

CONGRESS THINKS BP COMMISSION NEEDS SUBPOENA POWER, TOO

A bunch of hippie members of Congress noticed the same thing about Obama's BP Commission that I noticed: it lacks subpoena power.

So Lois Capps and Ed Markey in the House and Jeanne Shaheen and several of her colleagues are pushing legislation to give the Commission subpoena power.

U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), along with nine Senate colleagues, today introduced legislation to grant subpoena power to the bipartisan National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling, which President Obama created by executive order on May 22. Congress has previously granted subpoena power to presidential commissions investigating national crises, including the Warren Commission and the Three Mile Island Commission. Joining Shaheen on this legislation are Senators John Kerry (D-MA), Byron Dorgan (D-ND), Patty Murray (D-WA), Mary Landrieu (D-LA), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Bob Casey (D-PA), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Mark Begich (D-AK), and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY). The Senators strongly believe that the BP Commission must have subpoena power to ensure access to all the evidence it needs to undertake a complete investigation on the causes of the spill and make meaningful recommendations on how to prevent similar disasters. Today, Representatives Lois Capps (D-CA) and Ed Markey (D-MA) plan to introduce similar legislation in the House.

Here's the House version of the bill.

Now, I've actually been told that Obama, by himself, couldn't give the commission subpoena power—I'm trying to clarify that.

I'm still not entirely convinced this won't be a whitewash designed to enable future drilling in any case. But subpoena power sure would help.