

**U.S.-RUSSIA OIL SPILL PREVENTION AND RESPONSE WORKSHOP  
MOSCOW, RUSSIAN FEDERATION  
DECEMBER 4, 2003**

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen, Deputy Minister Gordeev, Ambassador Vershbow. It is a great pleasure to represent the United States Department of Energy at this workshop on oil spill prevention and response. I would like to extend to my thanks to Deputy Minister Gordeev and his staff for coordinating this event and for helping to bring together so many Russian agencies and Russian companies.

This workshop is addressing an issue of increasing importance worldwide, as oil transportation, on both land and sea, is viewed as presenting a risk to other economic activities and to the health and safety of populations along transportation corridors.

The United States is pleased to be partners with the Russian Federation in a dialogue to address how we can work together to minimize these risks.

The dialogue is made stronger by the inclusion of private sector companies from both our countries and representatives from key international organizations and industry associations that have been concerned with the environmental impact of oil transportation for many years.

We are also pleased to have representatives from Finland, Norway, and other interested countries, attend this meeting. Oil is oblivious to national boundaries and a spill in international waters can involve several countries. Their participation will strengthen the exchange of information on this issue.

This is the first meeting to be organized since we agreed to establish this dialogue in March. It fulfills the vision of Energy Minister Yusufov and Energy Secretary Abraham. The high level of participation on the Russian side is eloquent testimony to the Russian government's commitment to respond to the environmental issues associated with oil transport and to achieve the goals that govern our work program.

Over the next two years we will increase understanding of international best practices in oil spill prevention and response, encourage increased participation international dialogues on the broad range of environmental activities associated with oil production and transport, engage the private sector on practical approaches to minimize risk, and encourage industrial activities that support environmentally responsible transport.

This is an important issue – important to governments because should a spill happen, all sectors of society look to government to ensure an effective response, to the private sector because of the enormous costs that are incurred when a spill happens, important to citizens because of the potential for economic and commercial loss and the impact on health safety. We are pleased that we have come together to work jointly on this issue.

I look forward to the presentations to day and tomorrow and our future work together in partnership with the Russian Federation. Thank you.