
NEWS RELEASE

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Office of the Premier

B.C. OFFERS ASSISTANCE TO DEAL WITH GULF OIL SPILL

VICTORIA – British Columbia is offering to send Environmental Emergency Response Officers to the Gulf of Mexico to assist in the clean-up operations currently underway to deal with the recent explosion on board a drilling rig, Premier Gordon Campbell announced today.

“We want to lend a helping hand to our neighbours as they deal with this environmental emergency,” said Premier Gordon Campbell. “Our province has experts who are ready, willing and able to respond to tough situations like this.”

B.C.'s Ministry of Environment has 15 Environmental Emergency Response Officers and about 30 other specialists who are members of the incident management team for dealing with spills and other environmental emergencies.

The United States Coast Guard is the lead U.S. federal agency operating an incident command centre, along with British Petroleum. Several other federal agencies are involved such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Office of Minerals Management and state environmental agencies from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida and Texas.

Yesterday, President Barack Obama advised there are now five staging areas to protect sensitive shorelines; approximately 1,900 federal response personnel in the area; and more than 300 response vessels and aircraft on the scene. They have also laid approximately 66,142 metres (217,000 feet) of protective boom.

“In emergencies such as this it is important that British Columbia offers assistance and expertise to help lead agencies address the situation as quickly as possible,” said Premier Campbell. “Whether it's forest fires in the U.S. or other provinces or earthquakes abroad, British Columbians have always shown a willingness to help and this situation is no different.”

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