

WASHINGTON, D.C.--Congressman Jeff Fortenberry last week urged the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee's leadership to conduct a hearing to examine federal government responsibility, oil spill liability, and prevention regarding the April 20, 2010 Gulf Coast oil spill. On Friday, the committee decided to investigate the role of the Minerals Management Service (MMS), the government regulatory body responsible for oversight of offshore oil drilling, in this disaster.

"The harmful effects of this oil spill are likely to persist for years, perhaps decades, and I have stressed that congressional oversight of any regulatory lapses leading to this disaster is critical," said Fortenberry. "We must ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place by the MMS to prevent any future incidents. Environmental security, the protection of a fragile Gulf Coast ecosystem, and the economic integrity of the seafood and maritime industries are all at stake. This disaster also impacts the goal of strengthening an environmentally sustainable domestic energy system."

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the main investigative committee in the U.S. House of Representatives. It has authority to investigate the subjects within the Committee' legislative jurisdiction (governmental operations) as well as any matter within the jurisdiction of the other standing House Committees. Fortenberry serves on the Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittees on Domestic Policy and National Security and Foreign Affairs.

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