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JEFFREY DUNCAN
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

December 6, 2011

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar,

According to news reports, BP filed court papers on Monday that charge Halliburton with having “intentionally destroyed evidence” related to the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster that ultimately became the worst environmental disaster in American history. Halliburton was operating as a contractor to BP on the Deepwater Horizon and BP has reportedly alleged that Halliburton destroyed evidence on cement testing and has not provided computer models relating to the cement. It is imperative that the Congress and the American people get all of the answers about what led to this spill and that BP, Halliburton and Transocean are all held fully accountable under the law for this disaster.

As Ranking Member of the House Natural Resources Committee, I therefore request that you provide written responses to the following questions:

1. BP alleges that Halliburton destroyed cement testing information “in part because it wanted to eliminate any risk that this evidence would be used against it at trial.” As part of the government’s Joint Investigation Team (JIT) investigation, did Halliburton provide all information the Department requested related to the company’s cement work? Does the Department have any evidence that supports BP’s allegations that Halliburton destroyed or tampered with any information about the cement work?
2. Does the Department have any reason to believe that Halliburton or any of the other oil companies involved in this disaster destroyed any additional evidence or information relating to the disaster or otherwise tampered with such evidence or information before providing it to the Department or to Congress?

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3. BP also alleges that Halliburton "at best, lost the computer modeling outputs" related to the cement work. Has the Department requested such information from Halliburton? Does the Department have any evidence that supports BP's allegations about Halliburton's computer modeling outputs?
4. Does the Department have any reason to believe that Halliburton or any of the other oil companies involved in the Deepwater Horizon disaster withheld any other pieces of evidence or information from the Department or from Congress?
5. What steps did the Department take to ensure that all forensic evidence was promptly turned over to JIT investigators and properly protected? How confident are you that all available relevant evidence was supplied by the companies involved in the Deepwater Horizon disaster to the Department?
6. The government's JIT report concluded that "a combination of contamination, overdisplacement, and/or possibly nitrogen breakout of the shoe cement were causes of the blowout." Would the information that BP alleges was lost or destroyed affect in any way the conclusions reached by government investigators about the cement job?

Thank you for your assistance in responding to this inquiry. I ask that you please respond by December 21, 2011. Should you have any questions, please contact Morgan Gray or Reece Rushing of the House Natural Resources Committee Democratic staff at 202-225-6065.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
Ranking Member