

GREEN PARTY OF MISSISSIPPI

<http://www.greenpartyms.org>

greenpartyms@hotmail.com

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Contacts:

- Scott McLarty, GP US Media Coordinator, 202-518-5624, cell 202-904-7614, mclarty@greens.org

- Starlene Rankin, GP US Media Coordinator, 916-995-3805, starlene@gp.org

President Obama must cancel his plans for Atlantic and Alaskan offshore drilling, and hold BP and Halliburton liable for the Gulf spill's damage, say Greens

The Green Party of Mississippi joins Green Party of the United States leaders in calling on President Obama to cancel his call for offshore drilling in US waters off the Atlantic and Alaskan coasts, as the spreading British Petroleum oil spill threatens ecosystems and public health in the Gulf region. Greens also urged the President to hold BP and Halliburton liable for all costs associated with the spill.

Last Friday, President Obama signaled that his administration is not reconsidering plans to expand offshore drilling in the wake of the Gulf spill ("Obama won't back off drilling plans, but pledges safeguards," McClatchy Newspapers, <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2010/04/30/93216/obama-wont-back-off-drilling-plans.html>).

"President Obama's reluctance to set aside his offshore drilling proposal is comparable to the reckless disregard shown by President George W. Bush and other public officials before and after Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast," said Miriam Gennari, Green Party candidate for Arlington County, Virginia, School Board.

"No technology can guarantee complete safety from a spill. According to an assessment by Minerals Management Service of the damage to offshore oil and gas infrastructure caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, 457 pipelines were damaged and 113 platforms were destroyed, with six spills of 1,000 barrels or more reported ("MMS Updates Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Damage," May 1, 2006, <http://www.mms.gov/ooc/press/2006/press0501.htm>). The 167 million acres of ocean near the Atlantic and Alaskan shores will be vulnerable to the same disaster that the Gulf states are facing right now," said Ms. Gennari.

Greens said that President Obama's capitulations to energy lobbies, including a plan to construct new nuclear power plants (<http://www.gp.org/press/pr-national.php?ID=297>) and his support for "clean coal" while refusing to seek a halt to mountaintop removal mining, have surpassed those of President Bush, a former oil executive and enthusiastic ally of such industries.

The Green Party supports much stricter federal regulation of fossil fuel extraction and nuclear power, to protect workers, communities, and ecosystems, and an end to public subsidies for fossil fuel and nuclear industries. Greens have warned about the consequences of economic and environmental policies promoted by these industries to guarantee their own profits at public expense. Many Greens favor a moratorium on offshore drilling operations until tighter regulations and adequate insurance (not just BP's self-insurance policy) are in place.

"President Obama wants to establish a bipartisan alliance with 'drill, baby, drill' Republicans to boost oil industry profits while trying to end US dependence on foreign oil sources. But the problem isn't just foreign oil. It's all fossil fuels, which have proven disastrous in the short term, with the BP spill threatening the Gulf coast, and in the long term as we face global climate change. Democratic Party leaders deserves sharp criticism for their refusal to renew annual bans on offshore drilling beginning in 2008," said Audrey Clement, co-chair of the Green Party of Virginia (<http://www.vagreenparty.org>) and co-chair of the national party's EcoAction Committee (<http://www.gp.org/committees/ecoaction/index.php>).

Greens insist that BP and Halliburton, the oilfield-services company that handled the rig's cementing process, be held financially liable for the effects of the spill.

"No amount of money can possibly compensate for the lives lost and the damages caused by this disaster, which will be felt for years to come," said Michael Canney, spokesperson for the Green Party of Florida (<http://www.floridagreens.org>) and green energy advocate. "Taxpayers and Gulf Coast residents must not be left holding the bag for cleanup costs and damages. BP and Halliburton must be held accountable, even if it means impounding their assets to ensure these bills get paid."

MORE INFORMATION

MS Gulf Coast environmentalists: www.healthygulf.org

Green Party of the United States <http://www.gp.org> 202-319-7191, 866-41GREEN

- Green Party Speakers Bureau <http://www.gp.org/speakers>

"Two fossil-fuel dangers threaten America's economic health, public health and natural habitats: coal and offshore drilling for oil, say Greens on Earth Day 2010"

-- Green Party press release, April 22, 2010

<http://www.gp.org/press/pr-national.php?ID=311>

"More on the Oil Gush..." By Anita Steward, OpEdNews.com, May 3, 2010

<http://www.opednews.com/articles/More-on-the-Oil-Gush--by-Anita-Stewart-100502-286.html?show=votes>

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