



LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

"...conserving our natural resources and your right to enjoy them."



SUBJECT: CONTAMINATION IN FISH AROUND OFFSHORE OIL RIGS

WHEREAS, the Gulf of Mexico, and Louisiana offshore waters in particular, are renowned for the outstanding angling found around energy production facilities (rigs), and

WHEREAS, "rig fishing" supports a multi-million dollar industry in Louisiana, and

WHEREAS, anglers go to the rigs to catch snapper, cobia, amberjack, mackerel and other species that congregate around the structures, for home consumption, and

WHEREAS, the oil/gas industry has reaped the public relations benefits associated with the outstanding fishing opportunities in the vicinity of the offshore platforms, and

WHEREAS, sampling data collected at three offshore platforms has demonstrated elevated mercury levels in the sediment which may be the result of the discharge of waste drilling fluids into the waters beneath the rigs by rig operators, and

WHEREAS, the discharge of contaminants from energy production platforms is contrary to proper stewardship of our natural resources and an example of poor corporate citizenship, and

WHEREAS, if there is a health risk in consuming rig fish, the popularity of "rig fishing" and the economy this activity supports will decline, as will Louisiana's reputation as an offshore fishing destination, and

WHEREAS, "rig fishing" is a tradition for many Louisiana anglers that would be a tragedy to lose due to the risk of consuming fish contaminated by rig discharges; a risk that could be avoided by proper management of rig waste.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) urges the oil and gas industry operating in the Gulf of Mexico to take steps to minimize the release of mercury and other toxic chemicals that could potentially contaminate fish and pose a health threat to humans and marine life.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LWF hereby requests a copy of each scientific study referenced in response to this issue from the Minerals Management Service (MMS) dated January 14, 2002, as well as the data cited by the MMS or its contractors on the topic of mercury in sediments and fish tissue.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LWF urges and requests that the MMS conduct a thorough assessment of mercury in sediments, sessile benthic organisms, and fish at a statistically valid sample of production platforms and publish the results within two years.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, if the aforementioned study does not conclusively demonstrate that mercury from drilling fluids is NOT accumulated in sediments and marine organisms, the LWF urges that the discharge of all waste drilling fluids be halted.

Adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation in convention assembled, 3 March 2002, in Marksville, Louisiana.