you that as far as I know, there is no one in the Federal Government who's thinking that, but it's certainly been put out there by folks who argue that you could use the same technique as you used on land, which is to put explosive down those – the well heads.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Administrator, in my own understanding is that you needed to step off the (inaudible). If I – I think if any of the members have any questions, we can just forward them to Lisa Garcia, and that may be helpful unless you have one more minute.

Lisa Jackson: Yes, I think there are one or two more. Probably we can – yes, (inaudible) do two more.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: OK, great. Thank you.

John Ridgway: Ms. Jackson, this John Ridgway. I'm curious if there's anything specific for the council from an environmental justice perspective that you would like us to focus on or you think EPA could benefit our attention to be focused on in the months ahead?

Lisa Jackson: You know, I really think this is one of those situations where we could use any thoughts or recommendations the council (inaudible) right now, that within a month from now we'll be sitting there going, "Man, we wish we had taken XYZ data," or, "We wish we had done XYZ investigation."

EPA is not in charge of this response. But one of the things I think we can be very helpful on is getting data and information. And if we don't – I mean, we don't want to be absolutely willy-nilly and get useless data, but if we don't use it, it shouldn't be for lack of having thought we might need it.

So, the only thing I can think of right now is if there any suggestions the council could make about additional data we should or could be collecting, we would welcome those requests. I think the community groups, some of them are going to be sending some suggestions and may have already done it. And we have endeavored since my very first meeting when I went down for this (inaudible) with community groups to try to make sure (inaudible) EPA serves as a conduit to get some of their need met. If there's anything like that we can do, we are happy to try to accommodate it.

The other that's been helpful is using our mobile Air Lab, what we call our TAGA bus in the communities. (Inaudible) TAGA buses, we only have two of them (inaudible) but two of them in the country are operating at this moment. And they're both in the Gulf. And so, I've been encouraging communities to, if they have any concerns, to have the bus come down and spend a day sampling the air quality in a community, we can even let community members on the bus. It's just another way to attempt to give people some feeling of empowerment over issues that right now don't feel particularly empowering.

John Ridgway: Thank you.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Questions? OK. Well, thank you so much and thank you for being so generous of your time and thank you for all your efforts.

Lisa Jackson: Thank you. Thank you all. And, again, anything we can do to assist you all, please call on us. Thanks so much (inaudible).

Elizabeth Yeampierre: So, we are now in that part of the agenda where I guess we start wrapping up. And before the administrator came on, we had talked about at least three or four things that we were planning as the next step. Do you want me to go over them? Or would you like to add anything else to that before we wrap up?

Female: Go over them please.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: OK, so there were – we talked about a letter requesting targeted resources for the impacted communities, making NGOs, community based organizations a priority, the organizations on the ground and improving – and we also talked about the communication effort where Hilton, Derrick, Margaret, a few other folks that are on the NEJAC and who are on the ground would set up a meeting where they would talk about communication systems and would use the meeting as a way of bringing any (PA) to address some immediate concerns that are impacting the community.

And, Hilton, correct me or add anything if I've missed anything. We also talked about coastal wetlands and barriers islands. And I think that was – I'm trying to remember who brought that up, but...

Female: That was John.

Female: John – I know that was John. But there was someone – you.

Female: (Inaudible).

Female: Oh, that was Teri Blanton.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: OK, all right – are going to be the point people on that. And I think those were the three things. We also talked about address the issues of climate adaptation and community resilience and incorporating that into the work and if that's something that we might be able to follow up at the next call – let me think – interagency coordination and how we might be able to make a recommendation for agencies to be more proactive in addressing these kinds of issues. And, I don't know, did I leave anything out?

Hilton Kelley: Yes, we also talked about protecting the workers that are working with the oil spill.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you. Absolutely, we talked about trying to bring here from the Department of Labor, the Department of Justice, the Department of Health.

Hilton Kelley: OSHA.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: I think when you were talking about the workers, you were also talking about not just justice, but labor and health as well?

Hilton Kelley: Correct.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: OK. So that may – that may be in a letter. Or we may ask them to participate in the meeting that's being convened, or we may even ask them to present at the next NEJAC meeting.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: (Inaudible) Victoria.

