

MARK DESAULNIER
11TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND
THE WORKFORCE**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC ASSETS
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE, BENEFITS, AND
ADMINISTRATIVE RULES**

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

327 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
PHONE: (202) 225-2095
FAX: (202) 225-5609

101 YGNACIO VALLEY ROAD, SUITE 210
WALNUT CREEK, CA 94596
PHONE: (925) 933-2660
FAX: (925) 933-2677

440 CIVIC CENTER PLAZA, 2ND FLOOR
RICHMOND, CA 94804
PHONE: (510) 620-1000
FAX: (510) 620-1005

November 14, 2017

Vanessa Allen Sutherland
Chair
U.S. Chemical Safety Board
1750 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Suite 910
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Chairwoman Sutherland:

I write to urge the Chemical Safety Board (the Board) to vote against the proposed recommendations status change of 2010-10-I-OS-15.

On April 20, 2010, people across the world learned of the blast on the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig, which resulted in 11 deaths and seriously injured 17 others. Unfortunately, this incident was not an anomaly. According to the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), more than 1,400 injuries, 13 fatalities, and 324 evacuations or musters occurred from Fiscal Years 2011 through 2016. As an inherently dangerous work location and line of work generally, these workers are exposed to threats daily that they are uniquely qualified to identify.

The recommendation to the U.S. Department of Interior in the report following the Deepwater Horizon explosion made it clear that whistleblower protections were essential for the future safety of workers on the Outer Continental Shelf and the environment. While the Department of Interior may not have the current legislative authority to complete this on their own, the spirit of the recommendation does not need to be abandoned. Instead, the report can be edited to direct this requirement to Congress – something that we are prepared to undertake.

In 2010, my predecessor and former Chairman of the Education and Labor Committee George Miller introduced a bill that would set up these very protections. I am proud to continue to introduce this legislation with the support of the Committee's current Ranking Member, Robert C. "Bobby" Scott. This bill has previously been passed by the U.S. House of Representatives and stands ready to be considered again.

Rather than close this recommendation as "Closed-Reconsidered/Superseded," the Board should amend it and direct such recommendation to Congress. This action would send a strong signal to workers on the Outer Continental Shelf that the Board cares deeply about their safety, is working in their best interest, and is doing its best to ensure that another catastrophic incident like the one that happened on Deepwater Horizon never happen again.

Thank you for giving my request your full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark DeSaulnier', written in a cursive style.

Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress