

“It’s crucial that we enhance communications, resource allocation, and overall responsiveness if a disaster of this magnitude happens again,” Bilirakis said. “We have to make sure DHS is taking the right steps to enhance their efforts so it is better prepared for these situations.”

Bilirakis also requested the hearing in order to examine whether the Coast Guard, who was involved in response efforts from the start of the spill, has sufficient resources to respond to this type of disaster while maintaining its other homeland security duties.

“If the Coast Guard needs additional resources, we want to make sure they can receive them,” Bilirakis said. “Response to a disaster like this relies on a lot of fast-acting teamwork, so I wanted to hear about the lessons DHS has learned with regards to communicating with stakeholders in state and local governments.”

Witnesses included actor Kevin Costner, Owner of Ocean Therapy Solutions; Craig P. Taffaro, Jr., President, St. Bernard Parish Government; William O. Jenkins, Jr., Director, Homeland Security and Justice Issues, Government Accountability Office; Richard L. Skinner, Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security; RADM. Peter Neffenger, Deputy National Incident Commander, Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Response; and Richard M. Chávez, Acting Director, Operations Coordination and Planning, Department of Homeland Security.

Costner is touting an \$895 million plan for deploying vessels to harvest floating oil during future spills. The vessels would include technology that would separate oil and water. It would purify the water and capture the crude in storage tanks.