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### Barbara Lee joins Bay Area Contingent in Calling for Independent Inquiry into Oil Spill

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(Oakland, CA) – Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-Oakland) on Monday joined a number of congressional leaders who attended a hearing at the Presidio on Monday in calling for a thorough investigation into the chain of events that led to massive oil spill into the San Francisco Bay by the Cosco Busan on November 7.

Congresswoman Lee issued this statement following the three-hour congressional hearing:

"As you all know, the Port of Oakland, where this vessel departed from, is in my district just across the Bay. I am deeply disturbed by this incident for a number of reasons. I'm concerned by the chain of events that led to the initial collision and the oil spill. I'm concerned about the timeliness of the initial incident response and the extent of notification and involvement of city and local governments in the cleanup process.

But I'm especially concerned about the impact the oil spill has had on our environment and the wildlife, the health of the Bay and the people whose economic livelihood depends on it. And I'm concerned not just because of what I've read and heard about this incident, but also about the potential for this to happen again.

In many ways, ship and container vessel traffic throughout the Bay Area is a lifeblood for our region and the nation. Oakland and other ports have sought to do their part to work with the business, labor and environmental community and ensure that our environmental principles are not compromised for economic benefit.

But the fact is that container traffic is only expected to increase in the future as our population and our economy expands. So what are the steps we can take now, at the federal and state level to ensure that we have the right systems in place to deal with it?

For me, that means requiring on the front end, strong environmental and safety standards for all container vessel traffic, whether out in the Bay or anchored at port.

We should seriously explore the need for requiring double hulls on all containers vessels entering our ports. We should re-examine our regional vessel traffic system to more aggressively prevent collisions.

We should work with the pilots to ensure they have the resources they need to navigate ships correctly, and if need be, impose new requirements on international vessels that wish to dock at our ports. We need to sharpen our incident response process, to better coordinate local, state, and federal efforts to prepare and train for any situation that might occur.

And locally we should ensure that city governments in regions with container vessel traffic have the tools and resources necessary to respond and cleanup oil spills in their jurisdictions as quickly as possible. Inevitably this incident will take time to investigate. But that should not delay our efforts to learn from it and make sure that it never happens again."

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