

10 YEARS AFTER BP'S DEEPWATER HORIZON OIL SPILL TRUMP'S ACTIONS ARE INCREASING OFFSHORE DRILLING RISKS

10 YEARS AGO, THE BP DEEPWATER HORIZON EXPLODED AND STARTED A MASSIVE OIL SPILL INTO THE GULF OF MEXICO. THIS WAS ONE OF THE WORST OIL DISASTERS IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD – IT KILLED 11 WORKERS, INJURED MANY OTHERS, IMPACTED WILDLIFE AND COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS, AND CRIPPLED THE REGION'S ECONOMY. A DECADE AFTER THIS TRAGEDY, PRESIDENT TRUMP IS IGNORING THE LESSONS LEARNED IN THE WAKE OF THE DISASTER, INCLUDING WEAKENING SAFETY RULES AND LETTING THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY ONCE AGAIN CALL THE SHOTS.

WHEN: The disaster happened on April 20, 2010, and the well leaked for 87 days, until July 15, 2010.

WHERE: Gulf of Mexico; about 41 miles off the coast of Louisiana.

RESPONSIBLE COMPANIES: BP (owned the lease), Transocean (owned and operated the drilling rig), Halliburton (provided oilfield/drilling services).

CAUSES: Cement intended to seal the well failed, leading to a blowout, which caused an explosion on the drilling rig; the failure of the blowout preventer to cut the drill pipe led to the 87-day leak. A series of mistakes made by all three companies, technological malfunctions, and systemic failures of regulatory oversight and risk management caused the spill.

HUMAN IMPACTS: 11 workers were killed, and 17 others were injured.

AMOUNT OF OIL LEAKED: It was difficult to determine the exact flowrate over the course of the entire leak, and government agencies, independent experts, and BP came to different conclusions ranging roughly between 3 million and 5 million barrels of oil. In January 2015, after reviewing all the evidence presented at the trial, a federal court found that the 4 million barrels of oil (around 168 million gallons) leaked into the ocean from the well. This oil contaminated more than 1,000 miles of Gulf coastline, 1,200 square miles of the ocean floor, and close to 70,000 square miles of surface water.

BP's DEEPWATER HORIZON OIL SPILL COMPARED TO OTHER SPILLS: The oil spill was the largest in U.S. history – far larger than the Santa Barbara spill in 1969 (80,000 barrels) and the Exxon Valdez spill in 1989 (260,000 barrels). The BP spill is also the largest accidental spill in world history.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTIONS: Over the last three and a half years the Trump administration has prioritized “energy dominance,” which means less focus on worker safety and environmental protection and more emphasis on ensuring higher profits and lower costs for the oil and gas industry. This administration has repeatedly expressed a commitment to “partner” with industry, rather than hold it accountable, and has rolled back a number of rules and policies implemented in the aftermath of the spill, including:

- Weakening key parts of the Well Control Rule, the major regulation enacted in 2016 to increase drilling safety, and the Production Safety Systems Rule, a regulation designed to increase safety during oil and gas production;
- Relaxing offshore inspections and enforcement; and
- Abandoning attempts to hold offshore contractors directly accountable for their safety and environmental performance.

