

Law & Industry Daily

Oil company Sued Over 2004 Spill

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NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 2 (LID)—A coalition of environmental organizations filed a federal lawsuit Thursday against Taylor Energy Company LLC over an oil spill 11 miles off the coast of Louisiana following Hurricane Ivan in 2004.

Waterkeeper Alliance, in court papers, alleges that Taylor Energy has been slow in its cleanup of the Gulf of Mexico spill. Moreover, the New York-based group says, hundreds of gallons of oil continue to leak daily from the site of a Taylor offshore platform that was damaged by a seafloor slide triggered by the 2004 hurricane.

Plaintiffs said they filed the lawsuit in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana — under the citizen-suit provisions of federal environmental law — because neither Taylor nor government regulators will release details of the spill and subsequent cleanup.

“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,” said Waterkeeper Alliance Executive Director Marc Yaggi.

“[W]ithout details about Taylor’s response to this crisis, it is impossible for members of the public to assess the risk that similar events will cause additional multi-year spills, including spills from higher-pressure wells in deeper water,” the complaint reads. “Because such spills may damage the Gulf’s eco-system on a scale comparable to or exceeding that of the BP spill, it is essential that the public learn from the more than 7-year Taylor response.”

The lawsuit, which seeks civil penalties of up to \$37,500 per day against New Orleans-based Taylor, alleges violations of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA; 33 U.S.C. § 1251 *et seq.*) and Resource Conservation Recovery Act (RCRA; 42 U.S.C. § 6901 *et seq.*). The lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court by the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic on behalf of the plaintiffs.

Taylor could not be reached for comment.

Joining Waterkeeper Alliance in the lawsuit is Atchafalaya 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.

The case is *Apalachicola Riverkeeper et al. v. Taylor Energy Co. LLC*, No 2:12-cv-00337, Eastern District of Louisiana (New Orleans).

A copy of the complaint is available at <http://waterkeeper.org/ht/a/GetDocumentAction//24743>.

