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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0304

June 10, 2010

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

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am encouraged by your recent comments before a U.S. Senate committee stating the Gulf of Mexico drilling ban could be lifted sooner than expected. I am committed to working with the Administration to ensure the jobs of thousands of Louisiana workers are not destroyed by the current drilling moratorium.

I remain concerned your willingness to reconsider the drilling ban is contingent on the findings of the President's Commission. Almost a month after the President made his announcement, the Commission has yet to be fully appointed and work has not begun. This slow pace is unacceptable. I request the President fully appoint the Commission immediately and direct it to begin its work without further delay. The Commission is tasked with fully investigating all aspects of the Deepwater Horizon incident. However, its immediate task should be to develop a set of safety recommendations that will allow the drilling ban to be lifted immediately - not in months. The Commission should prioritize its work and expedite those recommendations before its broader report is issued in 6 months.

At risk are thousands of Louisiana jobs - many of which will never return if the ban remains in place. Small and large energy companies, banks, energy service companies, drilling operators and hundreds of citizens who know the importance of the industry to Louisiana and the nation's energy security have expressed their concerns to me. Gulf Coast residents are growing impatient with the Administration's mixed signals - a prime example being the recent debacle over shallow water drilling, and whether or not it's included in the ban. We must move forward now and work together to ensure responsible American energy production in the Gulf of Mexico continues. I urge the Administration to move swiftly to lift the drilling ban and work with Louisianians to ensure this vital sector of the economy is not further devastated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "CW Boustany Jr." in a cursive style.

Charles Boustany Jr., MD
Member of Congress

CC: President Obama