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Waterkeeper Organizations File Suit to Plug Taylor Energy's Gulf Oil Spill and Pry Open the Veil of Secrecy Surrounding 7 Years of Contamination

Calls on Obama Administration to Require Stronger Safety Standards and More Transparency

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA -- [Waterkeeper Alliance](#) and several Gulf Coast Waterkeeper organizations filed suit in Federal Court today, February 2, against Taylor Energy Company LLC under the citizen suit provisions of the Clean Water Act and Resource Conservation Recovery Act, for ongoing violations stemming from an oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico that has continued to flow for more than seven years.

Aided by satellite imagery and research conducted by [SkyTruth](#) and aerial observation by [SouthWings](#), the Waterkeeper Alliance and its local Waterkeeper organizations learned that the spill, located approximately 11 miles off the coast of Louisiana, started after an undersea landslide in the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan in 2004. An offshore platform and 28 wells were damaged, and since then, Taylor has yet to stop the daily flow of oil from the site. Waterkeeper estimates that hundreds of gallons of oil have leaked from the site each day for the last 7 years.

“The plaintiffs filed suit to stop the spill and lift the veil of secrecy surrounding Taylor Oil’s seven-year long response and recovery operation,” explained Marc Yaggi, Executive Director of Waterkeeper Alliance. “Neither the government nor Taylor will answer basic questions related to the spill response, citing privacy concerns.” The public deserves to know how this spill happened and why it continues. Coastal communities should understand the risks involved in developing off-shore oil resources and what protections are in place to prevent damage from future spills.

“The Taylor Oil spill is emblematic of a broken system, where oil production is prioritized over concerns for human health and the environment,” said Justin Bloom, Eastern Regional Director of Waterkeeper Alliance. “Nearly two years after the BP Deepwater Horizon Spill, none of the comprehensive reforms recommended by the National Oil Spill Commission have been enacted and Congress has yet to pass a single law to better protect workers, the environment or coastal communities.”

Meanwhile, President Obama, in his State of the Union, has called for a massive push to open up 38 million acres in the Gulf of Mexico to oil exploration and extraction. He also seeks to open

up pristine Arctic waters to drilling. The Taylor spill is in relatively shallow and accessible waters compared to the deepwater, challenging environment where Big Oil has set its sights. Oil exploration and extraction technology has dramatically outpaced the development of safety and recovery technology and it appears that the current regulatory regime is incapable of protecting us from a runaway industry.

A report released this week by the Gulf Monitoring Consortium, a partnership between Waterkeeper Alliance, SkyTruth, and SouthWings, investigates several spills in the Gulf (including the Taylor Spill) and highlights numerous deficiencies in the reporting and response process.

A copy of the report can be found here: <http://waterkeeper.org/ht/a/GetDocumentAction/i/24733>

“Imagine an incident like the Taylor Spill in a deepwater, high-pressure environment, that could not be contained in 7 years,” asks Paul Orr, the Lower Mississippi Riverkeeper, “Do we really want to race to the bottom without a lifeline when it looks like Big Oil is still at the helm?”

A copy of the complaint can be found here: <http://waterkeeper.org/ht/a/GetDocumentAction/i/24743>

Joining [Waterkeeper Alliance](#) in the lawsuit are: [Atchfalaya Basinkeeper](#), Baton Rouge, LA; [Galveston Baykeeper](#), Galveston, TX, [Lower Mississippi Riverkeeper](#), Baton Rouge, LA; [Louisiana Bayoukeeper](#), Barataria, LA and [Louisiana Environmental Action Network](#), Baton Rouge, LA. Plaintiffs are represented by the [Tulane Environmental Law Clinic](#).

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[Waterkeeper Alliance](#) is a global environmental movement uniting more than 190 Waterkeeper organizations around the world and focusing citizen advocacy on the issues that affect our waterways, from pollution to climate change. Waterkeepers patrol more than 1.5 million square miles of rivers, streams and coastlines in the Americas, Europe, Australia, Asia and Africa.