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BP Oil Spill Post

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The Congressional hearings concerning the Deepwater Horizon oil spill were a colossal and complete waste of time.

There, I said it. The hearing in which BP's CEO got blasted is pointless.

I know what most of you are probably thinking right now. You're probably thinking I have ties to big oil and that I put profits ahead of safety, reliability, and environmental responsibility. Obviously, I must not think very highly of environmental affairs if I think the initial hearings were pointless. If these were your initial reactions, then you're terribly wrong.

I don't have any ties to big oil, but I *am* an engineer and I think Congress is going about this whole mess the wrong way. Let's look at what's currently going on with the situation:

- 1) 11 workers are dead.
- 2) Oil is spilling into the Gulf of Mexico.
- 3) The leak is about a mile under the ocean.
- 4) Fish, dolphins, turtles, plankton, pelicans, etc. are dying.
- 5) Cleanup crews are working in hazardous environments.
- 6) Jobs are being lost in fishing, tourism, etc.

This is a mess, plain and simple. I think I can speak on behalf of most Americans and for that matter, most people *everywhere* when I say that by no means do we ever want this sort of thing to happen again. So, if we never want this to happen again, what do we need to do? How do we stop this

tragedy from getting any worse? What have we done so far? What I took from the Congressional hearing is that our wonderful representatives and senators have put a lot of time and effort into telling us what we already know - that the oil spill has everything all screwed up and that BP is responsible. We then got to hear our elected officials direct a lot of anger at the CEO. So far, the only thing we now know for sure is that BP is very bad and that they need to be big boys and clean up their mess.

I understand that the Coast Guard, the Army Corp of Engineers, and hundreds of volunteers are working hard on cleaning up the Gulf, but I think our fearless leaders have forgotten something very important – We need to STOP the leak! I realize that deadlines have been set by our government, but the only response I've seen from our end is "We're very disappointed in you." I also understand that our government doesn't quite have the same expertise in capping oil wells as do the big oil companies, but I'm surprised that a nation that could pull 700 billion dollars out of a hat to stop a worldwide economic meltdown can't organize an industry task group to stop one oil well. Perhaps we're all too content to sit around and gripe at BP instead of offering any solutions.

Now, before you go wagging a finger at me and saying "Oh yeah, where's YOUR solution!?", calm down, I've already submitted my idea for capping the well. Whether or not they'll do anything with it, well, that remains a mystery. At the very least, I thought it was a better use of my time than sitting around cursing big oil while the problem gets even worse. I think our biggest problem right now is the enormous leak on the bottom of the ocean floor, not "I really need to chew these guys out so my constituents will think I really care about the environment."

If most of these representatives and leaders were really concerned about the environment, we'd be seeing more efforts/time/resources/money being focused on *capping the well*. If Congress can show me that they're putting in a lot more effort on the well cap than I give them credit for, then they have my gratitude. If they're just sitting around twiddling their thumbs and moaning how bad oil is while driving around in big cars and jets, then I really don't care what they have to say.

I apologize for ranting so much, but the handling of this affair reminds me of the “solutions” in place for many of the world’s other problems. All too often it’s easy to see a massive problem, kick a few ideas around, and leave the cleanup for someone else. The original problem is never fully solved. Symptoms are treated, but rarely is the disease eliminated. Many of the problems we face today were faced by our ancestors, and many more are completely new to us. We can continue to play politics, to point fingers and blame one another, or we can put in the work to solve these problems. To quote Edison, “opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.”

If you have a pair of overalls in the closet, now would be a good time to wear them!