



Closing Statement of Chairman Edolphus Towns

House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

July 22, 2010

“Offshore Drilling: Will Interior's Reforms Change Its History of Failed Oversight?”

It's not every hearing where the witnesses and the Members on both sides of the aisle agree on the issues, but I think this is one of those rare days. Federal oversight of offshore oil drilling has for decades been inadequate and ineffective. The agency formerly known as MMS suffered from an institutional conflict of interest, and repeated regulatory and ethical failures.

All that has got to change. The recipe for reform is not complicated.

- Offshore oil drilling can no longer be regulated on the "honor system." There must be rigorous Federal oversight and effective enforcement.
- Conflicts of interest must be eliminated. The royalty collections must be entirely separate from regulation and enforcement.
- Sham environmental reviews cannot be tolerated. I don't want to see environmental assessments that talk about protecting walrus in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Oil spill response plans must be realistic. The entire world now knows that we were not prepared for the BP oil spill.

- There must be an effective and proven technology available to prevent blowouts in deep water before we allow deepwater drilling to resume.