



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Third Anniversary of BP Oil Spill Disaster Highlights Need for More Proactive Approach on Public Protections

Statement of the Coalition for Sensible Safeguards

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The third anniversary of the BP oil spill is a reminder of the real-life cost of inadequate regulation and enforcement – and the need for a proactive agenda for public protections. Wednesday night’s tragic explosion at a fertilizer plant in Texas, too, is a reminder of the work we have ahead to make our nation safer.

Saturday, April 20, marks the three-year anniversary of the explosion that started the BP oil spill disaster. Eleven workers were killed, and an estimated 4.9 million barrels of oil leaked into the Gulf of Mexico over several months.

Investigations after the disaster found that lax oversight allowed BP and its contractors to prioritize expediency and cost-cutting over worker safety and environmental protection. They found that the safety failures leading up to the tragedy are not isolated to BP, but rather reflect a systemic problem in the offshore drilling industry as a whole. Congress has yet to codify any of the regulatory changes that have been undertaken by the Department of the Interior. Nor have lawmakers passed a comprehensive oil spill response bill to make deepwater oil drilling safer for workers and the environment.

The BP oil spill, the financial market collapse of 2008, the Upper Big Branch mine disaster in West Virginia and a series of contaminated food outbreaks reminded Americans of what can go wrong when protective laws are too weak, federal agencies have too few resources, or companies skirt the rules and get away with just a slap on the wrist. Legal penalties often are not big enough to deter irresponsible or negligent behavior spawned by a company’s focus on profits instead of worker safety and the environment. Stronger enforcement and larger penalties are needed.

The public’s health, safety and security are at stake in today’s battles over standards and safeguards: We breathe the air, eat the food and drive the cars, and our children play with the

toys. In the BP oil spill disaster, local economies that rely on seafood and tourism suffered, to say nothing of sea creatures in the Gulf of Mexico.

This week's anniversary is a reminder that policymakers in Washington should be focused on proactive approaches to keeping the public safe.

Read more on the BP disaster at three years in a RegsTalk blog post here:

<http://regstalk.wordpress.com/2013/04/19/three-years-after-deepwater-horizon-disaster-has-the-u-s-improved-safety-standards-for-oil-drilling/>

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The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards is an alliance of consumer, small business, labor, scientific, research, good government, faith, community, health, environmental, and public interest groups, as well as concerned individuals, joined in the belief that our country's system of regulatory safeguards provides a stable framework that secures our quality of life and paves the way for a sound economy that benefits us all. For more information about the coalition, see:

http://www.sensiblesafeguards.org/about_us