

United States Senate

May 13, 2021

COMMITTEES
APPROPRIATIONS
BANKING, HOUSING, AND
URBAN AFFAIRS
BUDGET
JUDICIARY
SMALL BUSINESS AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Senate Commerce, Science
and Transportation Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Senate Commerce, Science,
and Transportation Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Murphy
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Homeland Security
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Homeland Security
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Colleagues,

I write today requesting an oversight hearing in the relevant authorizing committee and appropriations subcommittee on the federal response to the SEACOR Power capsizing in the Gulf of Mexico. The U.S. Coast Guard's (USCG) response and decisions made by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) during search and rescue operations warrant the immediate attention and proper oversight of the U.S. Senate.

On April 13, 2021, a 129-foot commercial lift boat, the SEACOR Power, capsized in the Gulf of Mexico. The tragedy led to the untimely deaths of at least 6 crewmembers while 7 other crewmembers remain missing. Salvage operations are still underway. It is clear that communication between the vessel operator and crewmember families was all too infrequent during search and rescue operations and that Congress must close gaps in existing vessel response plan regulations. Details of the immediate response from the USCG and subsequent search and rescue efforts deserve to be heard on the record in a Congressional setting. Testimony from SEACOR Marine, the operator of the SEACOR Power, will help clarify why the lift boat was traveling through such severe weather in the first place.

The capsizing of the SEACOR Power is the worst disaster to strike the Gulf Coast since the Deepwater Horizon blowout in 2010. We must ensure the federal response was timely and adequate. While the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is investigating this event, their full report likely won't be ready until late next year. There is an urgent need for clarity as loved ones of the lost crewmembers desperately seek answers. I stand ready to support all efforts to conduct oversight hearings in the relevant authorizing committee and appropriations subcommittee. Thank you all for your consideration.

Sincerely,



John Kennedy
U.S. Senate