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### **FLORIDA DEEPWATER HORIZON RESPONSE MAY 15, 2010**

**TALLAHASSEE** – Under the leadership of Governor Charlie Crist, the State Emergency Response Team and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) are actively coordinating and responding to the Deepwater Horizon incident.

The following is a summary of state and BP response actions to date, as well as tips for residents and visitors to take precautions both pre and post-landfall.

#### **Landfall Predictions:**

- Deepwater Horizon continues to discharge an estimated 5,000 barrels (210,000 gallons) per day.
- BP is evaluating options for successfully reinstalling a dome intended to contain the oil discharge and is also continuing its efforts to drill a relief well.
- Winds/currents continue to keep the plume away from the Florida coast for at least the next 72 hours.
- The loop current is far south of the oil and there is no imminent threat that the oil will be picked up by the loop current. However, Florida continues to make preparations to safeguard the state's shoreline.
- Floridians and visitors are reminded that the state's beaches and other attractions have not been impacted by the oil spill and remain open for public enjoyment.
- Should any impacts to Florida's coastline occur, these could potentially include [tar balls](#) – fragments or lumps of oil weathered into a solid consistency – [oil sheen](#) or tar mats – sheets of oil that are thicker than a sheen. Should individuals observe any evidence of oil on Florida's coastline, they should leave the area and report the incident to 1-866-448-5816.

#### **State Actions:**

- On May 14, 2010, Governor Charlie Crist announced that the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) approved disaster loan funds for businesses along Florida's Gulf coast that have been impacted by the Deepwater Horizon incident. ([Press Release](#)) Affected business owners can learn more by visiting the SBA website at <http://www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance/>.

- Businesses and individuals can now submit Innovative Technology Ideas, suggestions, or products by completing the following information: [http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/files/inno\\_tech\\_evaluation.pdf](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/files/inno_tech_evaluation.pdf). Send the completed form and any other supporting documentation to [Innovative.Technology@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:Innovative.Technology@dep.state.fl.us).
- In response to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, Florida is providing video and audio Public Service Announcements. These items are available for download and can be used to educate the public on Response, Safety, Coast Watch and Beach Clean Up: <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/media.htm>.
- On May 12, 2010, Governor Charlie Crist directed DEP to issue an [Emergency Final Order](#) to accelerate preparedness and restoration in the 19 coastal counties under the Governor's state-of-emergency Executive Orders. In addition, Governor Crist requested that the United States Small Business Administration (SBA) make low-interest loans available to impacted businesses in the same counties. The Governor also requested [\\$34.75 million](#) from BP to enable VISIT FLORIDA to create an immediate marketing campaign to counter the negative, widespread and false information potential visitors to Florida are receiving about the oil spill's impact on Florida's beaches and waters. Additional information can be found at the following link: [http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/files/govcristlocal\\_sbaletter\\_depefo.pdf](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/files/govcristlocal_sbaletter_depefo.pdf)
  - Government entities, BP and its contractors making emergency permit application requests pursuant to the Emergency Final Order for proactive measures, restoration, and certain other measures can obtain DEP's emergency application form at the following link: <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/beaches/publications/pdf/emergency/DEP73-303EmPerApp-w-insts.pdf>
  - The following link provides additional information about activities that may take place seaward of Coastal Construction Control Line: [http://www.dep.state.fl.us/beaches/default.htm#DEEPWATER\\_HORIZON - Gulf Oil Spill](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/beaches/default.htm#DEEPWATER_HORIZON_-_Gulf_Oil_Spill).
- On May 11, 2010, Governor Charlie Crist issued [\(Executive Order 10-101\)](#) creating an Economic Recovery Task Force to facilitate efforts by Florida businesses and industries in recovering from the loss of business and revenues due to the Deepwater Horizon incident.
- On May 10, 2010, Governor Charlie Crist and Attorney General Bill McCollum called on former Attorneys General Bob Butterworth and Jim Smith to chair a Legal Advisory Council to explore options relating to the Deepwater Horizon incident and oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The legal advisory team will bring together private-sector attorneys and other experts who will use their expertise to begin assessing the impact the potential disaster could have on Florida. [Press Release](#)
- As of May 11, 2010 at 8:00 a.m. the Florida Oil Spill Information Line was activated to provide Floridians with response information and resources about the Deepwater Horizon oil incident. Live operators will assist callers with questions and direct them to the appropriate source of information on the oil spill

from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., 7 days a week. The Florida Oil Spill Information Line phone number is 1-888-337-3569. This number replaces the Florida Emergency Information Line in order to better serve Florida's residents and visitors.

