

Talking Points by Carolita Kallaur
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I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all who helped us to get to this point particularly Mark Witten and the other members of the Offshore Operators Committee who assisted, and to particularly recognize the contribution of Sharon Buffington of my staff and the leadership shown by Admiral North.

The Coast Guard and the MMS are very different agencies, but we share the common goals of safety at sea, a clean environment and efficient Government. I believe this MOU is a reflection of our commitment to meeting those goals.

But our work is not over and we will continue our partnership effort with industry to improve safety of operations and the efficiency of government.

This is particularly important in this period of low oil prices where US companies are struggling to survive.

The first task will be for both agencies to review our procedures to make sure they are in line with this MOU. We recognize at the onset that change will be necessary.

We will be jointly proposing legislative changes to clarify the jurisdiction for floating facilities.

We will also focus on our inspection program, safety management, civil penalties and research.

On the inspection front we will ensure that we are not duplicating each other and focus rather on where we have exclusive responsibility.

In the important area of safety management, we will continue our work with industry and the Coast Guard to promote safe practices. This is done through workshops where best practices are shared as well as efforts towards a performance based regulatory regime.

A key part of safety management is the investigation of accidents and learning from any mistakes made. This is an area where I think we can all do a better job. We already have efforts underway to develop a single point of reporting and to begin to communicate electronically. We also will work to share information quickly and to use this information to prevent future accidents, particularly fatalities.

The next area is civil penalties. Having clear jurisdiction as outlined in the MOU will avoid many potential problems. MMS will work very closely with the Coast Guard particularly in the area of not looking at a civil penalty as solely a punitive action, but also as a means of feedback that will lead to improved safety and protection of the environment.

The last area I would like to touch upon is research. We will continue to coordinate research in the area of both safety and oil spill research. Many interesting research areas are on the horizon as industry explores and develops in deeper waters.

Today's MOU signing is just the beginning. We have a lot of work ahead of us and look forward to this challenge.