



National Commission on the
BP DEEPWATER HORIZON OIL SPILL
AND OFFSHORE DRILLING

December 6, 2010

Commissioners

Bob Graham, Co-Chair
William K. Reilly, Co-Chair
Frances Beinecke
Donald F. Boesch
Terry D. Garcia
Cherry A. Murray
Fran Ulmer

To: Bob Graham, Co-Chair
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Terry D. Garcia
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Dear Commissioners,

Richard Lazarus
Executive Director

We write to inform you of a roadblock in our investigation.

As part of our investigation, we are attempting to determine what indications of hydrocarbon flow the Deepwater Horizon's drilling crew could have seen in the two hours prior to the explosion. The crew relied on proprietary data displays provided by National Oilwell Varco ("NOV"). The precise dataset feeding the displays sank with the rig; however, a subset of the data is available to us in a different format. In order to recreate the driller's displays, we need access to NOV's proprietary HiTech software, conversion of the data into a format compatible with that software, and simulations of the real-time displays.

BP has provided us with the underlying data and permission to distribute it. We are seeking Halliburton's agreement to provide us with the algorithms and information necessary to facilitate conversion of that data. Transocean has independently requested recreation of the displays and made key witnesses available to that end. The roadblock is NOV.

For over a month, we have attempted to elicit NOV's assistance on this matter. They have been generally uncooperative, either in the form of refusal or delay.

We note that the result of the data conversion and display described above will necessarily be imperfect. It is impossible to recreate the exact screen the driller was watching in the moments leading up to the explosion. But even a basic understanding of what information was available to the driller could significantly advance our investigation. The men who know the precise answers to those questions – the driller and the two assistant drillers – are deceased. All we have is the data. We request your assistance in obtaining NOV's cooperation.

Sincerely,

/s/ Fred H. Bartlit

Fred H. Bartlit, Jr.
Sean C. Grimsley
Sambhav N. Sankar