

Honorable Members of the U. S. Senate:

Thank you very much for allowing me to speak to you today about the deepwater drilling moratorium and its economic impact on Louisiana and the nation! My name is Troy Lillie and my wife Melanie and I live in the town of Maurice, Louisiana. Most of my life I have worked in the oil industry. For 29 years I worked in the ExxonMobil Refinery in Baton Rouge and since retiring in March 2005, I have worked part-time for a couple of years writing Operations and Training manuals for a small business in Baton Rouge. Last summer, I was blessed to work with a great bunch of people on an offshore oil platform in the Gulf of Mexico. Let me say up front that I am no economist or expert on the oil spill or the drilling moratorium. What I am is a semi-retired person with a lot of experience in the oil industry and a very concerned citizen about what I am seeing and hearing from folks in my area about the impact this moratorium is already having on their lives and their fears of what is to come. My daughter and her husband both work for "oil field" companies in our immediate area. They are already being impacted in that he is being transferred overseas to work in order to keep his job. He is not a professional engineer or corporate executive, but rather an everyday blue collar worker making a living for his family. My daughter will have to remain here, along with their two daughters. However, they are one of the lucky families that still have jobs. Many, many of our friends, neighbors and relatives are losing their jobs. Layoffs are happening everyday in our area. Most people here believe that there will be tens of thousands of jobs lost, directly and indirectly. If you just consider there were 33 deepwater rigs operating in the gulf with approximately 200 personnel onboard that is 6600 direct jobs. It is my opinion, for each of those rig jobs; there are probably 10 onshore jobs that are going to be lost. That would be 66,000 jobs lost and God only knows how many small businesses will fail in the process.

The reason this is so evident to us after these past 3 months is we happen to live in the "oil field". The "oil field" is the corridor from Lafayette down Highway 90 to New Iberia, Morgan City, Houma, Grand Isle and New Orleans that is the location for countless small businesses that support the offshore industry in the gulf. It is a close knit industry (a family) and word spreads fast of layoffs and who may lose their business. In the past three months, you can observe in the shops and malls that there are not as many people out shopping. The smaller businesses are losing customers because so many people are scared to death to make even small purchases due to the uncertainty that has been created by the President's drilling moratorium. If the deepwater rigs are allowed to leave the gulf, then these fears will be realized. The tens of thousands of jobs and many, many small businesses will be lost in a time when we are being told that jobs are being created. The people in my area have a hard time believing the sincerity of job creation efforts by the President's administration.

After having been in the oil industry for over three decades, doing everything from turning valves by hand to supervising part of the operation of one of the largest refineries in the country, I can tell you first hand and without a doubt that the culture of the "oil field" is one that puts safe operations number one, both onshore and on the offshore rigs and platforms. The Deepwater

Horizon accident is truly a tragedy and the loss of the eleven men onboard is something none of us want! However, all of us who work in the "oil field" know the dangers going in and accept them. It is no different than working as a fireman, policeman, serving in the military, working in a coal mine or any other occupation that has inherent dangers. There have been terrible accidents and some intentional acts such as "911" that have taken many lives over the years. The coal mine accidents that have occurred recently did not justify a 6 month moratorium, so why does the Horizon accident?

Most in my state have a real problem with this moratorium and simply do not accept that it is because of the possibility of another blowout in the gulf, while we are dealing with the current crisis! There has been only one in 50 years of gulf drilling, so we believe that using such an excuse to do far more damage to Louisiana, the gulf coast and the nation than even the spill has done is motivated more by politics than sound reasoning. After all, supertankers offload millions of barrels of crude oil offshore that comes through south Louisiana each day! It is probably better odds that an accident with one of these ships could happen than another Deepwater Horizon accident.

We also have a problem with why the executive branch of government has chosen to ignore the two rulings of the judicial branch and continue to ruin our economy, our small businesses and our way of life with this unwarranted and now unlawful drilling moratorium. The persistence of the President's administration to force this moratorium on us also goes against the "spirit of the law". This should not and must not be a political game. This is the very lives of tens of thousands of hardworking Americans that hang in the balance, the economy of Louisiana and serious damage to the nation in higher fuel prices and operating costs for businesses.

This can be changed and prevented today, with the lifting of the moratorium by the President. Just as he recently apologized for a "knee jerk" reaction in the story of the USDA employee that was fired and admitted it was a mistake, he needs to do the same thing in this moratorium. That was one life that was affected; the moratorium already has and will continue to destroy tens of thousands of lives. Louisiana has been through several disasters since 2005, including Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Ike and Gustav, the Stanford fraud which costs thousands their life savings and the Deepwater Horizon accident. Louisiana will work hard and recover from these disasters, but many, many in my state are not sure we will recover from this moratorium. We believe this may be the final straw in destroying our individual lives and our way of life. It is our prayers and our hopes that the President will do the right thing and lift this moratorium before it is too late! There is a phrase in Cajun French, "Joie de vivre", which means spirit or joy of life. Lifting this moratorium can give us back our "Joie de vivre".

Thank you and God bless,

Troy Lillie