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2010: No Actionable Oil in Offshore Water or Sediment

17 Dec 2010

MEMORANDUM

From: *P. F. Zukunff*
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MEMORANDUM
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 From: RADM P. F. Zukunff, USCG
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 To: VADM R.C. Parker, USCG
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 Subj: OPERATIONAL SCIENCE ADVISORY TEAM REPORT

On 18 August, 2010 I chartered the Operational Science Advisory Team (OSAT) to provide me with situational data and analysis for use in directing the on-going response team developed a strategy to assimilate available data as well as to identify additional sampling was necessary to guide oil removal activities and assess dispersants. This sub-sea and sub-surface monitoring assessment effort culminated in a rigorous set of analytical data.

These data sets were gathered and integrated based upon the 13-step Unified Strategy promulgated on 18 August 2010. The resulting assessment has a phase of the Deepwater Horizon spill response. This report includes analysis of thousands of water and sediment samples taken from over 25 different research ships on more than 125 separate cruises and representing over 8500 samples. This report focuses on information needed to guide response actions and conclusions about the long-term environmental impacts of the spilled oil, continue to study the impacts of this oil spill on the Gulf of Mexico and in other habitats. The sampling and assessment data in this OSAT report restoration and research objectives including, but not limited to, the National Assessment.

As described in the National Incident Commander's Directive of 13 August, Sea and Sub-Surface Monitoring Strategy dated 18 August, 2010, the goals and analysis were to:

- Monitor and assess the distribution, concentration, and degradation of oil that remains in the water column and/or bottom sediments;
- Evaluate the distribution of indicators of dispersant or break-down dispersants used in oil spill response activities;
- Identify any additional response requirements that may be necessary remaining sub-surface oil.

Based on the robust sampling effort, the expert analysis of the data provided in this report and the decision criteria summarized above, I have determined that **there is no actionable oil in the water or sediments of the deep water or offshore zones**. Ongoing removal operations will continue where oil remains in nearshore sediments and shorelines.