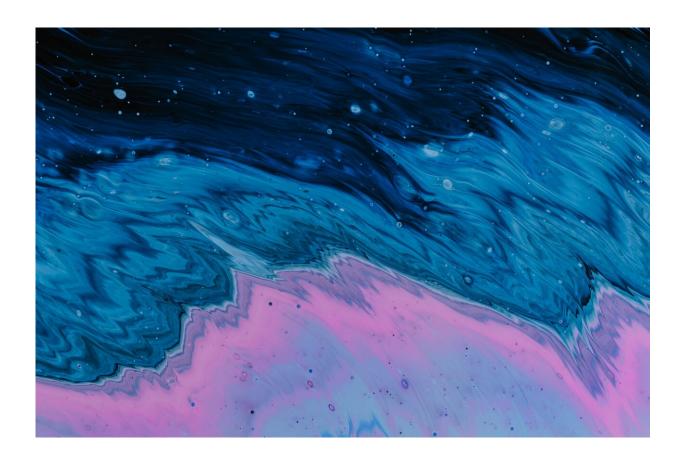# Has the oil leak been stopped? What we know about the origin of the massive Orange County spill

October 4 2021, by Rong-Gong Lin Ii, Hannah Fry, Rosanna Xia and Connor Sheets, Los Angeles Times

Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

The massive oil spill in Orange County is linked to an oil complex off

the coast of Southern California that has amassed a long record of federal noncompliance incidents and violations.

As divers for Houston-based Amplify Energy Corp. on Sunday searched for the location and cause of the enormous leak, many questions remain, including how at least 126,000 gallons of crude spilled into the sea, why it happened and whether the oil has stopped flowing.

The platform tied to the leak is more than eight miles off the coast. But the leak appears to be in a different spot. Here is what we know:

Where is the leak?

The potential source of the oil leak is about 4.5 miles off the coast, somewhere between an oil processing platform called Elly and along a 17.5-mile pipeline to the shoreline, where it's delivered to a local refinery, said Martyn Willsher, Amplify Energy's president and CEO, at a briefing Sunday afternoon.

Heavy crude is pumped through that single pipeline to the shore, Willsher said. The oil is fed into the Beta Pump Station in Long Beach.

The offshore oil processing platform and the oil pipeline have been owned by Amplify Energy for the last nine years, Willsher said. It's operated as a subsidiary of Amplify Energy, Beta Operating Co.

Amplify Energy has divers inspecting the potential source of the leak and investigating its cause. Willsher said his company notified the Coast Guard on Saturday morning about the oil spill after inspectors noticed an oily sheen in the water. The flow into the pipeline that was suspected of leaking was shut down Saturday night.

But officials say the oil was continuing to leak overnight Sunday.

Elly, the oil processing platform, is fed by some 70 oil wells. The processing platform separates oil from water. "It's just [crude oil](link) that's sent to the shore," Willsher said.

"We are fully committed to being out here till this incident is fully concluded," Willsher said. "Our employees live and work in these communities, and we're all deeply impacted and concerned. ... We will do everything in our power to ensure that this is recovered as quickly as possible."

Is it still leaking?

Willsher said Sunday afternoon that divers are still investigating whether oil is continuing to leak into the ocean.

The company won't know until divers have a chance to complete an intricate inspection of the pipelines on the sea floor, about 80 to 100 feet below the ocean's surface.

Divers have been investigating the potential site of the leak.

Some local officials said they think the leak has stopped and hope to have more answers Monday.

Where is the oil going?

Currents in the area Sunday afternoon were moving southeast into the waters off Newport Beach.

Some oil was seen in that seaside city, but nowhere near as much as in Huntington Beach, where crude spilled into the marshes.

Officials expect the oil to continue washing up onshore over the next several days.

Laguna Beach has closed its shores as a precaution, and officials say there's some evidence of oil along the city's coast.

The wind and [weather patterns](), coupled with how close the [leak]() was to the shore, made the dispersion of the oil slick particularly wide, experts have said.

That's a huge reason why such a large swath of beaches is now being spoiled.

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