



Day 49: Latest oil spill developments

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(Updated 4:51 a.m.) Here are the latest developments on the oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, caused by the April 20 explosion on the Deepwater Horizon rig.

NEW

The House Committee on Energy and Commerce will hold a hearing in Chalmette, Louisiana, on Monday. The Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations will hold a field hearing on "Local Impact of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill," near ground zero for the growing disaster.

Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, the federal government's response manager to the oil spill, will be in Washington briefing President Obama and the cabinet on the administration's ongoing response to the incident.

Carol Browner, the president's assistant for energy and climate change will host a video chat early Monday afternoon to answer questions from the public about the oil disaster. The chat can be viewed at WhiteHouse.gov or at the White House's Facebook page.

CLEANUP

Allen said BP has made progress, but cautioned it was too early to call efforts a success. "We're making the right progress. I don't think anyone should be pleased as long as there's oil in the water," he said.

BP had increased the amount of oil it funneled to the surface to about 441,000 gallons on Saturday, the company said Sunday. This was an increase from about 250,000 gallons on Friday.

After reviewing new images and data, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reopened more than 16,000 square miles of ocean along the Florida coast that was previously closed for fishing because of the oil spill.

More than 13,000 square miles of that lie just west of the Florida Keys and Dry Tortugas. But the federal agency also closed a 2,275-square mile area off the Florida Panhandle, extending the northern boundary just east of the western edge of Choctawhatchee Bay. That means that 32 percent of the Gulf still remains off limits for fishing.

POLITICS

President Obama plans to personally offer his condolences to families who lost loved ones in the rig explosion, said White House spokesman Robert Gibbs.

The president has invited the families of the 11 dead workers to the White House on Thursday.

The cost of the federal response effort to the Gulf of Mexico oil spill totaled \$93 million as of June 1, according to a Friday letter from Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano and Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen to congressional leadership. They are requesting that Congress approve a proposed provision that would make available up to an additional \$100 million to the Coast Guard.

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