Victoria Robinson: Yes.

Victoria Robinson: (Susan), one, when you – and you talked about a letter, you might want to see if maybe you want to see if people want to get together, a couple of people want to get together to help kind of craft a draft letter. Number two, I need some clarification on this Hilton's proposal about getting together and meeting with Derrick and other NGOs down the coastal areas.

Are we talking about as individuals and people – individuals like Hilton going as an individual representing his own organization going down and doing this or are you talking about the NEJAC engaging these individuals, NGOs?

Hilton Kelley: Well, sort of talking about the NEJAC engaging the individuals, doing this as a NEJAC effort.

Victoria Robinson: There is a fine line in terms of how the NEJAC at the Federal – the member of the NEJAC and what they can do since the NEJAC is a Federal (inaudible) committee whose sole purpose is really to provide advices to the agency. Now, having a series of public (inaudible), we need to work on that, the idea, because the agency is – convenes the meetings of the NEJAC where they are in the form of dialogues or if they're actually in public meetings like this or face to face meetings.

Hilton Kelley: Oh, OK.

Victoria Robinson: So, we need to take a look at how that fits in and really especially take a look at what you are asking for and how this can fit in with a variety of methodology, whether that's part of an outreach engagement process that the agency might embark up on or if it's something we're looking at as a body for the NEJAC that we'd like you know if the NEJAC we'd like to do something like that and then we need to work on it.

Hilton Kelley: Well, I think then (inaudible) – with that being understood, I think that it would be best if I did it from my organization (inaudible).

Victoria Robinson: OK.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Yes, I think (inaudible) clarification maybe – maybe, Hilton, something that could happen is that we could in the letter where we're asking for resources also ask for this meeting to happen. And then the meeting can happen outside of the purview of the NEJAC and then you could come and report back in July.

Hilton Kelley: Yes, most definitely.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: OK.

Victoria Robinson: Or, yes, so something like that. (Inaudible) if in the recommendations that if the NEJAC feel strongly that there needs to be a (inaudible), that the NEJAC needs, as a

body needs to engage to get more information, to make that recommendation if that's – if the NEJAC feels that way, so ...

Hilton Kelley: One of – one of the things that I'm thinking about (inaudible) with this meeting is to get with Derrick. And if you (inaudible) exactly, how are community folks are being impacted when it comes to jobs and how they're being protected, also to be a (inaudible) of what's happening on the ground and to do what we can as people living on the Gulf Coast to try and help protect our communities.

Margaret May: This is – this is Margaret in Kansas City. I would certainly be willing to participate in discussions around that. But I think that Kansas City was a tad far away from that area. I'm not sure that it would be appropriate for me to be a part of those meetings.

Hilton Kelley: Oh, yes, yes.

Langdon Marsh: (Inaudible), this is Lang. I wanted to follow up on the administrator's request that in response to John's question about what additional data we might recommend to be collected, because what I am concerned about is that whether EPA is or will be gathering data on long term impact to both, well, both the human beings especially but also to wildlife that may serve as indicator species of what might happen to us.

They're doing a good job it seems on collecting data on short term impacts, from traditional pollutants of volatile organic compounds and the particulates and so on, and water data. What I'm concerned about, whether there's enough thinking about how, what's in the water or what's in the chemicals that have been released in the air may have long term health impacts for people.

So I'm wondering if we could craft a paragraph in the letter that – I can't articulate exactly what it should be, but maybe Kathryn can help do that – that would say that we heard her and think that the long term impacts are things that we think ought to be addressed in terms of monitoring for both what's in the releases but also what happens to tissue in people and animals afterwards.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: OK.

Victoria Robinson: Are you (inaudible) to work with that? (Inaudible).

Elizabeth Yeampierre: He is. Langdon is volunteering.

Langdon Marsh: Yes, yes – no, I'd be happy to do that. I'm not quite sure how to say it, but I think I feel the need that we should say something along those lines.

Victoria Robinson: OK.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Is there – is there anyone else who wants to work on the letter?

Katie Brown: This is Katie. I'm willing to help.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: OK, thank you.

