

The Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico has brought new attention to the Minerals Management Service, the obscure branch of the Department of Interior responsible for overseeing offshore oil and gas production. MMS has been on the hot seat together with BP, Transocean, and Halliburton as Congressional committees and others have begun to look at the combination of technical and regulatory failings that allowed this human and environmental tragedy.

The initial response from the administration has been positive — a commitment to split MMS into pieces, in the hope that the regulatory and enforcement arm can be more independent of the arm responsible for leasing federal lands for offshore development and collecting the resulting revenues. While it's a positive start, the administration's plan doesn't go deep enough to reform an agency that has been thoroughly captured by the industry its expected to regulate. In [an op-ed published today in the Los Angeles Times](#), Eric and I explain why the plan as so far explained is insufficient and what more needs to be done.