

Letter: BP wants to pay real claims

June 27, 2013

For the past three years, BP has worked with the people of the Gulf to help restore the region's environment and economy. It's been a big job, and we've tried to do the right thing and honor our commitments.

So far, we've paid \$14 billion in response and cleanup costs and more than 300,000 claims totalling \$11 billion for spill-related losses. And we're not done yet. Last year, we signed an agreement to compensate the vast majority of remaining individuals and businesses with legitimate claims related to the Gulf spill.

Unfortunately, that settlement has been misinterpreted. We respectfully disagree with that interpretation, which is allowing trial lawyers to file fictitious or inflated claims that could ultimately cost billions of dollars.

The prospect of such awards has ignited a feeding frenzy among plaintiffs' lawyers. Brazen ads assure potential claimants that BP will be forced to pay them "even if your revenue increase(d)" or "even if losses are unrelated to the oil spill."

Whatever you may think about BP, we can all agree that it's wrong for anyone to take money they don't deserve. We should also be able to agree that the process for paying claims must be conducted with integrity. Anything less is a disservice to the people of the Gulf playing by the rules — commercial fishermen, restaurant and hotel owners, and other hard-working people who've filed legitimate claims for real losses. They deserve to know that the process for administering claims is fair and honest.

We are equally concerned about a troubling allegation of unethical and potentially criminal behavior within the claims facility. We strongly believe that an independent investigation and a comprehensive and public audit of the facility by a reputable national accounting firm are needed.

A claims system that does not have assurances of integrity does a disservice to our employees and contractors, who depend on BP to support their families, and to our shareholders, who enable us to provide energy and create jobs in America. Every dollar paid for a fictitious claim is a dollar BP will no longer have available to invest in America, where we currently support nearly 250,000 jobs. BP is pursuing legal remedies to restore fairness to the claims process. We have appealed the misinterpretation of the settlement agreement to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit, where oral argument is scheduled for early July.

Some may say we're backing away from our commitments. That is simply not true. As our actions over the past three years demonstrate, BP remains committed to paying legitimate claims. All we ask is that compensation go to people who actually suffered losses, and that the process for paying claims be conducted with integrity. That's what's called for under the law and our settlement.

John C. Mingé, chairman and president

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