

[Bob Kinzel, VPR News](#)

(Host) Congressman Peter Welch was one of the members of the House to grill the President of BP at Thursday's special hearing.

Welch suggested that the BP chief might consider resigning his post, after mishandling the massive oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

VPR's Bob Kinzel reports:

(Kinzel) BP President Tony Hayward's appearance at the House Energy and Oversight committee was the first time that he's testified in front of a Congressional panel since the oil spill occurred more than 8 weeks ago.

Welch is a member of the committee. At times, he sounded like a prosecutor at a trial laying the ground work to put evidence into the official legal record.

Welch wanted to know if it's true that BP used short cuts for the drilling operation at the deep water oil facility that exploded and Hayward responded:

(Welch) "I'll leave out motivation but there was a choice of more casing centralizers or fewer casing centralizers. More cost more, fewer cost less. Which choice did BP make at the Deep Water Horizon?"

(Hayward)"The decision taken by the engineering team, at the time which was a technical judgment was to use fewer centralizers rather than more it is not always true that more is better."

(Kinzel) Welch wondered if Hayward should resign because under his watch BP has been fined more than \$300 million for various safety violations before the recent spill. Welch also says BP hasn't been forthright about the amount of oil leaking into the Gulf of Mexico:

(Welch) Does that person who's presided over almost \$100 billion in loss of shareholder value and the suspension of a \$10 billion annual dividend, who's lost the confidence of shareholders and regulators and - most importantly - the families and citizens of the Gulf, does that person enjoy the confidence necessary to continue acting as CEO or is it time for that CEO to resign?"

(Hayward) "I'm focused on the response. I'm focused on trying to eliminate the leak, trying to contain the oil on the surface and defend the beaches and to clean up the spill and to restore the lives of the people on the Gulf Coast."

(Kinzel) Welch was one of the first members of Congress to urge BP to suspend its dividend payments to stockholders and he says he's pleased that the company has agreed to take that step.

For VPR News, I'm Bob Kinzel in Montpelier.