



**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES**



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MDEQ and DMR Continue Preparations

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR) are continuing comprehensive preparations in advance of the possible landfall of potential impacts from the Deepwater Horizon incident. Currently no elements from the spill have reached Mississippi waters or beaches. Mississippi beaches and waters are open and safe for public use.

- MDEQ and DMR staff, consistent with the area contingency plan, collaborated in placing protective boom. The first priority was estuaries and marshes, which are the natural nursery areas for many kinds of marine life including shrimp, crabs, oysters, and fish. Currently, thousands of feet of boom have been placed in strategic locations across the Coast and the barrier islands. This includes areas from Jackson County to Hancock County. Gates have been installed in booms in heavily used waterways which will be closed if necessary. The boom is bright yellow or orange and is equipped with floating buoys. There are flashing lights for detection at night. Boaters are asked not to cross the boom as it may cause damage to the boom or to their boats.
- MDEQ and DMR biologists last week sampled multiple sites to document pre-spill conditions of the coastal ecology. The results will provide a baseline of information if needed. Fifty-five sites were sampled for sediment and water quality. An additional 12 sites were sampled for fish, shrimp, and oysters. There will be a second round of sampling this week.
- MDEQ and DMR have contingency clean up plans in conjunction with BP and their contractors if any substance reaches the Mississippi Sound or land.
- MDEQ is providing its air monitoring data to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency using its permanent air monitors on the Coast. There has been no change from normal air monitoring data.
- Mississippi waters are open for recreation and fishing. Beaches along the Gulf Coast are also open.
- British Petroleum is the responsible party for the incident and has established a claims line: 1-800-440-0858. If necessary, additional questions about the Oil Pollution Control Fund can be directed to Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann's office.

●The latest information from the Deepwater Horizon Incident Unified Command is available at: www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com, on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/RobertLAJIC> or on Facebook at Deepwater Horizon Response. The community information line is 1-866-448-5816, and the wildlife hotline is 1-866-557-1401.

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“MDEQ is continuing to respond swiftly and thoroughly to protect Mississippi’s Gulf habitat and shoreline in conjunction with Governor Haley Barbour and the Department of Marine Resources. Our staffs have worked together efficiently since last week to do all we can to prepare for any threat to our valuable natural resources. We are currently in protection mode on the Coast, and we will continue to work with BP and its contractors to ensure that all measures are taken to fully protect human health, the environment, wildlife, and the economic livelihood of people along the Coast. We will use all of our resources to fulfill that obligation,” said MDEQ Executive Director Trudy Fisher.

“Our most important assets to protect in Mississippi are our barrier islands, Mississippi Sound, marshes and adjacent estuaries. These are the nurseries for all our fishery resources, which includes, shrimp, crab, finfish and oysters. Booms are being placed in these vulnerable areas, to help protect our major estuary systems including the Pascagoula River Basin, Grand Bay NERR area, Back Bay of Biloxi, Bay St. Louis and the marshes to the western end of the state from Bayou Caddy to the Pearl River,” said DMR Executive Director Bill Walker.

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality safeguards the health, safety, and welfare of Mississippians by conserving and improving our environment and fostering wise economic growth through focused research and responsible regulation.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at www.dmr.ms.gov.

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