Victoria Robinson: So we have so far, Lang, Katie, John.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Elizabeth.

Victoria Robinson: Elizabeth, and anybody else? Hilton?

Hilton Kelly: Yes, sure, I'd love – I'd love to help out.

Victoria Robinson: OK. Do we have any new members who would like to join us, get involved that way? (Inaudible) involved at a teleconference call and we're – teleconference call or two, that'd be about it probably.

Teri Blanton: Well, this is Teri Blanton. And I'm sort of having another (inaudible) up here in Appalachia. But I'm still sick on this garbage issue and the fact that they're going to allow the waste to be put into solid waste dumps in this area. And that's just BP putting off their waste on to the tax payers because eventually it will leak. So, somehow, I think that we have to – we have to say something about this or do something about it.

John Ridgway: Teri, this is John Ridgway. I'd be glad to be sure that that gets included. I'm also interested in that issues I brought up earlier.

Sue Briggum: This is Sue. Could I make a request? We give Mathy the opportunity to spend a little more time in more detail about the evaluation EPA has done with the states in order to determine the appropriate response? I'm worried that we haven't given him an opportunity to explain the extensive work he's been doing in this regard.

John Ridgway: I think that's a very good suggestion. I agree.

Female: So did you – would that incur either a message from Mathy or that's something you want to hear in July, in which case postpone the letter till then? What are your thoughts?

Sue Briggum: You know, I think it's – I think we should write a letter and I think we may just want to leave that portion out and give – maybe we could just send Mathy an email saying that you know, that we're waiting to hear on this issue, you know, a courtesy email. And then – because the letter isn't just covering that. It's covering a number of other issues as well.

Female: Well, in the letter you can also indicate that there are few more issues that needed additional information.

Female: Sure.

Female: And you invite that for the July meeting.

Female: Yes.

Female: Sue, are you saying that we – it just hasn't been communicated to us or Mathy's still collecting the information?

Sue Briggum: I think that he didn't have the opportunity to describe what's been done because it's actually a very extensive process in terms of evaluation of the regulations of all of the areas. In fact, a number of the processes that I'm familiar with have actually gone above and beyond current regulations.

And you know Mathy is an old friend to NEJAC. He was the chair of the work group several years ago. And I wouldn't want to send something that didn't give him an opportunity to express the way he's you know kind of meeting his responsibilities. I would feel uncomfortable with something that seemed negative and as if he was authorizing things that he didn't have an opportunity to explain. And because we had a very brief call today, I don't think he really had a chance to go into those details. He might want to have some other people there with him as well.

Female: I agree.

John Ridgway: Well, it seems that – this is John – that we can – in this letter that's being crafted, certainly, make a reference that the NEJAC is interested in learning more about this. And as we have the opportunity to hear from Mathy and others at EPA, we'll continue to assist where we can as we understand in greater detail.

Katie Brown: But I guess it seems to me, it's an important issue and we heard it discussed several times. Is there a way, whether we do a webinar or whether we ask Mathy for some kind of written communication that outlines this?

Victoria Robinson: Can I suggest that, because there are quite a few new people on and we don't – (inaudible) that everyone identify themselves before they speak for the benefit of the group? Thank you.

Katie Brown: This is Katie. Katie Brown.

Victoria Robinson: Katie, this is Victoria. You raised a very interesting point. And in a normal situation, a non (inaudible) situation, that would be the most expedient process of getting that information out. Unfortunately, it being (inaudible) convening the entire NEJAC to hear such a webinar would require a minimum of 25 days of you know posting in the Federal Register, getting the word out, setting that thing up, and that would put us to the July meeting.

He had a small group of individuals who were – like this work group of individuals to draft a letter. That's a different story. But in terms of pulling together the entire NEJAC, that would talk to a public meeting, and we'd have to go through all the rigmarole, all the process, the protocols.

So, any thoughts on that?

John Ridgway: Again, this is John. I think that we can recognize NEJAC's interest in the issue in this draft letter without trying to give any advice or presume anything. And then to the extent we can find out if Mathy can send us something to the council to review that could be posted on the website as well, that would be great if that's available before our July meeting or, if not, maybe we can follow up on this in the July meeting.

