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Press Briefing by National Incident Commander June 30, 2010

WASHINGTON -- Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, the National Incident Commander for the Deepwater BP Oil Spill response, briefed the media this afternoon

ADMIRAL ALLEN

..I'd like to take a couple comments about the Jones Act. There have been a lot of questions about that. We at no time in the course of this response have been inhibited by anything have to do with what we call Jones Act or Jones Act Labors. All of the vessels that are operating outside three miles do not require Jones Act waiver and we've been able to use four and five vessels out there, as we have needed.

There have been consideration given to Jones Act and we are looking right now at the Jones Act waivers for the four or five vessels that are working offshore because of the weather in the even that they might need to come into port because of the hurricane season we wanted to make sure that they were covered by that. So throughout this week we've been considering waivers for the production vessels that are out there that are foreign flag.

But other than that, there have been no inhibitions or constraints put on this response related to any Jones Act waivers moving forward. We had a report of some tar balls over in Texas around South Padre Island and Galveston those are being tested right now we do not believe at this point that they are connected to this response event. But we will make sure they are thoroughly tested and we will make sure that any follow-up action required is done.

But also like to talk about the foreign offers of assistance. There have been questions about how they're coming in about how we're handling those just to give you a summary to date. We've received 107 offers of foreign assistance from 44 countries and four international organizations. Sixty-eight of those offers were really government-to-government—this one government extending the offer of equipment or personnel or supplies to us. Thirty-nine of those offers were by private offers, which become another potential source of supply for the types of equipment we might need.

Out of the 68, government-to-government offers to date 35 appear to be equipment or resources that we could use. We've accepted nine of those offers already and 24 of those offers are being processed right now through the State Department for acceptance. This is an ongoing process has been from the start but wanted to give you an update here.

Of the 39 private offers, it looks like 30 of those are equipment or types of materials that we could use. Those have been provided to our folks that are out there acquiring whatever it is booms,

dispersants, or skinny material and they become part of the broader source of supply that we're pursuing in trying to resource our operation moving forward.

Finally, we have announced the publishing of an emergency rule that's going to loosen the requirements for equipment availability around the country. Just to give you a general background as a condition of operation vessels and facilities have to have response plans on file that identifies a certain amount of resources and a time limit at which they will be brought to bear in terms of various spill scenarios.

This emergency rule allows us to relax some of those response requirements and allows us to aggregate capability at different port levels through mutual assistance to free up additional resources that we could bring to the Gulf. We are looking now to go around the country and assess the implications of easing those requirements and what resources could be freed up to brought to the Gulf."..