

National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling

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Oil Spill Commission Releases Three Staff Working Papers

Today, the National Oil Spill Commission is releasing three more staff working papers (included below). The research reflected in these papers, like previously released documents, informed the Commission's deliberations, and the findings and recommendations in its Final Report. That report was presented to the President on January 11, 2011, but the staff papers themselves do not express the views of the Commission.

The staff working papers released today cover the following topics:

"Scientific Research to Support Offshore Oil and Gas Decision Making: Evolution of the Environmental Studies Program"

This paper offers an overview, in its own words, of the "Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Environmental Studies Program at the Department of the Interior. The Environmental Studies Program selects and funds the scientific research needed by decision makers at the Department of the Interior for offshore energy activities. This paper provides the historical context under which the Environmental Studies Program was created, discusses the shift in the program's research focus over time, and describes issues related to the current operation of the program that may be relevant to the Commission."

[Scientific Research to Support Offshore Oil and Gas Decision Making: Evolution of the Environmental Studies Program](#)

"Unlawful Discharges of Oil: Legal Authorities for Civil and Criminal Enforcement and Damage Recovery"

This paper discusses "the sources and uses of penalties and other funds recovered as a result of unpermitted discharges of oil. There are a number of provisions in federal environmental statutes that authorize the federal and/or state governments to seek fines and penalties for violations, recover clean up and removal costs, and secure funds to restore natural resources."

Unlawful Discharges of Oil: Legal Authorities for Civil and Criminal Enforcement and Damage Recovery

“Long-Term Regional Restoration in the Gulf: Funding Sources and Governance Structures”

This paper “analyzes alternative funding mechanisms and governance structures for a multi-jurisdictional entity that would oversee implementation of long-term restoration activities in the Gulf of Mexico. The paper: (1) reviews the current status of Gulf-wide restoration efforts; (2) considers proposals for new initiatives and increased funding; and (3) analyzes options and offers several possible recommendations for Commissioner consideration.”

Long-Term Regional Restoration in the Gulf: Funding Sources and Governance Structures

The staff working papers are also available at www.oilspillcommission.gov.