

OFFSHORE DISASTER: BP's Bad Behavior

The oil spill involving the British Petroleum (BP) Deepwater Horizon is only the latest accident in BP's long history of environmental and safety disasters. Despite a long rap sheet of environmental wrongdoing, BP touts itself as a "green" company, and spends millions of dollars attempting to rebrand itself as "Beyond Petroleum." But in reality, it fights relentlessly for oil and gas exploration and drilling in environmentally sensitive regions, including Alaska and the Gulf of Mexico. *Multinational Monitor* magazine named BP one of the "10 Worst Companies" in 2000 and 2005 based in part on BP's poor environmental record (<http://bit.ly/9drWPK>).

BP'S ENVIRONMENTAL RECORD

BP has paid millions in civil and criminal penalties for violating major federal environmental laws such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and other laws designed to protect the environment and public health. From air pollution to leaky oil pipelines, BP has one of the worst environmental records in the industry.

At BP's Texas City oil refinery in Texas, BP pled guilty to violations of the Clean Air Act, and paid approximately \$50 million in penalties for polluting the air with harmful air emissions such as benzene. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also fined BP over \$700,000 for violations of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act at the Texas City refinery, and the State of Texas fined BP over \$130,000 for illegally releasing air pollutants from the Texas City oil refinery. BP faced similar problems at its oil refinery in Carson, California, and paid over \$30 million in penalties and fees when its refinery violated state air quality laws. The EPA also cited BP for multiple Clean Air Act violations at its oil refinery in Whiting, Indiana.

In 2006, BP's oil pipeline spilled 200,000 gallons of crude oil into the Alaskan tundra, and the company paid approximately \$20 million in penalties to state and federal authorities to resolve these problems. Alaskan pipeline leaks are still being investigated, and as recently as November 2009, BP spilled another 46,000 gallons of oil in the North Slope of Alaska. In fact, BP failed to comply with its consent order to remedy the pipeline problems in Alaska, forcing the Department of Justice to file a civil lawsuit to force BP to take corrective action. BP also violated the Clean Water Act at its oil fields in Fremont County, Wyoming, and just two years ago was found liable for contaminating drinking water with MTBE, a gasoline additive.

BP'S SAFETY RECORD

Prior to the explosion on BP's Deepwater Horizon oil rig, BP's Texas oil refinery exploded, killing 15 workers and injured 170 others. In 2009, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), a federal agency charged with protecting

worker safety, fined BP \$87 million for negligent operations at the refinery. In March 2010, BP paid another OSHA fine of \$3 million, this time for violations of worker safety laws at its Husky oil refinery in Ohio.

In addition to paying some of the largest fines in OSHA history, the U.S. Chemical Safety & Hazard Investigation Board found that BP had ignored warning signs at its refinery and failed to take measures to prevent the Texas refinery explosion.

Even the Department of Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS), an agency heavily criticized for lax oversight of BP's operations, found numerous safety violations at BP facilities. MMS fined BP in 2007, 2006, twice in 2004, three times in 2003, and three times in 2002 for unsafe practices that led to injury or accidents.

BP'S GREENWASH CAMPAIGN

To cover its environmental wrongdoing, BP actively engages in public relations campaigns to "greenwash" its business practices. But behind BP's "Beyond Petroleum" slogan and renewable energy advertising lies a company firmly committed to exploiting fossil fuels at any cost, even if it means risking worker safety or violating environmental laws. In fact, BP has put little effort into renewable energy--instead, it has aggressively expanded its oil and gas exploration, often in environmentally sensitive areas in Alaska or the Gulf of Mexico.

THE SOLUTIONS

- » The Gulf oil spill and other catastrophes like it are predictable outcomes of our reliance on fossil fuels. We must change course. Congress must act NOW to:
- » Put stricter regulations in place for the coal and oil industries to make them safer and more accountable for the damage they do.
- » Place a ban on new offshore drilling
- » There should be an immediate end to all subsidies for fossil fuels and nuclear energy and investments should be focused on clean renewable energy, efficiency technology, and infrastructure development.
- » Pass legislation that jumpstarts a clean energy revolution in the U.S.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Help prevent another disaster by learning more about clean energy solutions and by taking action at www.greenpeace.org/usa/oilspilltruth

Note: All figures stated are based on August 2010 information