

Ryan Zinke
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Scott Angelle
Director
Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

May 3, 2018

RE: Friday, April 27, 2018 stakeholder call with Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement officials regarding the revised Well Control Rule

Dear Secretary Zinke and Director Angelle:

I am writing to request an explanation for why my colleagues and I were disconnected from a public engagement phone call on Friday, April 27, 2018. The briefing call was with Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement officials regarding proposed revisions to the Blowout Preventer Systems and Well Control Rule.

Oceana was invited and confirmed to attend the stakeholder call directly by staff from the Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs. We dialed into the stakeholder call and one-by-one were disconnected from the briefing. When my line was dropped around 1:12 p.m., approximately 12-minutes after it started, I assumed that there was a line error and attempted to reconnect. When I redialed, the operator told me and several others that they were directed by the organizing agency not to reconnect Oceana to the call. It appears that Oceana and other interested stakeholders were deliberately excluded from the call.

Let me explain why our participation is important to a fair and open democracy. For several years, Oceana has been active and vocally calling for additional safety measures for existing

offshore drilling operations, not less. Oceana is the largest international advocacy organization dedicated solely to ocean conservation and we have over 720,000 members and supporters in the United States alone. We have a deep and longstanding interest in any changes to the Well Control Rule which precedes the current administration.

Eight years ago, BP's exploratory *Deepwater Horizon* oil rig exploded. Millions of gallons of oil gushed into the Gulf of Mexico, and the world watched failed attempt after failed attempt to contain the blow-out. The Gulf's marine ecosystem continues to suffer even today. Years after the spill, whales and dolphins continued to die at higher rates and experienced diminished reproductive success. Heart-breaking images of oil-soaked birds and sick and dead sea turtles make clear that this is not a risk we should bring to any new areas.

By holding a public stakeholder briefing and excluding key members of the interested public – you are placing serious doubt about the fairness and legality of your public engagement process. When this rule is published in the Federal Register, we will comment. In the meantime, we expect even leaders who we disagree with to ensure fair and open public engagement.

Sincerely,



Diane Hoskins