

TTU Professor to testify in Washington about BP oil spill - KCBD, NewsChannel 11 Lubbock |

LUBBOCK, TX (KCBD) ??? A Texas Tech Professor prepares to head to Washington DC this week where he will testify before a senate committee about the BP oil spill.

Environmental and Human Health director Ron Kendall is the go to guy in Lubbock for expert information on the Gulf oil spill. After receiving a letter from the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works he will be the lead witness out of four scientists across the nation to testify on dispersants being used on the oil.

"We're very concerned about the exposure of organisms to oil dispersant mixtures and subsequently release of toxin," Kendall said.

Dispersants like Corexix 9500 do not change the volume of oil in the water; instead it breaks the oil into smaller droplets spreading it over a wider area.

"There have been a lot of questions and concerns, could these smaller droplets release the toxic constituents of oil quicker into the water column," he said.

Since the beginning of the oil spill, more than 1.8 million gallons of dispersants have been sprayed on the surface and pumped underwater.

"The discussion was made to use it and use it at a volume that we've never used before," Kendall said.

"This deep water dispersant is essentially an ecological experiment. We have no experience in deep water environment as to how these dispersants will be impacting aquatic life."

Right now, scientists are conducting multiple experiments to see how the oil and dispersants used may hurt wildlife, including some endangered species. Kendall's and the other scientist's research will be presented before the committee on Wednesday.

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