- On May 6, 2010, Governor Charlie Crist sent a letter to President Barack Obama requesting a \$50 million disaster National Emergency Grant from the United States Department of Labor as a part of Florida's response plans to the Deepwater Horizon incident. The following link provides a copy of the letter: [http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/files/05062010\\_letter\\_obama.pdf](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/files/05062010_letter_obama.pdf).
- On May 5, 2010, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) Sector St. Petersburg, DEP, and BP set up a Unified Command (in support of the Unified Area Command) at the USCG Sector St. Petersburg offices in St. Petersburg.
- Governor Charlie Crist confirmed on May 4, 2010 that Florida will receive a \$25-million block grant from BP for initial state and local preparation and response costs. [Press Release](#)
- On April 30, 2010, Governor Charlie Crist declared a state of emergency ([Emergency Order 10-99](#)) for Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay and Gulf Counties. On May 3, 2010, Governor Crist extended a state of emergency declaration ([Emergency Order 10-100](#)) for the coastal counties of Franklin, Wakulla, Jefferson, Taylor, Dixie, Levy, Citrus, Hernando, Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Manatee and Sarasota.
- The State Emergency Operations Center remains activated at a Level 2 or Partial activation. Two new support cells have been established to handle supplemental boom requests and alternative technology evaluation.
- The State Emergency Response Team has dozens of team members deployed throughout the anticipated impact region to assist with Deepwater Horizon preparation and response.
- DEP conducted water and sediment sampling to use as a baseline and is monitoring air quality data. Statewide air quality monitoring is conducted in coordination with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The public can view this data at <http://www.airnow.gov/> or <http://www.epa.gov/bpspill/>. DEP, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), county governments, water management districts and several federal agencies continue to conduct pre-impact assessments, including sampling of water, fish, shellfish and habitats along the Florida coastline and into the Gulf of Mexico.

### **Boom Placement:**

- Placement of boom is based on tides and where the oil is threatening, as well as direction given in each region's area contingency plan.
  - To view the Coast Guard Mobile Area Contingency Plan visit: <http://ocean.floridamarine.org/ACP/MOBACP/StartHere.html>.
  - To view the Coast Guard St. Petersburg Area Contingency Plan visit: [http://research.myfwc.com/features/view\\_article.asp?id=3482](http://research.myfwc.com/features/view_article.asp?id=3482)
- The booming strategy focuses on identified environmentally sensitive areas.
  - Estuaries and inlets are at the top of the list, not the beach areas.
  - This is to protect sensitive habitat that support wildlife and fish.

- If the oil washes on the beach, the sand can be cleaned.
- Note that booms are not a failsafe solution. They can become ineffective in high seas, strong winds, or currents over one knot.
- Florida's counties are working through the State Emergency Operations Center. Each county provides input, but the operational decisions for supplemental boom plans are made through the Florida Emergency Operations Center. The State Emergency Response Team is working with the counties, BP as well as the federal agencies to maximize protection and minimize impacts.
- The Unified Command Operations Group is asking boaters to avoid damaging boom. Boom cut or broken due to boater traffic jeopardizes the protection that has been set up for the environmentally sensitive areas across the coast.

### **Health Effects:**

- At this time, there are no indications of any health risks to Floridians due to the Deepwater Horizon incident. The Department of Health (DOH) and DEP are closely monitoring health and environmental impacts to Florida's beaches and will notice an advisory if conditions become unsafe.
- For most people, an occasional brief contact with a small amount of oil, while not recommended, will do no harm. If contact occurs, wash the area with soap and water.
- Consider the following tips for avoiding negative health impacts from an oiled shoreline:
  - Avoid entering areas where oil can be seen or smelled.
  - Avoid direct skin contact with oil, oil-contaminated water and sediments.
  - Do not swim or ski in areas affected by the oil spill, and if traveling through the area by boat, take precautions when hoisting the boat anchor. If oil makes contact with skin, wash it off with soap and water.
  - Do not fish in oil spill-affected waters.
  - Do not harvest or eat dead fish, fish with oily residue or fish that have a petroleum odor.
  - Avoid boating through oil slicks or sheens.
  - Young children, pregnant women, people with compromised immune systems, and individuals with underlying respiratory conditions should avoid the area.
  - Prevent pets from entering oil-contaminated areas.
- To learn more about the potential health impacts and first aid measures regarding the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, download the frequently asked questions at:  
[http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/files/faq\\_doh\\_051010.pdf](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/files/faq_doh_051010.pdf)