Female: I agree with that.

Margaret May: This is Margaret. I agree.

Female: Yes. Thank you.

Male: OK. And I'll be sure to cover that point in these letter crafting efforts in the weeks ahead.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: OK. So it sounds like we've got our work cut out for us, unless there is anything else. I would move to adjourn the meeting.

Victoria Robinson: This is Victoria again.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: OK.

Victoria Robinson: It was recommended that we do one last roll call just to make sure we have (inaudible) those members who might have joined us late. (Inaudible) in the quorum. So we're just going to do a quick call – a quick roll of the names. (Inaudible)

OK. Teri Blanton?

Teri Blanton: Here.

Victoria Robinson: OK. Margaret May?

Margaret May: Here.

Victoria Robinson: Kimberly Wasserman? No.

Stephanie Hall?

Vien Nguyen. We know he's not – he's in Vietnam actually by the way, so knew he could not call in.

Nia Robinson? OK.

Savi Horne? I knew she called in earlier.

Vernice Miller-Travis, are you still on the line? She probably stepped away for the other meeting.

Nicholas Targ?

Nicholas Targ: Here.

Victoria Robinson: OK. (Inaudible)? OK. All right.

Don Aragon? He was on earlier.

Chuck Barlow?

Male: He was on earlier.

Female: He was on earlier.

(Inaudible), yes, we know.

Female: Yup.

Victoria Robinson: Katie Brown.

Katie Brown: Yup.

Victoria Robinson: OK.

Peter Captain, were you able to join us? Okay.

Jolene?

Jolene Catron: Here.

Victoria Robinson: OK.

Wynecta?

Wynecta Fisher: Here.

Victoria Robinson: All right.

Jody stepped away.

Hilton?

Hilton Kelley: Present.

Victoria Robinson: All right.

Lang Marsh?

Langdon Marsh: Here.

Victoria Robinson: OK.

Paul Mohai I believe he's traveling out of the country as well.

(Inaudible)? He had called in earlier. He was here.

John Ridgway?

John Ridgway: Here.

Victoria Robinson: OK. Patty Salkin, I believe is out of the country and actually on her way to China. Unless you're on the call, Patty? No. OK

And Elizabeth?

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Here.

Victoria Robinson: That's it. So, OK. That's everybody there. So, thank you, (inaudible).

Female: Thanks, Elizabeth. Good job.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you, guys. Have a wonderful summer. We'll be in touch, talking to each other in the interim, and we'll see each other in July. And thank you for the wonderful, insightful guidance and comments that you all made because they – you know really I found them really insightful.

Male: Thank you. Have a good summer.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: You, too.

Male: And, Elizabeth, congratulations.

Elizabeth Yeampierre: Thank you. I don't know, the jury is not out on that yet. Bye-bye.

Male: Thank you.

END

The following written statement was provided for the public comment period by Ms. Meisha McDaniel, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. It was not read during the meeting.

June 14, 2010

**Statement from the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
Concerning the Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico**

Background

The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies is a leading think tank committed to responding to public policy issues affecting African Americans and communities of color. In July 2008, the Joint Center launched the Commission to Engage African Americans on Climate Change (CEAC). Composed of leaders from within the scientific, academic, private, and public sectors, this diverse body was established with the mission to cultivate African American engagement on the issues stemming from climate change and leadership in the new green economy. With the guidance of the Joint Center, the Commission has helped to develop policy recommendations that address disparate environmental impacts on communities of color and ensure protection to low-income households.

As recounted in the Joint Center publication *Environmental Justice through the Eye of Hurricane Katrina*, disaster preparedness is a national security issue. The devastation that struck the Gulf Coast during Hurricane Katrina in 2005 demonstrated how structural barriers to equity in housing, transportation, and land use decision-making can effectively isolate vulnerable communities from the resources necessary to plan for and respond to disasters. Now, as millions of gallons of oil spread unabated increasingly closer to protective ecosystems, human settlements, and wrecks the region's commercial fishing industry, the need for immediate action to assess and redress the damages inflicted to human and wildlife communities affected by the oil spill is evident.

