

Given the cavalier attitude of BP's corporate brass, it is obvious the oil company thinks that by plugging its Macondo oil well - which has gushed uncontrollably for nearly three months – it has also capped the urgency of an economic crisis that it alone created.

Pardon us, BP, if we don't rush to thank you for doing what you should have done more than 100 days ago. For the people of the Gulf Coast, who have suffered the most from this unprecedented disaster, shutting off the oil spill without any serious commitment to speed up damage claims is only partial relief. Unlike Tony Hayward, Coastal Alabama residents are a long way from getting their lives back. Some will never be able to return to their former jobs or hold onto their businesses.

For months, BP has been running radio and television ads in Washington, DC and along the Gulf promising to make things right while boasting of its efforts to compensate those who've been victimized by the oil spill. Yet, two months after the White House announced the creation of a \$20 billion Gulf oil spill claims escrow account - to be funded by BP - the company still hasn't deposited a red cent into it.

Furthermore, there is a growing feeling among local business owners that BP is simply digging in its heels to avoid any substantial claims payments until the new escrow account is funded and the administrator, Kenneth Feinberg, has fully taken over. Therefore, it's no surprise that BP has taken a position of stall and delay for as long as it can.

We who live along the Gulf Coast know the oil and gas industry helps fuel the regional economy, but it would be a serious mistake for BP to take our good will for granted. There can be no excuse for BP's negligence in manufacturing this calamity, and the company will not be allowed to treat the Gulf Coast like some third world country, hoping to sweep this tragedy under the rug while making for the door.

This past week I sent letters to incoming BP CEO Robert Dudley and President Barack Obama calling on both to immediately expedite the pending claims.

As I stated in my letter to BP CEO Dudley, "Simply putting off claims payments until Mr. Feinberg's organization is established is unacceptable, and clearly not in keeping with the promises your company made to the residents of the Gulf Coast."

To President Obama, I asked for a status report on the BP escrow account: "We are nearing two months since that (BP escrow) agreement, and yet my constituents are no closer to having their claims reviewed or paid. When will the escrow account be funded and an operational structure established to begin administering the funds?"

The Gulf oil spill is an economic and environmental challenge to our region on a scale we have never before faced. While BP was solely responsible and will be held accountable, that is not enough for our local communities, which are threatened with the very real prospect of economic collapse. They must be quickly and adequately compensated for their loss. I am committed to

keeping the pressure on BP, Mr. Feinberg and the administration to ensure that our coastal businesses and families are treated fairly and expeditiously.

South Alabama Town Meetings:

I will be holding town hall meetings in all six counties of Alabama's First District during the week of August 23 through 26.

By the end of this month, I will have held 217 official town meetings throughout the First District since coming to office in 2003.

I hope each of you will take the opportunity to find the meeting closest to your home and come out to visit with my staff and me.

Monday, August 23

8:30 -9:30 a.m. – Bayou La Batre

City Hall

11:00 a.m.-Noon – Dauphin Island

Town Hall

2:30 - 3:30 p.m. – Satsuma

City Hall

4:30 - 5:30 p.m. – Semmes

Community Center

Tuesday, August 24

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. – Chatom

Community Center

11:00 a.m. – Noon – Jackson

City Hall

2:30 – 3:30 p.m. – Monroeville

Old Monroe County Courthouse

Wednesday, August 25

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. – Brewton

City Hall

11:00 a.m. – Noon – Flomaton

City Hall

2:00 – 3:00 p.m. – Atmore

Municipal Auditorium

Thursday, August 26

10:00 – 11:00 a.m. - Fairhope

City Hall

1:00 – 2:00 p.m. – Gulf Shores

City Hall

3:00 – 4:00 p.m. – Orange Beach

City Hall

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.