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ENVIRONMENT

April 21, 2020

The Honorable Dan Brouillette
Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Brouillette,

This week marks the 10 year anniversary of the Deepwater Horizon explosion that killed 11 workers and set off the largest oil spill in American history. Oil gushed from the seafloor for 87 agonizing days, spewing more than 200 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico. I was Governor of Florida at the time. I watched in helpless horror as tar balls washed up along our pristine beaches, tens of thousands of marine animals drowned in oil, and families and small businesses along our coast lost everything. Ten years later, we're still rebuilding our environment and economy – and we still don't know the full extent of the damage.

The recovery along the Gulf Coast is fragile. Another accident could shatter the progress that has been made. This fragility is heightened by the current economic crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to necessary efforts to flatten the curve, demand for oil and gas has plummeted even though production remains high – leading to excessive and unneeded crude that has nowhere to go. There are reports that storage tanks are filling up quickly, leaving few options for storing excess crude. I fear that the industry may be forced to turn to less safe, non-traditional storage options such as tankers and pipelines – a risky endeavor, particularly as we approach hurricane season.

It is imperative that the Department of Energy do everything it can to maintain safe storage requirements and prevent another Deepwater Horizon from occurring. Please provide answers to the following questions:

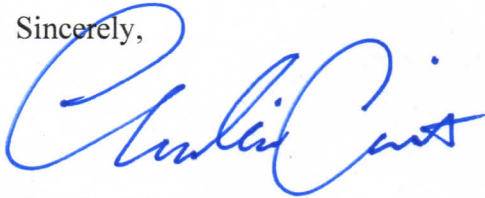
1. With a glut in supply, how is the Department of Energy, along with other relevant agencies, enforcing crude storage safety requirements to prevent a spill or accident at storage facilities?
2. What is the Department's plan if traditional storage options are full? How will the Department, along with other relevant agencies, set potential non-traditional storage options? And how will safety standards be enforced at these non-traditional sites?
3. Does the Department plan to work with the Department of Interior to set and enforce limits on leasing, extraction, and production, given the sharp decline in demand and necessity? If no, why not?

Deepwater Horizon showed us the high cost of negligence in the name of economy prosperity. The numbers are astounding: 11 lives lost, nearly \$1 billion in losses for the seafood industry,

and more than \$500 million in losses for outdoor recreation, just to name a few. We can't risk another Deepwater Horizon, especially in light of the current economic crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Energy must take all necessary steps to protect our communities, workers, and environment from a preventable tragedy.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I am also raising these concerns with the Department of Interior and the Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charlie Crist". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Charlie" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Crist".

Charlie Crist
UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN