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Gulf oil spill: BP accepts responsibility for oil cleanup

May 3, 2010 | 8:15 am

BP, the oil company at the heart of what was likely the nation's worst oil disaster, said on Monday it would pay for the cleanup costs connected to the massive oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico.

In a round of appearances on morning television and radio news shows, BP Chief Executive Tony Hayward accepted responsibility for the cleanup and said the company would pay compensation for legitimate claims for property damage, personal injury and business losses.

"We are responsible, not for the accident, but we are responsible for the oil and for dealing with it and cleaning the situation up," Hayward said.

The original accident took place April 20 on a deep-water rig operating about 130 miles southeast of New Orleans. The rig sank two days later, and 11 were believed dead.

Oil began leaking from the wellhead, pouring at least 5,000 barrels of oil into the gulf waters, though some estimates have placed the flow from three leaks at much more. The leading edge of the oil has reached Louisiana wetlands and is expected to make landfall in the next days.

Throughout the weekend, federal officials led by President Obama have stressed that BP will be responsible for the cleanup and for capping the leaking well.

On Monday, Hayward acknowledged that his company would be responsible for the cleanup, expected to cost billions of dollars. But he was careful to contend that the original accident was the fault of offshore drilling contractor Transocean Ltd., which operated the rig that sank.

"We will await all the facts before drawing conclusions, and we will not speculate," a spokesman for Transocean said.

The original accident and the oil leaks also are being investigated by the federal government.

Hayward explained in his appearances that the company was working below the surface to cap the leaks from the well, some 5,000 feet underwater. BP is also working on the surface to control the leak with chemicals to disperse the oil and has an active effort underway to place booms to contain the spread of the spill.

-- Michael Muskal

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I don't understand why this story is not "the" number one story across news outlets. Also why does this article still quote the fraudulently low 5,000 barrels per day figure? This spill has the potential to destroy nearly half of the commercial fisheries available in the continental US with no end in sight! Don't drop the ball on this LATimes.

Posted by: Mark | May 03, 2010 at 08:30 AM

Isn't it fascinating that we keep hearing that BP is responsible for the oil spill disaster off the Gulf Coast. But wasn't there in the media a passing mention of Dick Cheney's old shop, Halliburton, which had just finished installing the concrete cap on the well, I believe 20 hours before the

explosion? But we don't hear about that any more? Oh, sorry... wasn't supposed to go there...

Posted by: Hypatia | May 03, 2010 at 08:52 AM

Notice they "promise" to pay for the clean-up - But - watch when it comes to make restitution for lost incomes - fat chance anyone will be adequately reimbursed for the loss of their livelihood. Don't believe me? Just look at what happened to the fishermen in Prince William Sound, AL after the Valdeze.

Posted by: Jim Hines | May 03, 2010 at 08:58 AM
