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For Immediate Release

June 14, 2010

Remarks by the President at a Gulf Coast Briefing in Gulfport, MississippiCoast Guard Station Gulfport
Gulfport, Mississippi

11:56 A.M. CDT

THE PRESIDENT: I'm going to make a longer statement later in Alabama, so just very quickly I just want to thank Governor Barbour and the First Lady of Mississippi for hosting us. I want to thank Governor Jindal for flying in. And we have members of the congressional delegation here in Mississippi, as well as a range of local and state officials.

Admiral Allen provided a detailed report about what was being done specifically here in Mississippi and fielded a range of questions and suggestions about how responses can continually improve. One of the things that came out of this discussion is how do we make sure that there's effective coordination in terms of skimmers, vessels of opportunity that are out on the water right now. Can we make sure that they are responding as quickly as possible to the oil before it starts getting closer to shore?

And there are a range of issues having to do with communications. Are there -- some of these smaller vessels have radios on them, have we done an effective inventory of which ones are large enough and have enough trained personnel that they can actually lay boom or they can engage in skimming? Which ones should be deployed more as sentinels to identify where, in fact, the oil may be coming in. I think it was a very useful conversation. Captain Steve Poulin, who is the local incident commander, had gathered a lot of these suggestions and is going to be moving on them in the days to come.

We also talked about claims to make sure that people here in Mississippi, but throughout the region, are going to be adequately compensated for the damages and the losses that they are experiencing right now. There are still problems with them. I think as everybody is aware, I'm going to be meeting with the chairman and other officials from BP on Wednesday. And so we're gathering up facts, stories right now so that we have an absolutely clear understanding about how we can best present to BP the need to make sure that individuals and businesses are dealt with in a fair manner and in a prompt manner. And, again, there were suggestions on that front as well.

So I just want to thank everybody here that's involved. Folks around the table here have been working 24/7. The governors, they've been on a constant state of full alert and have been putting in a lot of time and a lot of energy working with Thad Allen to make sure that in dealing with this disaster, we are minimizing the short term impacts, and we're making sure that we've got the resources to fully recover.

The last point I'm going to make, and this is something that's been repeatedly emphasized, here in Mississippi -- but it's true in Florida, it's true in Alabama and it's true in portions of Louisiana -- there's still a lot of opportunity for visitors to come down here, a lot of beaches that are not yet affected or will not be affected. And we just want to make sure that people who have travel plans down to the Gulf area remain mindful of that, because if people want to know what can they do to help folks down here, one of the best ways to help is to come down here and enjoy the outstanding hospitality.

All right, and I'll be making longer comments when I get to Alabama this afternoon. Thank you, everybody.

END

12:00 P.M. CDT

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