



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460**

**Office of External Affairs and
Environmental Education**

April 12, 2013

Ms. Beth Parke, Executive Director
Mr. Joseph Davis, Director, SEJ Watchdog Project
Society of Environmental Journalists
P.O. Box 2492
Jenkintown, PA 19046

Dear Ms. Parke and Mr. Davis:

Thank you for your letter. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been working closely with our federal, state and local first responders to coordinate response and cleanup activities at the ExxonMobil Pegasus pipeline spill in Mayflower, Arkansas. Today, over 600 Exxon personnel and 60 federal, state and local first responders are on location in Arkansas. While much work has been accomplished, more progress is needed before families can return home and the cause of the spill is determined by Department of Transportation – Pipeline Hazardous Materials and Safety Administration (PHMSA). Our primary objective remains to ensure that residents are protected and the oil spill clean up activities by ExxonMobil Pipeline Company meet the federal and state requirements.

We appreciate your comments and feedback on improving our first response field operations. We agree with you on the importance of press access to information during emergency responses and other disasters. We support press access when safety and operational conditions allow individuals to be in the area and will continue to champion this access on your behalf. We also support NGO access such as Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and others.

EPA representatives were not present when Ms. Lisa Song, reporter from Inside Climate News had her unfortunate experience with on-site security. We did, however, respond to her request to us directly. EPA provided her with both access to the command post and a tour, and we continue to work with her by sharing information and answers regarding the spill. We also provided representatives from the NRDC with access and a tour.

EPA is not involved in Federal Aviation Administration decisions regarding airplane flight zones.

We are always looking to improve our operations and it is important for us to hear directly from you and your members. Thank you for your feedback..

Sincerely,



Roxanne Smith
Principal Deputy Associate Administrator
Office of External Affairs & Environmental Education



Lawrence M. Stanton
Director
Office of Emergency Management

Cc:

Mark Weesner
ExxonMobil Pipeline Company

Patrick Henretty
ExxonMobil Pipeline Company

Judge Allen Dodson
Faulkner County, Arkansas

Mayor Randy Holland
City of Mayflower, Arkansas

Michael Parette
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