

Foreword

When President Obama created the National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling he instructed the Commission to “examine the relevant facts and circumstances concerning the root causes of the *Deepwater Horizon* oil disaster.” This Chief Counsel’s Report is the result of an extraordinary effort to carry out that mission. It is essential reading for anyone looking to extract the lessons of Macondo and avoid a repeat of that terrible tragedy.

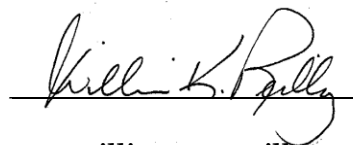
Notwithstanding demanding time constraints, the Commission’s Chief Counsel Fred Bartlit and his investigative team have provided the most comprehensive, coherent, and detailed account of the events leading up to the blowout and explosion. The wealth of material presented here offers new details and documentation in support of the Commission’s final report, *Deep Water: The Gulf Oil Disaster and the Future of Offshore Drilling*, released on January 11, 2011.

What the investigation makes clear, above all else, is that management failures, not mechanical failings, were the ultimate source of the disaster. In clear, precise, and unflinching detail, this Report lays out the confusion, lack of communication, disorganization, and inattention to crucial safety issues and test results that led to the deaths of 11 men and the largest offshore oil spill in our nation’s history.

The Chief Counsel’s efforts were integral to the Commission’s deliberations and findings. For that reason, this report is an important companion to the full report of the Commission. It stands on its own as well—a durable contribution to our understanding of the importance of responsible management systems and state-of-the-art practices, and the dire consequences when they fail.



Senator Bob Graham
Commission Co-Chair



William K. Reilly
Commission Co-Chair