



The U.S. government disclosed Friday it is investigating whether a Transocean worker's handling of a key piece of evidence in the Gulf oil spill probe affected the integrity of the examination of the device.

Michael Bromwich, director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement, said in a letter to U.S. Rep. Ed Markey that his investigators have questioned workers from various government agencies and a Norwegian firm the government hired to test the failed blowout preventer.

While no conclusions have been reached, Bromwich said that firm, Det Norske Veritas or DNV, admitted it was at fault for not disclosing to certain BOEMRE officials the Transocean worker's role in the forensic work. He said that while he currently doesn't believe testing on the device was compromised, the probe continues.

The 300-ton device that failed to stop the oil spill is still being tested in New Orleans.

Bromwich said his agency is committed to ensuring the integrity of the testing and the broader investigation by a joint U.S. Coast Guard-BOEMRE panel looking into the circumstances of the April 20, 2010, rig explosion off Louisiana. The blast killed 11 workers and led to 200 million gallons of oil spewing from a well a mile beneath the Gulf of Mexico.

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