

NEW MEXICO INJURY ATTORNEY BLOG

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BP Continues Retreat from Responsibility While Insisting Regulations Hurt Profits?

As another oil rig burns in the Gulf of Mexico, BP is attempting to extort new Gulf leases with suggestions or perhaps threats that without these new leases it cannot or will not pay the damages for the disaster it has caused in the Gulf.

A new bill working its way through Congress would bar any company from receiving deep water drilling permits if it has had more than 10 fatalities on its rigs or has been penalized with fines of more than \$10 million under the Clean Air or Clean Water Act. The bill does not mention BP by name but oddly BP is the only company with this track record.

Of course the bill will likely never pass anyway. Remember "drill baby drill." It's still the mantra of the Republican party. It is just whispered now rather than being plastered on t-shirts and posters at campaign rallies. The Right is not concerned with the disaster(s) in the Gulf. It is easier to blame the Democrats and Obama. Instead, in the midst of the crisis they attack Obama for not stopping the horrible and uncontrollable spill that 30 years of oil deregulation has caused. They publicly criticize Obama for not doing more to stop the spill while they continued to fight any meaningful regulation of the oil industry that would stop future spills, and perhaps a few regulations that might help to prevent rigs from exploding, like the one that blew up yesterday.

Oddly, the Right goes the other direction than common sense might dictate. Rather than legislation and regulation to increase the safety of rigs to protect the Gulf and the workers on those rigs (do not forget 11 men died in the BP disaster), the Right will continue to fight for deregulation. It's just what they do and who they are. They can't help it.

But there is more to it than safety of offshore rigs. The deregulation craze has spilled into all other areas of energy production. There are hundreds of contaminated water suits that have been filed against Massey Energy for vast contamination of drinking water in the areas in which they operate. The natural gas industry, the purportedly clean energy alternative, is following suit. Natural gas does indeed burn clean, however, the extraction process has devastating impacts on water supplies around the wells. Like the coal slurry contamination, the chemicals used to extract the gas from the ground seep into the drinking water of nearby residents rendering the water toxic. Yet, there is little regulation over the extraction process or the chemicals that are pumped into the ground.

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In the end, thousands upon thousands more will be injured as a result of deregulation of the oil and energy sectors. There will be promises of clean methods. And when mistakes or disasters occur, there will be promises of absolute responsibility. Then there will be back pedaling as with the extortionate threats of BP over regulation of deepwater drilling permits. It will be quite dramatic as legislation quietly dies in Congress and business continues as usual. The only thing left will be the lawsuits to compensate the victims for their damages. Naturally, the Right will then chime in attacking the lawyers that attempt to help those victims and the victims themselves for their opportunistic greed. And BP and friends will skip along their merry way as taxpayers pay for their mistakes.

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