

Oil Budget Overview Talking Points 8.4 updated 9pm

- The Oil Budget Calculator provides an account by experts of what's happened with the oil from the BP Deepwater Horizon spill and makes clear that the administration's response removed significant amounts of oil from the Gulf.
- Overall the report shows that the vast majority of the oil from the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill has either evaporated or been burned, skimmed, recovered from the wellhead or dispersed. The dispersed oil is in the process of being degraded.
- A significant amount of this is the direct result of the robust federal response efforts.
- The historic response, which has included more than 6,000 vessels and 40,000 individuals, has been effective.
 - The Unified Command's aggressive recovery operations, including burning, skimming and direct recovery from the wellhead were successful in removing from the Gulf approximately 1,257,789 million barrels (one quarter of the oil). Direct capture is one of the actions the government directed BP to do.
 - More than an additional 400,000 barrels (408,792) barrels was chemically dispersed, bringing the total result of Unified Command efforts to more than 1.6 million barrels, or about one third of the total amount of oil removed or dispersed.
 - One quarter (1,172,792m barrels) was dispersed, either naturally or chemically. The result of dispersion is to break the oil up into microscopic droplets, about the width of a human hair. These droplets are in the process of being naturally degraded by microbes.
 - Twice as much oil was dispersed naturally as was dispersed chemically. (763,948 barrels or 16% was dispersed naturally; 408,792 or 8% was dispersed with chemicals at and below the surface.)
 - One quarter of the total oil (1,243,732 m barrels) evaporated or dissolved naturally.
 - The residual amount of oil, i.e., oil that cannot be measured directly or estimated with confidence, includes oil that remains at the surface as light sheen, just below the surface as tar balls, washed ashore or already removed from the shore. This residual amount totals 1,253,839 barrels, or one quarter of the total.
 - The oil that is left in the water is light sheen, it is weathered and diluted, and if and when it washes ashore, it will largely be in the form of tar balls and not heavy oil.
 - Oil that is dispersed beneath the surface, on the surface as light sheen or washed ashore is in the process of natural degradation.

- That said, we continue to monitor the water, we continue to assess and we continue to be concerned about the long term effects of this spill and what it means for the health of the Gulf ecosystem and the millions of people who depend on the Gulf for their livelihoods and enjoyment.
- The Federal Government is not going anywhere. We are committed to this region and its long term recovery. We are here until the oil from this spill is cleaned up and the people from this region are made whole.
- As you know, teams of scientists and experts have been carefully tracking the oil since Day One of this spill, and based on the data from those efforts and their collective expertise, they are now able to provide these useful estimates.
- These estimates were derived by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Department of the Interior (DOI), who jointly developed what's known as an Oil Budget Calculator, to provide measurements and best estimates of what happened to the spilled oil. The report was produced by scientific experts from a number of federal agencies, led by NOAA and USGS, with peer-review of the calculations by other governmental and non-governmental scientists. The calculator is based on 4.9 million barrels of oil released into the Gulf, the government's Flow Rate Technical Group estimate from Monday, August 2, 2010.
- The oil budget calculations are based on direct measurements where that is possible and the best available scientific estimates where measurements were not possible.
- Other research efforts are currently underway to further understand and quantify the location and concentrations of subsurface oil, and results, as you know, so far have shown that diffuse concentrations in the low parts per million, exist at depth. Our latest information is that those concentrations are being degraded through time.
- We will continue to monitor and sample and conduct a number of other studies to quantify the rate of degradation. Because that is a key question about which we'd like more information. While further analysis remains to be done to quantify the rate of degradation, early indications are that this oil is degrading quickly.