

Judge clears BP's \$7.8 bn settlement in US oil spill

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Fire boats battle the blazing remnants of the off-shore oil rig Deepwater Horizon April 21, 2010. British oil giant BP won US court approval of a \$7.8 billion settlement with people and businesses who lost money and property due to the 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

British oil giant BP won approval Friday from a US federal judge of a \$7.8 billion settlement with people and businesses who lost money and property due to the 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Although the deal addresses the bulk of private claims over the Deepwater Horizon [oil rig](#) and the oil spill that resulted from its explosion, it does not affect an anticipated tens of billions of dollars in fines and claims from the US government and impacted coastal states and [local governments](#).

Nor does it resolve suits filed by shareholders or others seeking compensation because of a drilling moratorium imposed after the worst environmental disaster in US history. The incident also killed 11 workers.

US [District Judge](#) Carl Barbier gave his final approval to the settlement in a 125-page ruling. He had preliminarily approved the accord in May.

"None of the objections, whether filed on the objections docket or elsewhere, have shown the settlement to be anything other than fair, reasonable and adequate," Barbier wrote.

He said the [settlement agreement](#) "provides compensation to class members that appears sufficient" to cover their losses from the spill.



Graphic on the 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster in the US that killed 11 oil rig workers and spilled 4.9 million barrels of crude oil into the Gulf of Mexico.

Both BP and the plaintiff's attorneys welcomed the approval of a deal that would settle nearly 100,000 claims from fishermen and others affected by the disaster.

BP hailed the decision, saying it resolved "the substantial majority of legitimate economic loss and property damage claims stemming from the Deepwater Horizon accident."

"We believe the settlement, which avoids years of lengthy litigation, is good for the people, businesses and communities of the Gulf and is in the best interests of BP's stakeholders," the company added.

Attorneys Steve Herman and Jim Roy, who represent the plaintiffs, also praised the deal.

"This settlement has—and will continue to—bring the people and businesses of the Gulf the relief they deserve," they wrote in a statement cited by US media.

BP has said the settlement is not expected to result in any increase of the \$37.2 billion charge it posted to cover the cost of the massive spill that blackened beaches in five US states and devastated the Gulf Coast's tourism and fishing industries.

It took 87 days to cap BP's runaway well 5,000 feet (1,500 meters) below the water surface off the coast of Louisiana as it spewed some 4.9 million barrels (206 million gallons) of oil into the [Gulf of Mexico](#).

Barbier—an expert in maritime law charged with consolidating hundreds of spill-related lawsuits into the single case—has left the door open to some shared liability in key pre-trial rulings.

Several government probes have already castigated BP, rig operator Transocean and Halliburton—which was responsible for the well's faulty cement job—for cutting corners and missing crucial warning signs.

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