

# DIRTY DRILLING

Trump Administration Proposals Weaken Key Safety Protections and Radically Expand Offshore Drilling



## SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS IN OFFSHORE OIL OPERATIONS

### Weak Oversight

The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) is tasked with ensuring safety and environmental protection in offshore drilling, but the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found BSEE's enforcement capabilities inadequate.

AS OF 2018

**BSEE**  
EMPLOYED



ROUGHLY

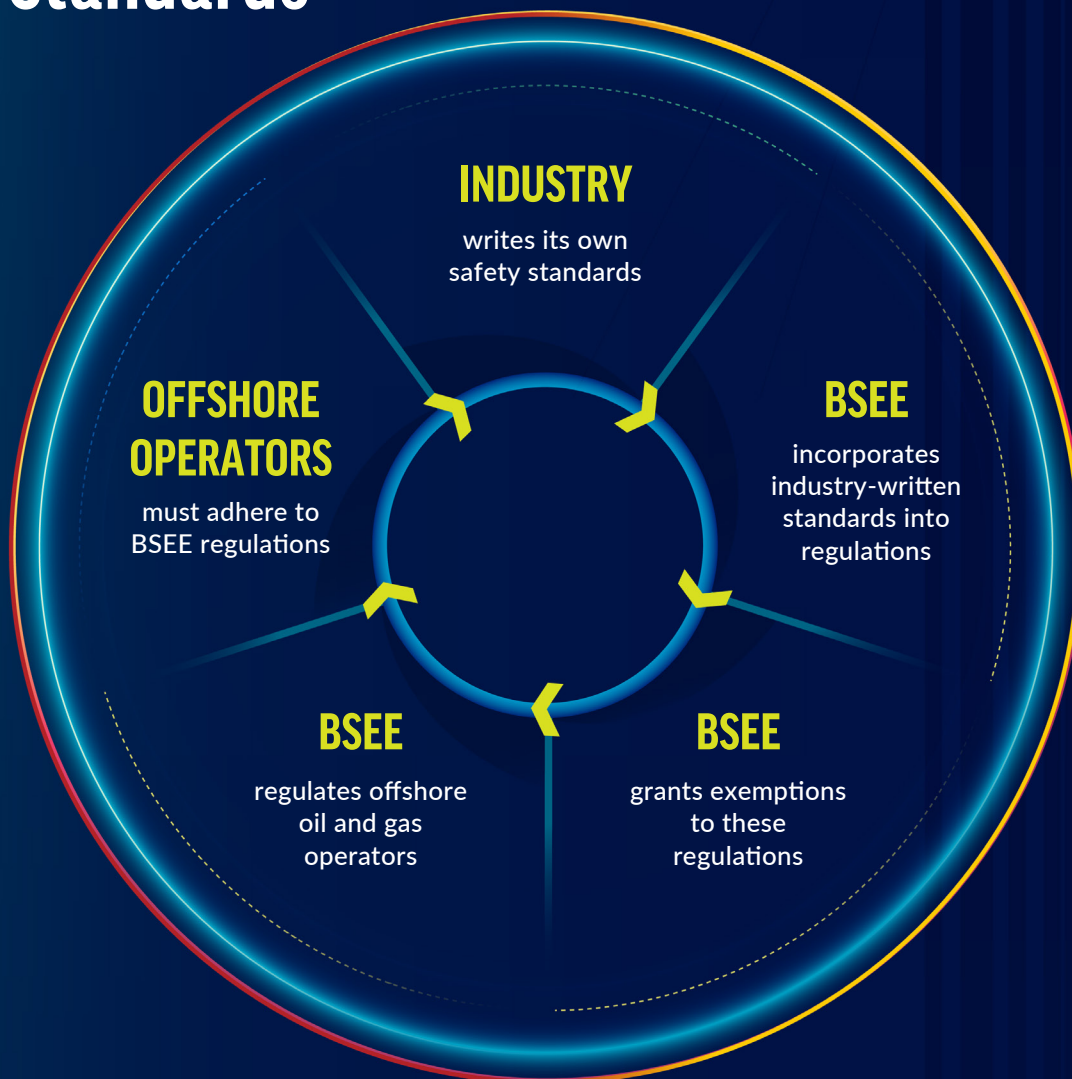
**120**  
INSPECTORS



TO CONDUCT  
MORE THAN

**20,000**  
INSPECTIONS  
ANNUALLY

# BSEE Relies Heavily On Industry-Written Safety Standards



**\$1,000,000**



Operating  
Cost/Day

**\$44,675**

Penalties/Day/  
Violation

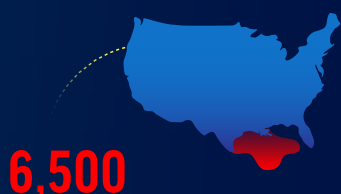
## Grossly inadequate civil penalties fail to deter corner-cutting

Operating costs for offshore drilling can be **\$1 million per day**, but penalties for violating offshore operating requirements are capped at only **\$44,675** per day per violation.

