United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

May 17, 2010

Admiral Thad W. Allen
Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 2nd Street SW, Stop 7000
Washington, DC 20593-7000

Dear Admiral Allen:

The public release last week of a short video segment of the oil and natural gas being emitted from the Deepwater Horizon quickly led scientists to revise estimates of the size of the spill. We are seeking to determine what additional video records of the ongoing Deepwater Horizon oil spill have been created, and how to ensure access to these materials without delay.

Last week we asked BP executives to produce any and all video of the wellhead and broken pipe from the Deepwater Horizon rig. Over the weekend, BP informed us that the release of a video segment last week was "authorized by the Unified Command."

We are following up with you to ascertain whether the Unified Command has control of other video records, and to determine how to best obtain rapid access to these records.

We believe that the public and scientific communities should have access to these materials. Access to timely and accurate data on how much oil is being released is vital to assessing the short- and long-term impacts to the Gulf of Mexico, fisheries, the marine environment, tourism-driven economies and U.S military testing and training operations in the eastern Gulf.

While we are seeking the release of all video records from BP without restriction, we also ask that, to the extent that you have video records available, you provide those materials to us for use in Senate oversight activities.

Sincerely,

Bill Nelson
Senator Bill Nelson

Barbara Boxer
Senator Barbara Boxer

cc: Ken Salazar, secretary, Department of Interior