

## aLanguageBank TRANSCRIPT for FEMA

TITLE: N/A

TOPIC (if needed): Federal Response to Hurricane Dolly

DATE: July 24, 2008

LENGTH: 13 minutes and 26 seconds

PARTICIPANTS: Unidentified Female 1  
Unidentified Male 1

ABBREVIATIONS: [U/I] = Unintelligible  
[PH] = Phonetic Spelling

### Speaker

### Transcription

Bill Bryan:

Good morning. On behalf of the Secretary of Energy, I first want to extend my offer of sincere sympathies to all those who have suffered any losses during the storm or anything caused by the storm, and please be assured that the Department of Energy's doing all we can to assist the state of Texas and the local communities in the restoration efforts. The Department of Energy is responsible for coordinating with the energy sector to prepare for and mitigate the effects of any man made or natural disasters. The Department deployed a team of dedicated emergency responders to Texas ahead of the storm and are now staffing shifts at FEMA's coordination center in Denton, Texas. Personnel have been working closely with FEMA to maintain awareness and assist in recovery and restoration operations.

The Department is also issuing daily situation reports on the status of energy infrastructure. Now I would like to shift to the impacts. Overall, Hurricane Dolly's had a minimal impact on the energy infrastructure regionally and nationally. However, locally, as early as 10 o'clock this morning, with little over an hour ago, 236,000 customers are still without electric power. There are 26 transmission lines currently out of service. There are far more distribution lines, and that . . . those totals are still being assessed. Fortunately a majority of off-shore oil and natural gas production facilities in the Gulf of Mexico have not been impacted by the storm. Yesterday the Minerals Management Service within the Department of Interior reported that natural gas production in the Gulf has been shut in at about a rate of 8% of Gulf off-shore production, now that's about 2% or less than 2% nationally. With respect to oil production, MMS reported 58,000 barrels per day of Gulf crude production has been shut in, which equates to about 4.5% of Gulf production or 1% nationally. A total of 62 new production platforms or 8.5% of the Gulf's 717 man made platforms have been evacuated. The Gulf of Mexico accounts for about 25% of U.S. crude oil production and 15% of natural gas production. The stoppage of ship traffic due to port closures from the Houston ship channel to the Port of Corpus

Christi have caused Valero's refineries at Houston and Port Arthur to reduce production. Early reports indicate that refineries in Corpus Christi have been unaffected by the storm. As soon as conditions improve, ports will reopen and shipping will resume, and the Coast Guard will address that issue when they get here to the platform. Regarding restoration efforts, my staff are in close contact with the Texas Public Utilities Commission, and with the American Electric Power of Texas regarding any restoration efforts. AEP crews will be assessing damage as the storm moves out of the area. AEP Texas reports that there are 1,000 line and service crew members; 250 tree trimmers; and 100 damage assessors who have been called upon from the AEP and of course, neighboring utilities will assist in the power restoration once the Tropical Storm Dolly leaves the area. This concludes my prepared remarks and will be taking questions after the other opening comments.

RADMIN. Sally Brice-O'Hara

Good morning, I'm Rear Admiral Sally Brice-O'Hara the Deputy Commandant for operations with the U.S. Coast Guard, and certainly I will echo what has been previously been said: we are very concerned about safety, of life and property. We are focused on getting commercial shipping back in safe shipping as

soon as possible, but there are a few steps that we have to go through first to insure that all hazards to navigation have been removed and that we know that there are not any underwater obstructions that would be a threat to the vessels traveling on the waterways. The Coast Guard currently has 4 aircraft up assessing and right now I don't have any feedback from that. They were still flying at the time I left to come to this briefing, and certainly we will make imagery available as soon as we have that. The impacted areas the Port of Brownsville, the Port of Corpus Christi and the Victoria Barge Canal, we have many vessels that sheltered in the Port, 55 in Brownsville 4 in Corpus Christi, and 11 in the Victoria Barge Canal and as soon we work through those assessments to insure the safety of shipping, then we'll let that process start back into service. At this time, we're working very closely with key partners at the state, local, and federal levels. The Army Corps of Engineers and NOA will be instrumental in helping us with the channel surveys. We will also work with the Corpus Christi Harbor Pilots Association and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterways Association, and we will focus on, as I mentioned earlier, the Port of Brownsville, the Corpus Christi Shipping Channel, and the Port Isabella Causeway. We'll be underway today starting those assessments. I don't know how

long it will take to work through that, but certainly we will work very expeditiously, but again, I want to emphasize the safety is going to be paramount before we allow any commercial shipping to resume. I will be happy to answer any of your questions when we get to that period.

Armond Mascelli:

Good morning, my name is Armond Mascelli. I'm Vice President of Disaster Operations for the Red Cross. Just a few items: we're in the process this morning started at daybreak to move our emergency response vehicles that we had staged, some in San Antonio, Texas, others in Corpus Christi, and to go to the affected border counties. Latest reports they're on site, and we expect to have them continue throughout the day. Second activities we'll work with our partners, in particular the Southern Baptists. We're looking at setting up kitchens to do long term feeding, looking at primarily the towns of Harlingen, Brownsville, and McAllen. Third issue is that we're also bringing in, what we call bulk distribution supplies. These are things like cleanup kits, rakes, shovels, tarps and comfort kits that people that need in terms of going back and making their homes livable again. We're also doing damage assessment. It's following the normal pattern. We have wind damage primarily on the coastal area,

power outages mentioned and also pond and spot flooding in a number of areas. We're unsure of the degree of flooding is at this point. The rain system continues to go on, and it may get . . . we may have some more as the storm continues to move out. In terms of people, in addition to the local chapter people we have in south Texas, we brought in 230 additional people to be deployed, and also we're bringing in another 80 people as activities get up and running. So that concludes my brief and if you have any questions I'd be happy to answer to them. Thank you.

