

Myths vs. Facts on the DOI Observance of BP Oil Disaster

On April 14, 2020, the Trump administration's Department of the Interior marked the 10 year anniversary of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil disaster by releasing a [blog](#) that greenwashes their current record on drilling safety and conservation. Despite rolling back safety requirements, ignoring the calls of frontline communities, and proposing to dramatically expand offshore drilling nationwide, the administration is taking credit for implementing "countless reforms, increased safety measures and inspections, and prioritized conservation efforts to restore beaches and natural habitats in the Gulf of Mexico." The following myth vs. fact outline corrects the record on this political spin that fails to recognize the facts of the situation and the reality of life for the gulf communities that are still struggling 10 years after the worst environmental disaster in the country's history.

For more on community-led statements and events commemorating the 10 year anniversary, visit BP10yearslater.com

Trump Administration Myth v. Fact:

Myth: *"The Trump Administration is working to ensure that operations are conducted safely and in an environmentally sound manner in order to meet domestic and international demand."*

FACT:

- The Trump Interior Department [rolled back](#) crucial safety rules put in place following the BP disaster, a major goal of the oil industry.

Myth: *"BOEM also conducts comprehensive site-specific environmental assessments for all deepwater exploration plans in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act."*

FACT:

- The Trump administration is in the process of [undercutting](#) the National Environmental Policy Act--the nation's bedrock tool for ensuring major projects, like offshore drilling rigs, do not damage the environment and public health. The Trump administration is [aggressively ignoring](#) impacts to endangered Gulf whales, like the Gulf Sperm Whale and Gulf Bryde's Whale.

Myth: *"BOEM is responsible for offshore energy development and conducts environmental reviews grounded in science-based decision making."*

FACT:

- Political appointees at the Department of the Interior [overruled](#) objections from career staff to roll back the Well Control Rule.

Myth: *“Safety is priority number one for the Trump’s Administration’s oversight of OCS operations.”*

FACT:

- In 2019, BSEE [granted](#) 1,700 waivers to safety requirements put in place after the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster.

Myth: *“In the event of another large-scale incident, Interior’s bureaus and the Gulf’s operators are prepared to respond.”*

FACT:

- Methods for cleaning up oil have remained [largely unchanged](#) since the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster released 11 million gallons of oil into Alaskan waters. In fact, despite [years of studies](#) showing the human health impacts of aerial spraying of dispersant, Clean Gulf Associates has increased its capacity to spray dispersant over the Gulf in 2019 to 2000 gallons per day

Myth: *“All along the Gulf’s sandy shores, you can see progress being made[...]These restoration efforts have replenished beaches and recreation has been rejuvenated benefiting local communities.”*

FACT:

- The BP oil [continues](#) polluting the Gulf today, according to findings by scientists from the University of South Florida’s College of Marine Sciences. In addition to [human health](#), it’s still affecting fish and other marine species--causing lasting impacts to the region’s fishing economy on top of the \$1 billion lost following the disaster.