### **Fisheries & Seafood:**

- The fisheries, wildlife and seafood off of Florida's coast in state waters are safe and there are no alerts at this time. [Press Release Florida saltwater fishing regulations](#) remain in effect as usual. More information is available online at [www.MyFWC.com/Fishing](http://www.MyFWC.com/Fishing).

- The recreational red snapper season in the Gulf will remain closed until June 1. However, FWC will use federal funds to survey Gulf charter boat catches each week during the 53-day season to see if catch rates are lower than previously anticipated. If so, state and federal fisheries managers could use that information to determine if the season can be extended or if an additional period of harvest can be allowed later in the year. The following link has more information on the red snapper management rules and research efforts:  
[http://www.myfwc.com/RULESANDREGS/Saltwater\\_Regulations\\_RedSnapperIndex.htm](http://www.myfwc.com/RULESANDREGS/Saltwater_Regulations_RedSnapperIndex.htm).
- On May 7, 2010, NOAA modified and expanded the boundaries of the closed fishing area to better reflect the current location of the BP oil spill, and extended the fishing restriction until May 17, 2010. The closure affects commercial and recreational fishing in the oil-affected area of the Gulf of Mexico. Details can be found at:  
[http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2010/20100507\\_closure.html](http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2010/20100507_closure.html).
- Fishermen who wish to contact BP about a claim should call 1-800-440-0858.
- FWC is working with DEP, county governments, water management districts and several federal agencies including NOAA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct pre-impact wildlife assessments. These assessments include samples of water, sediments, fish, shellfish and habitats along the Florida coastline and into the Gulf of Mexico. Assessments are needed to provide baseline information prior to the anticipated impact. Examples of the assessments include the following:
  - FWC and the University of South Florida College of Marine Science are designing a multi-day scientific research study to obtain information on fisheries resources and plankton in the Gulf of Mexico near the Florida Panhandle.
  - Aerial surveys also are planned to identify locations of marine mammals.
  - Groups are marking the location of bird and sea turtle nesting sites along the beach. Nests are marked to help prioritize response with real-time information.
  - FWC urges citizens to report oiled wildlife to the Wildlife Distress Hotline at 1-866-557-1401.
- For the safety of the public as well as the safety of animals, rescues should be conducted by trained responders. Untrained rescuers may cause more harm than good. The following link provides tips FWC:  
[http://www.myfwc.com/NEWSROOM/10/statewide/News\\_10\\_X\\_OilSpill2.htm](http://www.myfwc.com/NEWSROOM/10/statewide/News_10_X_OilSpill2.htm)

**Closures:**

- Currently there are no Florida State Park or beach closures. For more information about Florida State Parks, visit: [www.floridastateparks.org](http://www.floridastateparks.org).

**Tourism:**

- Florida's pristine beaches and famed fishing grounds remain open to residents and visitors. Currently, there are no impacts to Florida's more than 1260 miles of



coastline and 825 miles of sandy beaches. Florida's shores are clear and open for business.

- If you are planning a trip to the Sunshine State and are concerned about any potential impact from the Deepwater Horizon Oil incident, VISIT FLORIDA, the state's official tourism marketing organization, encourages you to check with local destinations in order to get the most up-to-date information.
- Through [www.VISITFLORIDA.com](http://www.VISITFLORIDA.com), vacationers are able to view live Twitter feeds and read up-to-the-minute information on the status of any city or region in Florida, allowing them to see first-hand whether or not an area is currently affected. The following link also provides helpful local links to check on the status of your Florida destination:  
[http://www.visitflorida.com/florida\\_travel\\_advisory/](http://www.visitflorida.com/florida_travel_advisory/).
- The Florida State Park website will be updated daily and will list any parks that may be impacted by the Deepwater Horizon Incident:  
<http://www.floridastateparks.org/>. Visitors with camping or cabin reservations will be notified if their stay will be impacted. If you have any questions, please call 1-850-245-2157.

