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STATEMENTS REGARDING THE INDICTMENT OF MIKAL WATTS

Statement of Robert McDuff, Attorney for Mikal Watts

Nearly two years after mega-corporation BP sued attorney Mikal Watts as part of its strategy to delay paying victims of its 2010 Gulf oil spill, the federal government has now joined BP by launching a similar attack on Mr. Watts, claiming that BP itself somehow was a victim of his actions. This attack has come in the form of an indictment against Mr. Watts charging federal crimes. We recently were informed by the government of that indictment, which is presently under seal, but will be unsealed later this month. Contrary to the allegations of the indictment, and the claims of BP, Mr. Watts did not commit any crimes.

A lawyer who has devoted his professional life to representing the victims of corporate wrongdoing, Mikal Watts and his staff spent thousands of hours and extensive resources to uncovering the misdeeds of BP that led to the 2010 oil spill and that damaged the lives of countless numbers of people in the Gulf states. His efforts in working on this case helped all of those injured by the oil spill, whether they were represented by him or by other lawyers. Although he has been paid no money in the BP cases, Mr. Watts is proud of the work he did to help the people affected by BP's irresponsible and criminal conduct.

BP's allegations against Mr. Watts in its lawsuit, which apparently are being recycled in this new indictment, are that he knowingly stole the identities of people by claiming that he represented them in the oil spill case when he didn't. Contrary to those allegations, Mr. Watts did not steal anyone's identity. When he was given the names and information of thousands of people and told they wanted relief from the damage inflicted by BP and wanted to join the mass tort lawsuits being filed against BP, he believed they were real people who had suffered real injuries. Although it later turned out that Mr. Watts had been provided with inaccurate information, and that some of these people had never authorized him to represent them, Mr. Watts was not aware of that when he filed these lawsuits against BP in order to protect the interests of the fishermen of the Gulf.

Mr. Watts and his law firm sent people regular updates regarding the status of the oil spill litigation. Only a small percentage contacted him to say they had never intended to sign up with him, and he promptly stopped making submissions for those who did. With respect to the remainder, he made appropriate filings to preserve their rights. Once a partial settlement was reached, Mr. Watts informed these people of the settlement and

for those who sent in paperwork to apply for the settlement, Mr. Watts forwarded their materials to the Special Master in charge of the settlement. He never created any phony documents in order for people to qualify for the settlement. Instead, he and his staff devoted extensive time and resources to preserving and protecting the rights of all people injured by BP's oil spill.

Far from the picture painted by BP, and now the federal government, Mr. Watts' actions in the BP case were taken in good faith in an effort to help those who he believed were real people who had suffered real injuries. Lawyers from around the country who worked with Mr. Watts know that he worked extremely hard, reviewing countless documents, consulting with engineers and scientists, deposing senior BP officials and other witnesses, preparing massive evidence outlines, and working extremely hard to achieve fair compensation for all of those injured by the oil spill, not just the ones who he believed he was representing. .

Since 2000, BP has pled guilty to felonies relating to three different incidents of gross corporate malfeasance: its pipeline spill in Alaska, an explosion killing 15 men in its Texas City refinery, and the Gulf Coast oil spill. On the Gulf oil spill alone, BP pled guilty to 14 felony crimes. Its actions led to the senseless deaths of 11 people working on BP's oil rig, extensive environmental damage, and severe disruption of the lives and livelihoods of many thousands of people. In contrast to BP's felonious conduct, the evidence will show that Mr. Watts did not do the things of which he is accused.

Statement of Mikal Watts

After years of waiting, I will now finally have my day in court. I look forward to a speedy trial and the opportunity to prove to a jury that I am not guilty of any crimes. I have spent my professional life working hard to protect the rights of those victimized by corporations like BP. When this trial is over, I look forward to getting back on the job, and to working for years to come.