

County Commissioner's Message



Ken Keechl
Broward County Mayor
District 4 Commissioner

The Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill: Being Prepared is the Best Response

When you elected me to be your Broward County Commissioner in November of 2006, I knew there were many issues facing Broward. Nevertheless, the possibility of an oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico being brought into Broward's waters by the "gulf loop" wasn't one of them.

For years, the Broward County Commission has been unanimous in its opposition to off-shore drilling. In fact, during the last two months while I was in Washington D.C. and Tallahassee talking to our lawmakers, I reminded them of our unified opposition to the practice. Shortly thereafter, the Deepwater Horizon catastrophe occurred.

As your Broward County Commissioner and Mayor, it's my job to insure that we are ready. Make no mistake: we are. I immediately convened a Broward County Working Group to monitor the situation and report to me daily. This Working Group is made up of Broward's best: emergency management officials, beach specialists and environmental experts. You get the idea.

I have reached out to others as well. Within the County, I conveyed a "workshop" of coastal city mayors to make sure that we are all on the same page and working together. We are. Outside of the County, I reached out to the Coast Guard, officials from NOAA, private sector contractors, and our lawmakers in Washington D.C. In fact, I have personally met with U.S. Senators Bill Nelson and George LeMieux, and U.S. Representatives Debbie Wasserman Schultz and Ted Deutch seeking their assistance if necessary. Each of them has assured me that they are here for Broward if we need them.

So what can we expect here in Broward as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill? I wish I had the answer. Because an oil spill in the gulf has never been picked up by the gulf loop and traveled along the east coast of Florida, no one is sure. But the good news is this: the effect upon Broward, if any, will be manageable. It will appear in the form of increased tar ball activity. (Yes, we have tar balls in our waters already.) Broward's goals will be to assist our coastal cities in any additional clean-up activities, and to keep the tar balls out of the seaport, inlets, and our intercoastal waterways.

Again, we are praying that this national catastrophe doesn't affect Broward. But if it does, we are ready.

I've said it before and I will say it again. Being your Broward County Commissioner is never boring. Thank you for the honor. And, as always, my best to you and your families.

Broward County Commissioner and Mayor Ken Keechl

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