

When I made the decision to come to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement in June of 2010, I did it because I believed that I could help move this organization towards a brighter future. I think it's that feeling of being able to make a real difference in an agency that does important things that is currently attracting many talented people to careers here. Needless to say, there are lots of opportunities for people from across the organization to make an enormous impact on how we move forwards. We have a hardworking and dedicated group of employees that believe in our mission, and are committed to working to ensure the safe and environmentally responsible development of energy and mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf.

We've been working extremely hard over the past several months to improve the safety of offshore oil and gas drilling and to expand our renewable energy program. The explosion and sinking of the Deepwater Horizon rig serves as a sobering reminder of just what is at stake. The blowout and subsequent fire took the lives of 11 people, injured many others, and spewed millions of barrels of oil into the Gulf of Mexico for close to three months. The oil spill jolted the nation; it surprised many who believed that such a spill could not occur, and is an event that will have lasting consequences on the entire Gulf region.

My greatest challenge right now is to help us move this organization past the immediate aftermath of Deepwater Horizon, learn and apply its painful lessons, and move forward with our terribly important work. We are reorganizing the agency to eliminate conflicts of interest among our various missions and are in the process of creating strong, independent entities to promote energy development, regulate offshore drilling, and collect revenues. In the past, these three functions resided within the same agency, creating the potential for internal conflict and an increased risk of a pro-development bias.

In recent months, we have issued a series of strong regulations and let everyone know that we are serious about serving as vigilant stewards of our nation's offshore resources. As oil and gas drilling continues in shallow and deep water, we will remain committed to ensuring that safety and environmental stewardship are central values that we will work very hard every day to promote.

I also want to ensure that our renewable energy program flourishes. Within a few months, we will open a new Atlantic office that will handle future renewable energy projects, a task currently being performed by a dynamic and talented team in our Herndon office. We have approved the Cape Wind renewable energy project on federal submerged lands in Nantucket Sound off the coast of Massachusetts and anticipate other exciting off shore renewable announcements in the near future. I feel very strongly about the future of offshore renewable energy and know that the approval of this first project was an important milestone that will help us move in new and exciting directions.

Here at the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement, I'm surrounded by a talented and committed group of people who take their jobs and the agency's mission very seriously.

We will continue working as hard as we can, improving as much as we can, and trying to reach our critically important goals of making offshore drilling safer and expanding the universe of offshore renewable energy. We will continue to recruit the best and the brightest from a wide variety of fields to achieve those important goals.