

cy and look forward to working closely with Congress as we continue our efforts to jump-start job creation and restore fiscal discipline in Washington.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

Remarks Following a Briefing on the Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico in Gulfport, Mississippi

June 14, 2010

I'm going to make a longer statement later in Alabama, so I—just very quickly, I just want to thank Governor Barbour and the first lady of Mississippi for hosting us; want to thank Governor Jindal for flying in; and we have members of the congressional delegation here in Mississippi, as well as a range of local and State officials.

Admiral Allen provided a detailed report about what was being done specifically here in Mississippi and fielded a range of questions and suggestions about how responses can continually improve. One of the things that came out of the—this discussion is how do we make sure that there's effective coordination in terms of skimmers, vessels of opportunity that are out in the water right now. Can we make sure that they are responding as quickly as possible to the oil before it starts getting closer to shore?

And there are a range of issues having to do with communications. Are there—do they—some of these smaller vessels have radios on them? Have we done an effective inventory of which ones are large enough and have enough trained personnel that they can actually lay boom or they can engage in skimming? Which ones should be deployed more as sentinels to identify where, in fact, the oil may be coming in? I think there was a very useful conversation. Captain Steve Poulin, who is the local incident commander, had gathered a lot of these suggestions and is going to be moving on them in the days to come.

We also talked about claims to make sure that people here in Mississippi, but throughout the region, are going to be adequately compensated for the damages and the losses that they're experiencing right now. There are still

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, and House Minority Leader John A. Boehner; and Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid, and Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell.

problems with them. I think as everybody is aware, I'm going to be meeting with the chairman and other officials from BP on Wednesday. And so we're gathering up facts, stories right now so that we have an absolutely clear understanding about how we can best present to BP the need to make sure that individuals and businesses are dealt with in a fair manner and in a prompt manner. And again, there were suggestions on that front as well.

So I just want to thank everybody here that's involved. Folks around the table here have been working 24/7. The Governors, they've been on a constant state of full alert and have been putting in a lot of time and a lot of energy working with Thad Allen to make sure that in dealing with this disaster, we are minimizing the short-term impacts and we're making sure that we've got the resources to fully recover.

Last point I'm going to make, and this is something that's been repeatedly emphasized: Here in Mississippi—but it's true in Florida, it's true in Alabama, and it's true in portions of Louisiana—there's still a lot of opportunity for visitors to come down here, a lot of beaches that are not yet affected or will not be affected. And we just want to make sure that people who have travel plans down to the Gulf area remain mindful of that, because if people want to know what can they do to help folks down here, one of the best ways to help is to come down here and enjoy the outstanding hospitality.

So all right? And I'll be making longer comments when I get to Alabama this afternoon. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:56 a.m. at U.S. Coast Guard Station Gulfport. In his re-

marks, he referred to Gov. Haley R. Barbour of Mississippi and his wife Marsha; Gov. Piyush “Bobby” Jindal of Louisiana; Adm. Thad W. Allen, USCG, in his capacity as national incident commander for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill; Capt. Steven D. Poulin, USCG, commanding officer, Sector Mobile; Carl-

Henric Svanberg, chairman of the board, Anthony B. Hayward, group chief executive, Robert W. Dudley, managing director, and Rupert Bondy, group general counsel, BP p.l.c.; and Lamar McKay, chairman and president, BP America, Inc.

Remarks During a Discussion With Community Members in Gulfport June 14, 2010

[*The President’s remarks were joined in progress.*]

The President. —the problem is, most of this stuff had been tested with a much smaller amount of oil. And so the amounts of dispersants, for example, were much lower. We really have never seen up to a million—

Participant. Gallons

The President. —gallons of dispersant put out there. And so we already provided some waivers, because our attitude was, given the toxicity, given how toxic the oil was already—it’s a matter of the lesser of two evils—it was better to go ahead and put that out. And we tested it for safety, and the EPA has been involved in that.

But the point I made earlier is the one that I think we have to focus on, and that is that the technologies generally, whether it’s dispersants, boom, skimming devices, they really haven’t developed much over the last 30, 40 years. We’re using the same stuff—the industry is using the same stuff that the industry was using 40 years ago. And we’ve got to—part of the review that we’re doing involves making sure that whether it’s private industry or a public-private partnership that people start developing better mechanisms to respond to this kind of disastrous situation

But for the press pool, I just want to thank the business owners as well as the mayor and the Governor and first lady for talking to Thad and myself.

As you can see, this is a spectacular beach. You’ve got Missy, who’s got a wonderful inn, the Edgewater Inn, and George [Scott],^o he’s got a terrific restaurant—what’s the name of the restaurant?

Scott Weinberg. The Blow Fly Inn.

The President. And Missy was mentioning she has already seen a 40-percent drop in her occupancy since this crisis occurred, partly because of cancellations of large groups that were planning to stay there.

It just gives you a sense—and those folks who were going to stay at Missy’s would have been eating at George’s [Scott’s],^o so it gives you a sense of the kind of potential economic impact that a crisis like this can have on individual business owners. And obviously, they’ve got to make payroll, and they’ve got employees, and it trickles down and has an impact on them as well.

So we are going to be working with business owners like this, with Governors and mayors to make sure that they are made whole as a consequence of this crisis. But we also want to make sure that we are in this for the long haul. And the full effects of this may not be known immediately. They may not be known 3 months from now and may not be fully known for another 6 months or a year. And we just want to make sure we’ve got structure in place so that people like Missy and George [Scott]^o are adequately dealt with. That’s going to be a top topic of mine when I meet with the BP officials on Wednesday. And so I just want to say

^o White House correction.