

# New bill pending to avoid next oil spill: US senator

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A photo taken on on April 21, 2010 shows a US Coast Guard handout image of fire boat response crews as battling a blaze on the BP operated off shore oil rig, Deepwater Horizon, in the Gulf of Mexico. US senators plan to introduce in the coming weeks new legislation aiming to prevent another disastrous oil spill like last year's massive slick in the Gulf of Mexico, a key lawmaker said Wednesday.

US senators plan to introduce in the coming weeks new legislation aiming to prevent another disastrous oil spill like last year's massive slick in the Gulf of Mexico, a key lawmaker said Wednesday.

A similar bill that would revise [offshore drilling](#) rules had previously been considered but never reached a full Senate vote.

"We must ensure that we have systems in place in our government and in the industry so that this cannot happen again," said Senator Jeff

Bingaman, chairman of Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

"Beyond that, we should lead the world in development of these systems and technology and not settle for standards that are less rigorous than those of other nations."

The presidential commission set up to probe the Gulf spill has called for overhauling industry practices and establishing a tough new safety watchdog to avoid a repeat of the disaster, which killed 11 workers aboard the BP-leased Deepwater Horizon platform.

"This is a complex and challenging matter. This committee unanimously reported legislation in the 111th Congress (last session) that would take many of the necessary steps," Bingaman said.

"Since then, the Department of the Interior has taken a number of important actions to address these issues. Nevertheless, I continue to believe that legislative change is necessary to fully ensure safe operations going forward, and intend to introduce legislation again in this Congress."

The April explosion on the rig off the coast of Louisiana spewed a record 4.9 million barrels of toxic crude into the Gulf before the gushing Macondo well was capped three months later.

The impact is still being felt in the region, where oil washed up on beaches, tainted fragile marshlands, caused the authorities to close down vast areas of water to [commercial fishing](#) and shrimping, and crippled tourism.

Obama's commission -- whose chairs Bill Reilly and Bob Graham testified before the [Senate committee](#) Wednesday -- blamed "systemic"

failures in oil industry safety practices and weakness in regulation for the disaster

Both must be reformed or an accident like that aboard the Deepwater Horizon might recur, they added.

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