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Senate Hearing Written Testimony- U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship
The Deepwater Drilling Moratorium: A Second Economic Disaster for Small Businesses?

Tuesday, July 27, 2010

Presented by Leslie Bertucci, Owner, R and D Enterprises of LA, LLC

Chair Landrieu, Ranking Member Snowe, Members of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship,

First, I would like to personally thank Senator Landrieu and the committee for giving me this opportunity to tell you about my experience as a small business owner in Louisiana, most particularly in the last few years.

I am Leslie Bertucci. I was born and raised in New Orleans. My husband and I have raised 6 children in New Orleans. Along with my husband, Dan Ness, I own R and D Enterprises of LA, LLC.

We are a small family owned and operated business in New Orleans since 1983. At R and D we rent very specialized tanks and racks that are used to safely transport and store drilling fluids to the deepwater rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. Our customers are drilling companies. We employ 14 people. These 14 people have families to take care of. Forty two spouses and children rely on these 14 people for their financial support. In addition, we have more than 40 vendors that we order supplies and services from every month. These companies rely on our company and other companies like us for their sustenance.

We are all sickened by the loss of life and ecological devastation that has taken place in the Gulf due to the BP Horizon explosion and subsequent oil spill.

Our company had equipment on the BP Horizon rig, and at the time of the explosion we also had equipment on 23 other rigs in the Gulf. Much of that equipment is still out on those rigs. If these rigs are not allowed to drill, our equipment sits idle and produces no revenue. With no revenue, we will not be able to order from or pay our vendors. If we have no revenue, we will not be able to pay our business loan notes or the mortgage on our warehouse. If we have no revenue, we will have to lay off our employees, all of which were affected just a few short years ago by the devastation that we were dealt after Hurricane Katrina. One of my employees was unemployed for 2 and a half years after Katrina, prior to working with us. Some of my employees' spouses have jobs that have been affected by the moratorium on drilling. My office manager has 3 children. Her husband is a territory sales manager in south eastern Louisiana for a flooring manufacturer and has had a 50% decrease in sales in the last 6 weeks. He reports that 10% of his customers have already gone out of business in the last two months.

Since the ban on drilling in the Gulf, my husband and I have decreased our personal salaries by 75% in just one of our many efforts to slash our operating costs, in an effort to keep our employees on the payroll and off of the unemployment rolls. Unemployment benefits are not a viable or desirable option for any of the hardworking people of the Gulf Coast Region. We don't want to file claims. We want to work. We want to do our jobs, support our families and our local economies. We want to remain self-sufficient.



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The blanket moratorium on drilling in the Gulf is not and will not resolve the damage that has already occurred to the families that lost their loved ones, our ecosystem or our seafood industry. The moratorium adds insult to injury. The people of Louisiana and the Gulf Coast region need to know that the rest of our country does care about us and will consider the long term effects that this moratorium is causing. The economic ripple effect is and will be catastrophic to our entire region.

We do agree that that safety should be the #1 priority; however we also know that banning all drilling in the Gulf is not the solution.

On behalf of our company, our employees, the thousands of others like us and our entire community, we implore you to take into consideration the big picture and try to understand that this moratorium has already caused much more damage than good and it needs to be lifted as soon as possible.

Thank you