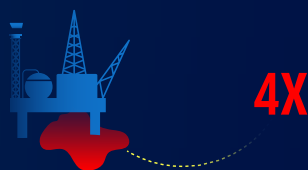
INDUSTRY PROFITS ARE IN THE **BILLIONS** PER YEAR.

# ONGOING OIL SPILLS CONTINUE TO POLLUTE OUR OCEANS

Far too many spills  
continue in U.S.  
waters every year



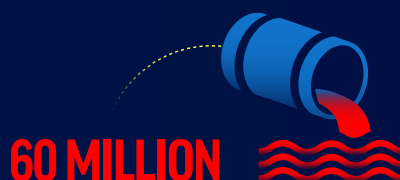
At least **6,500 oil spills** occurred in U.S. waters between 2007 and 2017.



One study determined oil spill size estimates are on average **over four times larger than what is reported** to the Coast Guard.

**SPILLS ARE  
TYPICALLY  
FAR LARGER  
THAN  
REPORTED.**

Oil spill clean-up  
methods are limited and  
largely unchanged since  
the late 1980s



After "clean-up" following the BP *Deepwater Horizon* disaster, up to an estimated **60 million gallons of oil remained in the environment** - that is five times more than the total amount initially spilled by the *Exxon Valdez*.

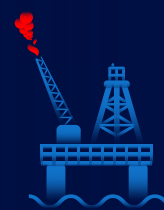


A Coast Guard Admiral who responded to the *Deepwater Horizon* spill, stated that seas over four feet rendered the Coast Guard's ability to remove the oil **"virtually impossible."**

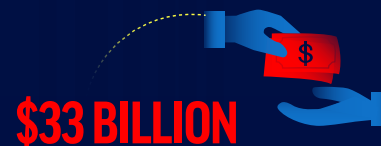


Clean-up costs alone amounted to over **\$14 billion** in the years directly following the BP *Deepwater Horizon* spill.

Financially at-risk  
companies place an  
enormous financial  
burden on the public



After production concludes, **companies must address oil and gas infrastructure**, including its removal from the environment.



Some smaller companies do not have the resources available to decommission their facilities, leaving American taxpayers to face the burden for those costs when wells must be capped. **As of 2015, those liabilities were approximately \$33 billion in the Gulf of Mexico.**



Financially at-risk companies operate roughly **449 of the 2,104 active facilities in the Gulf.**

## U.S. offshore industry's safety culture has not sufficiently improved since the BP *Deepwater Horizon* disaster



**Fatality Rate =  
4x Higher**  
THAN IN EUROPE

At the time of the BP *Deepwater Horizon* explosion that killed 11 rig workers, the U.S. offshore oil industry had the highest reported rate of fatalities among its international peers. Industry's fatality rate was four times higher than in European waters between 2004 and 2009.



**Fatality Rate =  
7x Higher**  
THAN OTHER U.S. WORKERS

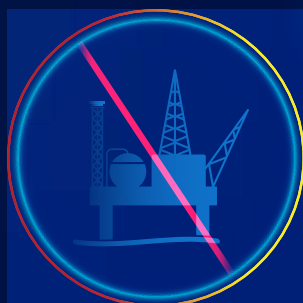
In the United States, the oil and gas industry's fatality rate (both onshore and offshore) was an average of seven times higher than among other U.S. workers in general between 2003 and 2013.



**1,568 Injuries  
Reported**  
BETWEEN 2011-2017

According to the most recently published BSEE data since the BP *Deepwater Horizon* disaster, offshore operators reported 1,568 injuries between 2011 and 2017.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:



President Trump should **direct his administration to halt all efforts to expand offshore drilling activities** to new areas and abandon attempts to weaken safety regulations.



BSEE should **seek transformative changes to industry's safety culture** through greater inspections and enforcement, and by reducing reliance on industry-written standards.



Congress must **substantially increase financial penalties for safety violations** to deter dangerous, non-compliant behavior and ensure that risk-taking is no longer profitable.



Congress must **require accurate oil spill reporting**, establish industry-specific penalties for under-reporting, increase federal resources and research new clean-up technologies.

**For Oceana's full report, please visit [oceana.org/DirtyDrilling](https://oceana.org/DirtyDrilling)**