### **Tips for Homeowners**

- While the state appreciates the concern expressed by Floridians and the ingenuity of those seeking alternative measures to help protect the state's shoreline, the following tips are offered to ensure that these measures are helpful and not harmful to Florida's coasts, wildlife and water resources: [Tips for homeowners](#).

### **Tips for Businesses and Consumers:**

- Florida residents are discouraged from signing any documents provided to them in return for money from BP or anyone else until they know the extent of their loss, which may be significantly higher than the money being paid. These may be fraudulent or premature.
- The Attorney General's fraud hotline is open to receive any reports of fraud or price gouging. The hotline is 1-866-966-7226.
- The Florida Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner gas price-gouging hotline is also operational. The toll-free hotline number is 1-800-HELP-FLA (1-800-435-7352).
- Florida's coastal businesses should be prepared to make loss of earnings claims for damages incurred as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The Florida Department of Financial Services provides the following suggestions:
  - Take detailed records of cancelled reservations. It is important that when these cancellations occur, the cancelling party is questioned whether the cause is because of the oil spill. If the answer is yes, keep a record of the person's name and contact information, and also the revenues lost as a result of the cancellation.
  - Calculate estimated losses for a six-week period and be able to provide records, sales receipts and documentation to support such a claim. A good

- idea would be to compare business now to a five-year average of revenues between May and June, which can offer insight as to the damages incurred.
- Make a detailed list of assets – including non-structural -- and include appropriate records to support the list. For example: if your hotel or restaurant is within walking distance to the beach and that beach has oil reach its shores, the business' assets are damaged even though there is no physical damage to the structure, and it is important to record this depreciation.
  - Be wary of insurance settlement scams. -- For businesses who may have already begun the claims filing process with BP, first, make sure you are dealing with authorized representatives from BP and not scam artists; and be careful not to sign waivers of liability too quickly without getting adequate legal and financial counsel.
  - In all circumstances, affected businesses should file a claim with BP via the hotline number – 1-800-440-0858. Additional guidance to help small businesses survive a disaster can be found at <http://www.myfloridacfo.com/> or by calling 1-850-413-3089 or toll-free at 1-877-MY-FL-CFO (1-877-693-5236).

### **Volunteer Opportunities:**

- The Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service is encouraging Floridians and visitors to watch for oiled wildlife, vegetation, and beaches by becoming a Coast Watch volunteer.
- The "[Coast Watchers](#)" will assist BP, the state of Florida and partnering organizations in identifying beaches that need attention.
- Report injured or oiled animals to the Wildlife Distress Hotline: 1-866-557-1401.
- Report oiled shoreline to: 1-866-448-5816.
- Report a change in Air Quality to: <http://www.epa.gov/bpspill/>.
- For information on scheduled beach cleanups and other volunteer opportunities, visit <http://www.volunteerfloridadisaster.org/>.
- Emergency Support Function 15, Volunteers and Donations, successfully spearheaded pre-impact beach cleanups over the weekend of May 1-2. More than 1,200 volunteers participated in cleanups in Escambia, Santa Rosa and Wakulla counties to minimize the effect of the Deepwater Horizon incident. Volunteer Florida offers guidance for conducting safe pre-impact beach cleanups at <http://www.volunteerfloridadisaster.org/>.
- BP has established a volunteer program and set up a toll-free number for those interested in volunteering. When calling, interested parties should communicate what activities they are volunteering and locations in which they are available to work. For information on assisting with the response efforts, please contact BP's community information line at 1-866-448-5816.

### **Learn More About Florida's Response:**

- DEP launched a Twitter account, [@FLDEPalert](#), dedicated to providing updates on Florida's response to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. Visit [www.Twitter.com/FLDEPalert](http://www.Twitter.com/FLDEPalert).
- DEP in coordination with the state Emergency Operations Center established an email sign-up for information alerts on its website as well as a resources page

containing fact sheets and tips. To view tips and sign up for email updates, visit [www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon).

- For a list of Unified Command, BP and Florida phone numbers, visit <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/default.htm#numbers>

For additional information regarding Florida's response to the Deepwater Horizon incident, visit [www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon), or follow us on Twitter at [www.Twitter.com/FLDEPalert](http://www.Twitter.com/FLDEPalert).

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