



United States Department of the Interior

MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE

Washington, DC 20240

JAN - 7 2010



The Honorable Robert Menendez
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Menendez:

Thank you for your letter dated November 18, 2009, to Secretary Ken Salazar expressing concern about the serious incident in Australia's Timor Sea, and the possible role of Seadrill Limited, a Norway-based drilling contractor, in that incident. Secretary Salazar asked me to respond to your letter on his behalf.

As you requested, the Minerals Management Service (MMS) will conduct a full analysis of Seadrill's activities in U.S. Federal waters. This will include a complete review of all inspection and incident data for operations associated with this company. We expect to have a report by the end of February 2010. Additionally, the MMS has been closely monitoring all available information on the Timor Sea well blowout and anticipate a full understanding of the factors contributing to that incident in the near future.

I appreciate your interest in the safety of Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas operations. If you have any further questions, please contact me or Ms. Lyn Herdt, Chief, MMS Office of Congressional Affairs, at (202) 208-3502.

Sincerely,

S. Elizabeth Birnbaum
Director