

BP Submits to Record \$20 Billion Spill Fine



London, October 9 (RHC)-- BP has accepted a record \$20 billion fine over the worst environmental disaster in US history from the company's Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010.

The U.S. government says its final settlement with the oil giant resolves all civil claims from the massive pollution and the deaths of 11 workers after an explosion on the company's deep-water drill in Louisiana. The settlement caps five years of legal fighting to force BP to account for at least 134 million gallons of oil which leaked into the sea and took 87 days to stop.

The spill affected 1,300 miles of shoreline in the states of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida, crippling the ecosystems and local economies.

Attorney General Loretta Lynch said: "BP is receiving the punishment it deserves, while also providing critical compensation for the injuries that it caused to the environment and the economy of the Gulf region."

EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy said that as part of the settlement, the U.S. government will lift its suspension on doing business with BP.

A coalition of conservation organizations used the occasion to state that the full damage of the oil spill may not yet be known as it lauded the settlement "a positive step."

U.S. government officials said the money will be used to restore wildlife, habitat and water quality and handle environmental and economic damages.

But Miyoko Sakashita, oceans director at the Center for Biological Diversity, said the oil spill had damaged the Gulf region in a way that money could never fix. She said the real solution would be to curb offshore oil and gas drilling.

The toxic oil wreaked havoc on the population of fish, birds, plankton, turtles and mammals, causing death and disease and making animals unable to reproduce.

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