China Pushes ConocoPhillips to Contain Spill by End of August

Reuters

BEIJING | (Reuters) - China's marine authorities expressed growing frustration at the failure of a unit of ConocoPhillips to contain a two-month oil spill that has spread across the northeast coast and again urged it to halt the leak by the end of August.

Officials of the State Oceanic Administration (SOA) met ConocoPhillips officials again on Tuesday and urged the company to seal off oil leaks in northern China's Bohai Bay and clean up polluted areas before an August 31 deadline, the agency said on its website (www.soa.gov.cn [1]).

"To date, ConocoPhillips has not yet sealed off sources of the oil spill at Penglai 19-3 oilfield," the administration said.

"The company has come to no clear conclusion about why a new oil spill source has been found at platform B, why more oily mud has been found near platform C, or even whether similar situations could occur in the future," the administration said.

The measures taken by ConocoPhillips have so far been limited to lowering pressure on the seabed and installing an oil containment device, which are temporary and remedial. They have not eliminated oil spill risks effectively, it added.

The administration said it would "strengthen oversight" if ConocoPhillips fails to contain the oil spill in time, but it did not provide any further details about what action it would take.

The spill has already spread to the Bohai Bay coast, posing a direct threat to the region's environment, and SOA also urged ConocoPhillips to keep the public informed about potential risks as soon as possible.

The oil leak at the Penglai 19-3 oilfield, China's biggest offshore oil field, which started in June, have polluted 840 square kilometers of water, the SOA has said.

ConocoPhillips has a 49 percent stake in the oilfield and acts as the operator, while China's offshore oil specialist CNOOC Ltd has the remainder.

SOA said on Tuesday it had not decided how much compensation it would seek for the ecological damage caused by the oil spill, but it plans to sue the parties responsible.

Reporting by Judy Hua and David Stanway

SOURCE [2]

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