

From: Marcia K McNutt/DO/USGS/DOI
Sent: Sunday, May 23, 2010 10:48:29 PM
To: Peter Cornillon <[REDACTED]>
CC: Bill.Lehr@noaa.gov
Subject: Re: revised statement

Peter -

Thanks so much for sharing your thoughts. Truly the scientific approach would be to begin with a broad upper and lower limit, and refine the lower limit up and the upper limit down. But indeed iff we said, for example, that the upper limit was 80,000 bpd, the headline tomorrow would be "New oil pollution rate 16 times faster". Remember when BP testified to Congress about a rate as high as 160,000 bpd? That rate was based on the calculation of an idealized formation with zero skin - e.g. the impossible well. And yet, that is the number the press picked up. They were just giving a theoretical upper bound, but of course that is what the press gravitated to.

Having said that, I agree completely that the approach of establishing bounds and refining them is how we should attack the problem, but not publicly.

Marcia

Dr. Marcia McNutt
Director
US Geological Survey
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS 100
Reston, VA 20192
(703) 648-7411
(703) 648-4454 (fax)
[REDACTED] (cell)
mcnutt@usgs.gov
www.usgs.gov

From:	Peter Cornillon <[REDACTED]>
To:	mcnutt@usgs.gov
Cc:	Bill.Lehr@noaa.gov
Date:	05/23/2010 05:23 PM
Subject:	Re: revised statement
Sent by:	"pcornillon" [REDACTED]

Hi Marcia,

Bill suggested that I follow up with you with regard to my comments below. My sense is that our group can come up with an upper bound, but that it will likely be quite high at this time. The concern of those in the group, at least as I understand it, is that we know that the press will misuse any upper bound that we provide. I don't think that that is a useful way to approach the problem. My hope would be that the President's Office would know how to use the information that we provide to best serve addressing this issue - but I've been told by many throughout my life that I am politically naive.

The way that I think we should approach the problem is to establish an upper and a lower bound and then to continually modify these bounds as we obtain better information from BP and other sources and as we improve the estimates based on the information that we already have. Having said this, I note that I am the only person in the group who appears to feel comfortable with this approach and I was broad in to evaluate the estimates being made not to make my own; others are actually doing the bulk of the work.

Peter

On May 23, 2010, at 4:59 PM, Bill.Lehr@noaa.gov wrote:

Peter, your statement came one minute after I sent it. Please let Dr. McNutt know your concerns

----- Original Message -----

From: Peter Cornillon <[REDACTED]>

Date: Sunday, May 23, 2010 1:55 pm

Subject: Re: revised statement

To: Bill.Lehr@noaa.gov

Cc: ira.leifer@bubbleology.com, James J Riley <rileyj@u.washington.edu>, "Espina, Pedro I." <pedro.espina@nist.gov>, "pete@gso.uri.edu" <pete@gso.uri.edu>, "Wereley@purdue.edu" <Wereley@purdue.edu>, Alberto Aliseda <aaliseda@u.washington.edu>, Paul Bommer <pmbommer@mail.utexas.edu>, Poojitha Yapa <pdy@clarkson.edu>, Juan Lasheras <lasheras@ucsd.edu>, savas@newton.berkeley.edu

Hi Bill,

Sorry to be a spoil sport, but I do not agree completely with the statement. I believe that we can give an estimated range based on what we have. Yes, it will be large, but we can do it. It sounds to me like everyone agrees that a lower bound is 5,000 bbl/d and an upper bound is 80,000 bbl/d; i.e., none of us think that it is outside of these bounds. If I am wrong about this we should discuss it. Furthermore, I think that we are all in agreement that the actual number will be quite a bit larger than 5,000 bbl/d and significantly less than 80,000 bbl/d. With better information, information that is available at BP, we believe that we can significantly reduce this range. My guess that this information would be of value to those in the White House and elsewhere in government

Having said, this, it sounds like I am in the minority, but I'm used to that.

Also sorry for not getting back to you earlier.

Peter

On May 23, 2010, at 3:59 PM, Bill.Lehr@noaa.gov wrote:

Attached is the statement that I hope captures the suggested changes. Please check it one more time before I send it to McNutt.

<TeamStatement.docx>

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Peter Cornillon	
215 South Ferry Road	Telephone:
(401) 874-6283	
Graduate School of Oceanography	Fax: (401)
874-6283	
University of Rhode Island	
Internet: pcornillon@gso.uri.edu	
Narragansett, RI 02882 USA	

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Peter Cornillon	
215 South Ferry Road	Telephone: (401) 874-6283
Graduate School of Oceanography	Fax: (401) 874-6283
University of Rhode Island	Internet: pcornillon@gso.uri.edu
Narragansett, RI 02882 USA	