

Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28) joined House colleagues in asking BP not to award dividend payments or move forward with an expensive advertising campaign until more work is done to contain the leaking oil.

In a letter to BP Chief Executive Officer Tony Hayward, Slaughter and other members of Congress said that the oil company should not divert resources to pay dividends with such an urgent environmental disaster unfolding in the Gulf of Mexico. Slaughter joined with Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) and 31 other members of Congress.

"It's disheartening to see BP spend millions on advertising and image consultants when they still have no idea how much oil is spewing into the Gulf," Slaughter said. "Their first priority should be cleaning up the mess they've made and only then should they send out dividend checks and film TV commercials."

Members signing the letter as of early this afternoon included: Reps. Welch, Ed Markey, Lois Capps, John Hall, Paul Tonko, Bill Delahunt, Chris Van Hollen, Steven Rothman, Jim Langevin, Tim Bishop, Raul Grijalva, James McGovern, Maurice Hinchey, Charlie Melancon, Betty Sutton, Pete Stark, Frank Pallone, Doris O. Matsui, Jan Schakowsky, Jared Polis, Mazie Hirono, Steve Israel, Russ Carnahan, Jackie Speier, Chet Edwards, John Olver, Rush Holt, Dennis Cardoza, Earl Pomeroy, Keith Ellison, and Mike Michaud.

A copy of the letter is below:

Tony Hayward
Chief Executive Officer
BP
1 St James's Square
London
SW1Y 4PD

Dear Mr. Hayward,

As BP presides over one of the greatest environmental and economic catastrophes of our time, we find it troubling that your company plans to divert financial resources to shareholder dividends and slick marketing campaigns.

Even as oil threatens to flow into the Gulf of Mexico for months to come, press reports indicate that you hope to distribute \$10 billion in dividends to shareholders before the full cost of this devastating oil spill is known. At the same time, your company has launched an aggressive public relations campaign, with full page ads in major newspapers and a reported \$50 million television blitz.

We urge you to halt your planned dividend payout and cancel your advertising campaign until you have done the hard work of capping the well, cleaning up the Gulf Coast and making whole those whose very livelihoods are threatened by this catastrophe. Not a moment before then should you return to business as usual.

Sincerely,