Bill Irwin:

Good morning, my name is Bill Irwin with the Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps of Engineers is one of the agencies that supports FEMA under the National Response Framework, and the Corps is responsible for public works and engineering assistance. First of all, we had a 10 o'clock call with the International Boundary and Water Commission regarding their levee system along the Rio Grande River, and I'm pleased to report that the Commission has not experienced any problems with the flood control structures, and they don't anticipate any issues as the river rises over the next few days. For Hurricane Dolly, the Corps of Engineers is to receive mission assignments

from FEMA to be prepared to provide assistance such as debris management, commodities management which includes bottled water, temporary emergency power which is generators to critical facilities, and temporary roofing to homes that have been damaged by the winds. Texas has a very robust emergency management system, and we don't anticipate any unmet needs, but we have the teams and resources in place in case those requirements emerge. Thank you.

Unidentified Female1: All right, thank you. That concludes our briefing section, and now if there are any questions we'd be happy to take them.

Unidentified Male 1: Yeah I just have this question: do you have an idea of how many people are made homeless and are using shelters?

Armond Mascelli: We don't have figures on how many are homeless. We know the shelter count this morning was a little over 3,000. Now that's a combination of people who are homeless but also people that had to leave their homes that would eventually be able to get back in again. It's going to take about a day or two to get some type of accurate assessment in terms of what the full impact is.

Unidentified Male 2: But 3,000 people in all the shelters?

Bill Bryan: Yes.

Unidentified Male 2: Okay.

Unidentified Female2: I was wondering if you guys could talk a little bit more about the seizures that happened yesterday of illegal immigrants. I was wondering if you had any more information on that.

Unidentified Female1: We can refer you to Customs and Border Protection for that.

Unidentified Female2: Okay.

Unidentified Female1: Any other questions? Jeff:

Jeff: Yeah, I want to ask about the Intracoastal Waterway and the Rear Admiral yesterday was saying it was closed, it was closed as soon as this Hurricane lands. Is it reopened or . . .

RADMIN. Sally Brice-O'Hara: No the waterway has not opened yet. We want to be very measured and thorough in the assessment of any debris or

underwater problem that would impact the safety of any vessels that would be transiting that waterway. So as I mentioned, we'll work very carefully with our other partners to assure a thorough full assessment before we open the waterway. That said, we understand that there's great pressure to get the ports and the waterways, the shipping channels back open and so we are working through this expeditiously with our port partners. I would also like to comment about search and rescue, there's always that concern about the safety of people. In this case we had quite a bit of warning that Hurricane Dolly was on its way. We had several SRT's in advance of the storm. We had one call for assistance in advance of the storm. Subsequent to that, we have not had any requests for search and rescue assistance by the Coast Guard, but as I mentioned, our flights are still out and I don't know yet whether they've come across something in the course of their overhead assessments and of course we have ground teams that are moving as well.

Unidentified Female3: On the water rescue that took place, could you tell me where that was?

RADMIN. Sally Brice-O'Hara: That was off the south Texas coast, very close to the Mexico

border and it was a fishing vessel that just needed some assistance coming into port. We were very concerned about the shrimpers. We are about a week into the shrimp season, and we're very concerned that those boats might get themselves into trouble, but again, I think our preventive message, the SRT's that were flown warning shipping that the storm was coming and to act accordingly must have worked well because we have no indication that there are any problems. And many of them went back into the Mexico port safely.

Unidentified Male2: Is there any count on terms of injuries? There are no reports of deaths.

Bill Bryan: Not that I'm aware of at this point.

Unidentified Male2: Any injuries? Do you have a count on that?

Bill Bryan: We can get back to you on that. Any more questions?

Unidentified Male3: I'm going to ask one. I want to ask: the Department of Energy said that Valero had had some problems because of the Intracoastal Waterways shut down. Are there any other

companies that have had reduced production that you can talk about?

Bill Bryan:

First let me introduce myself, after seeing my colleagues I forgot to mention my name. I am Bill Bryan, Deputy Assistant Secretary within the Department of Energy with the responsibility for infrastructure security and energy restoration. And in direct answer to your question, the only reports we have right now are the Valero's been impacted, certainly out of those 62 platforms that have been evacuated, other companies were all nested in that, and were shut in. They know when the storm is coming, the models and predictions that we provide, they know if they're going to be in that range of the 75-100% impact zone or if they're going to be in the 0-25% impact zone. So they do their due diligence to look at the situation and decide if they're going to keep folks out of the platforms or shut them down, and so several companies were involved in that process. So to that degree, yes, I mean they batten down the hatches and let the storm pass before they get in and do their restoration and assessment if necessary.

Unidentified Male3:

Do you have an idea of who those companies are?

Bill Brian: Off the top of my head, I would have to . . . those 62 platforms I don't, but we can certainly get back to you with that.

Unidentified Male1: Are there any further questions? Well thank you very much for coming and if there are no more questions that concludes our briefing for today. Thank you very much.