

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4402

June 16, 2010

ENERGY AND COMMERCE
COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEES:

HEALTH

ENERGY AND AIR QUALITY

COMMERCE, TRADE AND
CONSUMER PROTECTION

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
COMMITTEE

The Honorable Lisa Jackson
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

On Friday, June 11 an oil pipeline owned and operated by the Chevron Pipe Line Company began leaking in Salt Lake City and, before being shut off early Saturday morning, spilled approximately 33,000 gallons of oil in Red Butte Creek in northern Salt Lake City. This creek flows into the Jordan River, which is the main waterway that drains the Jordan River Watershed into the Great Salt Lake. The Great Salt Lake is an incredibly fragile ecosystem and one of the most important estuaries for migrating birds in the West. I am deeply troubled that, despite containment efforts along the Jordan River, reports are surfacing that oil sheen has now been spotted very near the Great Salt Lake.

The spill and subsequent environmental consequences is of grave concern to me and my constituents. My top goal is ensuring that this spill is fully cleaned up and all traces of oil removed. I want to thank the EPA On-Site Coordinator (OSC) for the quick ground response to provide coordination of clean up efforts with local officials and Chevron officials. I hope the OSC will remain active and engaged on the ground in Salt Lake City throughout this process to ensure that Chevron follow through on cleanup.

Even with the quick response to this spill, I still have several questions regarding the cleanup process going forward. It is my understanding that on Tuesday, June 15 the EPA established a Unified Command System with Chevron and that the EPA is reviewing Chevron's Incident Objectives. Can you provide me with detail regarding the Unified Command System and how specifically the EPA will coordinate with Chevron and the various government agencies responsible for overseeing the cleanup to ensure it is completed thoroughly, effectively, and in a timely manner?

Additionally, I would ask that you respond to the following questions that many in the Salt Lake community affected by the spill have raised, and whose concerns I share:

- What are Chevron's Incident Objectives and are they sufficient to clean up the spill?
- Should oil reach the Great Lake Salt, what is the plan for removing it and protecting the surrounding ecosystem from damage?

- Much of the oil in the Jordan River and nearing the Great Salt Lake is reported to be sheen. How harmful is oil sheen to wildlife and what tools are used to cleanup sheen?
- How often will you conduct water monitoring to ensure oil does not contaminate groundwater sources?
- How long does the EPA estimate the cleanup will take?
- What standards do you use to determine when cleanup is complete?
- What chemicals have been approved for oil clean up and what are their environmental impacts?
- How will you guarantee Chevron pays all cleanup costs?
- Who will have the final approval of the cleanup process and certify that it is complete?

Again, thank you for your efforts to respond quickly to the oil spill in Salt Lake City. I look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that Chevron lives up to its duties to mitigate the environmental consequences resulting from this spill and returns the waterways, wildlife, and surrounding land to their natural state.

Sincerely,



JIM MATHESON
Member of Congress