



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

BILL NELSON
FLORIDA

June 1, 2010

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Former Secretary of State Colin Powell noted over the weekend that it's been more than a month since the Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded and sank, and that a "comprehensive total attack" is the best way to protect our Gulf of Mexico coastal economies and environments.

Therefore, I am writing to reiterate my suggestion from last week that you consider more fully involving the Department of Defense to help augment the massive public and private response to the growing oil spill in the Gulf.

Last week I respectfully suggested that you consider calling on the Pentagon - if the attempted "top kill" of the well didn't work. Despite initial reports to the contrary, that attempt failed. And it now appears likely that oil will continue gushing at least until August when two relief wells can be finished.

Meantime, the latest projections show some of the oil may start coming ashore in Mississippi and Alabama by the end of this week. Florida would be the next state that would suffer the trauma of oil coming into our estuaries and lapping up on our beaches.

While the Coast Guard, under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the National Guard both are involved, it is my belief that the broader assets and command and control capability of the Department of Defense could better translate your directives into prompt, effective action.

I believe such an approach would help protect people's livelihoods, as well as our coastlines, wetlands and fisheries from the damages of this oil spill. Certainly no one thinks the problem in the Gulf is going to be solved in a few days. But Americans need to feel that their government is taking an all-hands-on-deck response.

As always, thank you for your leadership and your consideration of my suggestions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Nelson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the "n".