



Coastal Vitality Project Talking Points

September 15, 2010

The following talking points, drafted for a shrimper/fisherman, are intended to be a guide, and not a script, for discussions held in Washington DC, regarding the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Disaster's impact on the seafood industry and the people that drive its success.

My Business, My Life

My business is shrimping/oystering/fishing/processing, my life is shrimping/oystering/fishing/processing.

After Katrina, our industry experienced many complex challenges. Diesel fuel prices increased. The price of shrimp plummeted due to foreign imports and too much supply.

But after fuel prices leveled and investigations by NOAA found the domestic shrimp industry was flooded with foreign product, our industry was actually experiencing some good fortune. With foreign product removed, our market price went up – things were looking good.

But then the Deepwater Horizon rig exploded, kicking off the largest oil spill in history. Since Day #1, I have not been able to go back to work. In the meantime, I have been contracted out by BP to collect and burn oil.

I ran/run a unique business [Business name]. [Description of business.]

Over time, this model has enabled me to be more successful than most. But it has taken innovative solutions and years upon years of hard work to market my product the way I do and secure long-standing relationships, such as [relationships with sellers]. Now, I don't have any product to sell these clients, so, they have to look elsewhere for product. And I have no guarantee that these clients will return.



I am highly leveraged with loans, so I am concerned about my ability to service my outstanding debt. Not only is my own personal economic future uncertain, but the future of my business and my potential to employ others is uncertain. .

Currently, only 20% of shrimpers have returned to work. And, even with a fraction of the industry at work, the market price of shrimp is half of what it was prior to the spill. As workers continue to go back to work, you can be sure that the market price will continue to drop – less money for more workers.

BP maintains that the oil spill hasn't negatively impacted our seafood brand image – a claim which is just plain untrue, evidenced by the state of our falling market price. But what I am most worried about is not our “image” but that we won't have an industry to go back to. The long-term vitality of the shrimp industry is in jeopardy. What is the long term impact of the oil to the estuaries and ecosystem? What happens 5 years down the road? 10 years?

Estuaries: Root of Coastal Life

The Gulf is home to the majority of the shrimp and oysters consumed domestically and over 2% of overall US seafood consumption. The coastal estuaries are the nursing grounds for gulf seafood. Over 70% of our seafood in the Gulf comes from these estuaries.

BP maintains that the seafood is safe, but it is only safe right now. I am concerned about the long-term vitality of our seafood product – the future of our industry and our livelihoods – if these estuaries are not properly cared for.

If the oil spill negatively impacts any of the species on the food chain there will be a resulting impact to our marketable seafood products.

We may be able to repair our brand image over the years, but what happens to us when there isn't a product to harvest and sell?

It may be relatively simple to clean oil off beaches and the surface of the water, but it becomes more difficult in these estuaries. Thus, restoration and revitalization of these estuaries is of greatest importance to survival of the



species that make up the coastal eco-system. In turn, restoration is vital to the preservation of our livelihoods.

BP Claims

Since the spill, I have spent my time helping BP gather and burn oil in the Gulf. I did this for two reasons. On one hand, it put money in my pocket when there was none coming from shrimping. But most of all, I wanted to do what I could to preserve the wetlands and the environment (my place of business), so I could get back to work sooner.

BP is accountable – this is their problem. We didn't have to help out, burning oil, sucking up oil – but we did, at a fraction of the cost than they would have paid.

Now, not only is BP getting credit for the oil that was cleaned up – the oil WE cleaned up – but they want to subtract “vessel of opportunity payments” from our “loss payments.” This is as much infuriating as it is unfair. We provided a service to BP, to our region, when we could have sat back and waited for our claims to be processed. But instead we helped out, endangering our health in the process – I have been to the doctor twice since the spill for respiratory issues.

It is imperative and completely reasonable that we keep our cleanup payments on top of our claims money.

Conclusion

In the end, this isn't just about reimbursing me, restoring me. It's about rebuilding communities, businesses and entire industries. Yes, we need to be reimbursed for our losses and future losses, but most of all, we want to go back to work, knowing that our



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industry is protected and our product is safe. In the words of Tony Hayward: "We want OUR lives back."