WASHINGTON. D.C. – House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member Darrell Issa (R-CA) **sent a letter today** to Interior Secretary Ken Salazar regarding the Committee's investigation into "whether the Interior Department's Minerals Management Service (MMS), which oversees offshore drilling activity, has promulgated regulations necessary to ensure the safety and operability of vessels drilling in the Gulf of Mexico" and whether "MMS improperly awarded safety certifications to BP, Transocean, and the *Deepwater Horizon* rig."

"Reports indicate that the *Deepwater Horizon* appears to have had a faulty 'dead man' shut-off switch which, if functioning properly, could have averted this massive spill," Issa wrote. "The malfunctioning 'failsafe' device raises serious questions about any safety inspections or audits conducted by MMS or third parties during the certification process. This, in turn, casts serious doubt upon any safety awards that MMS may have granted to BP and/or Transocean within the past year."

Issa added, “The American people also have aright to know whether the federal government possessed and implemented an appropriate emergency response plan to mitigate this disaster. Though U.S. Coast Guard assets quickly arrive on-scene to assist with the fire and rescue effort, there appears to have been a delay in dispatching significant resources to assist in the environmental clean-up.”

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