Disaster Preparedness within Vulnerable Communities

Moving forward, the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council must utilize its position within the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to implement a protocol for national emergency preparation that is inclusive and recognizes the unique socio-economic challenges facing racially and ethnically diverse communities and works to bridge these disparities in order to ensure substantively adequate access to the tools that prevent loss during disasters and resilience in their wake. In 2008, the National

Consensus Panel on Emergency Preparedness and Cultural Diversity¹ issued a consensus statement explaining the need for and characteristics of public health awareness plans that include and engage diverse communities:

The integration of racially and ethnically diverse communities into public health emergency preparedness is essential to a comprehensive, coordinated federal, state, tribal, territorial and local strategy to protect the health and safety of all persons in the United States. Such a strategy must recognize and emphasize the importance of distinctive individual and community characteristics such as culture, language, literacy and trust, and promote the active involvement and engagement of diverse communities to influence understanding of, participation in and adherence to public health emergency preparedness actions. Additionally, this strategy must acknowledge the critical commitment to developing effective and sustainable services, programs and policies and building mutual accountability. Only through these comprehensive, unified efforts can we work to counter the legacy of racial and ethnic disparities and ensure that quality and equality for all communities form the foundation of the Nation's planning for any and all public health emergencies.

Making Coastal Planning and Protection a Priority

Coastal communities are particularly sensitive to the effects of global climate change and many major cities in the United States fall within zones that are at risk for impacts of sea level rise, including wetland submersion, beach erosion, flooding, and saltwater intrusion into freshwater aquifers. Given predictions from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the U.S. Global Change Research Program, more frequent and intense weather events in the not-so-distant future require that our governing bodies make coastal planning and protection a priority without delay. Effective public health emergency preparedness is contingent upon engagement of stakeholders at multiple levels of government. In order to generate the buy-in necessary to ensure the protection of coastal areas and the communities that rely on them, the EPA must exert its unique position as a regional and national body to generate the information necessary for government decision-makers to make informed choices that builds on the assets of communities of color—opportunities for health improvement, willing workers, ample need for development—to promote an equitable and sustainable domestic growth.

Federal/State

- Enforce Executive Order No. 12898 to address environmental justice in minority and low-income populations
- Invest in emergency response technology in areas with high vulnerability and sensitivity to human and climate-induced disasters
- Create a disaster fund for low- to moderate-income communities

Regional/Local/Tribal

- Engage universities to collaborate with community members to conduct community-wide vulnerability and capacity assessments (CVCA)
- Conduct cost-benefit analyses to determine the costs of inaction involved in not preparing for coastal disasters

Community Engagement in Environmental Clean-up and Recovery

The environmental, health, and economic impacts of the oil spill on Gulf Coast residents have yet to be determined; however, the actions taken now and after the flow of oil subsides to facilitate swift and comprehensive recovery must be meted against potential long-term effects on future Gulf Coast residents and the courageous individuals involved in cleaning efforts. The Joint Center's Commission applauds the EPA for disclosing the composition of Corexit, the chemical currently being used as a dispersant in the Gulf Coast. Yet, accounts that spill workers are complaining of "respiratory problems, headaches, and

nausea²” bring the safety of exposure to the oil and dispersants into question. Alternatives to chemical dispersants, such as bioremediation strategies, need to be implemented to avoid possible detrimental health impacts on workers. In the event of future oil spills, the lessons learned from this tragedy must be recorded and disseminated to the public, including comprehensive environmental and racial/ethnic impact analyses examining affected regions. Finally, given the continuing threat that offshore drilling poses to hundreds of communities bordering our coasts, the EPA must commit to a stronger stance in favor of alternative energy and supporting communities with the means to implement clean energy projects. Without addressing energy sovereignty in the U.S., our coasts will continue to bear the brunt of our collective addiction to oil.

Footnotes:

¹ June 11, 2008. National Consensus Statement & Guiding Principles & Panel List

² Schwartz, N. and Brown, M. (June 6, 2009) “Gulf spill workers complaining of flulike symptoms.”Associated Press.