



Report: Fossil Fuel Disasters Common in America ***A Decade of Tragic Incidents Points to Need for Strong Reforms*** ***in Wake of BP Spill***

Washington, DC (July 29, 2010) – As Congress debates petroleum industry reforms and with a series of pipeline spills in recent days, a new report documenting thousands of safety incidents underscores a pattern of oil and gas company malfeasance. According to the report from National Wildlife Federation, from 2000 to 2010, hundreds of deaths, as well as habitat and wildlife destruction in all regions of the United States have occurred. These incidents demonstrate that the BP disaster is not an isolated case and that these companies consistently put profit ahead of communities, local economies, and the environment.

“The oil and gas industry’s careless business approach does a clear injustice to the American people. The total cost of the status quo in lives lost and environmental damage is far too high,” said Tim Warman, executive director of NWF’s global warming solutions program.

The report, [*Assault on America: A Decade of Petroleum Company Disaster, Pollution, and Profit*](#), documents hundreds of disasters of all types, large and small. These examples shed light on how the oil and gas industry has continued to show negligence and cause accidents nationwide. While not exhaustive, the listing offers a cross-section of spills, leaks, fires, explosions, toxic emissions, water pollution, and more that have occurred in the last decade.

This occurs despite promises of reform in the post- Exxon Valdez era and the post-Oil Pollution Act of 1990 era, when the industry claimed to have mended its dangerous ways. The report concludes better safety procedures, and improved technology that were promised after 1990 have not been effective in reducing spills, fires, explosions, leaks and seeps.

States with the most incidents over the period were Texas, Louisiana and California. The report includes a complete top 10 list of those and other states and a U.S. map of major incidents across the country.

The report also tracks industry profits and a pattern of political contributions to members of Congress and presidential aspirants.

"For decades, this industry has been skimping on safety while taking huge profits," said report co-author Jack Doyle. "Time and time again, as the incidents in this report show, the oil and gas industry has failed to protect workers, the environment, and public health and safety. They are industrial recidivists. They keep repeating the same environmental crimes over and over."

The report comes as Congress debates a response to the BP disaster. Among the recommendations, the report says now is the time to lift the liability cap that shields oil companies from responsibility for major spills. Additionally the report calls for a cap on global warming pollution that would put a price on pollution and unleash clean energy development.

“You never hear of a wind farm disaster or a solar farm catastrophe,” said Warman. “There are safer, cleaner choices. Congress needs to push the industry to mend its ways and spur investments in clean energy. Congress should no longer be bullied by Big Oil and its army of lobbyists.”

The report says the BP Deepwater Horizon spill is truly a tragedy of our time but should provide an opportunity “to take a closer and more comprehensive look at the full and continuing costs that the oil and gas industry continues to impose on society with 24-7 pollution, environmental degradation, habitat destruction, wildlife loss, worker and community endangerment, health effects consequences, and loss of life.”

National Wildlife Federation is America's conservation organization inspiring Americans to protect wildlife for our children's future.

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