



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

BILL NELSON
FLORIDA

February 4, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to ask for a review of the Gulf Coast Claims Facility. My request follows a court ruling and recently published news accounts that raise questions about transparency and accountability of the \$20-billion fund set up to compensate victims of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Just this week, a Louisiana district court judge, in essence, ruled the fund is not in any way-shape-or-form "independent" of the BP oil company, and that BP must refrain from calling the administrator "neutral" as compensation is dispensed to victims of the worst oil spill in our country's history.

Mr. President, last summer, while in my state at the U.S. Coast Guard station in Panama City, you said this fund would be run independent of those who caused the spill "so that people can trust that they'll get a fair shake."

The claimants in Florida, and the rest of the Gulf Coast, deserve no less.

In addition to the aforementioned court ruling, the Associated Press reported this week the claims fund has disbursed only one final settlement, which was done at the request of BP and amounts to \$10 million that went to an unnamed BP business partner.

In any other context involving a fund of this size, questions that touch on accountability and transparency would normally be reviewed by a regulator or outside auditor. I believe a high level of scrutiny should apply not only to claimants, but also to the claims handlers – and to BP.

Thus, I respectfully request that your administration initiate a review of all administrative operations of the claims fund. Given the court ruling and other news accounts, there's clearly a need to assure more accountability and transparency. I thank you in advance for addressing this concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Nelson" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.