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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: THURSDAY, JULY 29, 2010
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FLORIDA EMERGENCY RESPONSE OFFICIALS TO BEGIN RIGHTSIZING RESPONSE EFFORTS TO THE DEEPWATER HORIZON INCIDENT

TALLAHASSEE- -The State Emergency Response Team, in coordination with US Coast Guard officials, and county partners will today begin rightsizing Florida's response efforts to the Deepwater Horizon incident.

"The capping of the well and progress toward permanent well-kill have reduced the threat of oil to Florida's shores and sensitive environments," said Florida Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Michael W. Sole. "We will now begin the cautious and measured rightsizing of protective measures to help Florida's residents and communities start the road to recovery. However, boom will be redeployed as necessary, as well as other assets within each branch area of operation, should conditions change."

Prior to Tropical Storm Bonnie's landfall, areas along the Northwest Florida Gulf coast began removing boom and associated equipment to protect it from weather-related damage and to protect fragile coastline from impacts caused by dislodged boom. Some protective boom will continue to be removed in the coming weeks, based on input from county officials and coordination with the State Emergency Response Team.

Residents and visitors are reminded that protective boom is used to deflect heavy oil product away from sensitive coastlines. However, it is not effective in preventing tar balls from washing ashore. Tar balls may continue to wash up on Florida's Northwest Gulf coast in the coming weeks and cleanup teams will continue to respond as necessary.

Though Florida's emergency response officials will adjust staffing and resources based on current needs, they will maintain the ability to either increase or further reduce operations as necessary. All available response and cleanup resources remain in the areas of operation and can be redeployed immediately to address any reports identified by reconnaissance or other methods.

For more information on Florida's response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, visit www.deepwaterhorizonflorida.com, follow www.Twitter.com/FLDEPalert or call the Florida Oil Spill Information Line at 888-337-3569.

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