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ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

MAJORITY (202) 225-2927  
FACSIMILE (202) 225-2525  
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May 19, 2010

Mr. Lamar McKay  
President and CEO  
BP America, Inc.,  
501 Westlake Park Boulevard  
Houston, Texas, 77079

Dear Mr. McKay:

Recent news reports and congressional testimony indicate that BP's efforts to stop the flow of oil 5,000 feet beneath the ocean surface are being monitored in real time by ongoing video feeds from the numerous robots and other submarine vessels that are being deployed around the area of the blowout preventer and the broken riser pipe. Although the accident occurred nearly a month ago, and remotely operated vehicles arrived soon thereafter, BP did not release any video until 23 days after the accident. To date only a small fraction of the video has been released to the public, primarily in response to requests from Congress.

I am writing to ask that you make these ongoing live feeds publicly available. Although BP argues that these video feeds belong to BP, the American public has a right to the information that they contain and to be able to see for themselves BP's progress in containing this ongoing environmental disaster. Allowing the public to view this video could provide our best scientists and engineers with information that could be helpful in developing much needed solutions to the ongoing oil spill, both in terms of subsea operations and surface spill response.

For instance, Dr. Steve Wereley of Purdue University has used a video-based method for calculating the rate of flow from the broken riser pipe and additional video would assist him in developing a more precise estimate of the rate of oil flowing from that pipe. Dr. Wereley estimates that approximately 70,000 barrels of oil a day are flowing out of the

pipe, however his estimate is based on only a very short video sample. Other scientists have conducted similar video-based efforts. An ongoing live feed would provide him with ample opportunity to obtain representative video samples and to then provide an updated estimate.

There are many other first class scientists and engineers who could apply their talent and expertise toward solving this disaster if they were able to view the ongoing efforts in real time and/or review and analyze large segments of the video as it is collected.

Congress and the American public has a right to know what is happening in real time, so that they can understand and react to the situation as it develops. Accordingly, I am asking that you allow relevant Congressional Committees to link to the live video feeds coming from the ocean floor. We will be happy to host such live feeds on our websites, and stream it free of charge to the world. I believe it is in all our interests, including BP's, for there to be transparency in all aspects of the response to this unfolding catastrophe. That way, we will see BP's spill response efforts and activities as they actually happen, and we will be able to judge for ourselves their efficacy, wisdom and ultimate environmental impact.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey  
Chairman

Subcommittee on Energy and  
Environment  
Committee on Energy and  
Commerce

Cc: Honorable Henry Waxman, Chairman,  
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Honorable Joe Barton, Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Honorable Fred Upton, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy and  
Environment