

# Feds Respond to Criticism Over Exxon's Mont. Spill

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — Federal officials say a report that found Exxon Mobil Corp. took "reasonable precautions" to address flooding that triggered an oil spill into Montana's Yellowstone River did not reflect the government's final determination in the case.

Friday's statement from the Department of Transportation comes after Exxon criticized a \$1.7 million proposed penalty over its 2011 Silvertip pipeline break.

The company said allegations it failed to address flood risks were contrary to findings last year by federal investigators. About 63,000 gallons of crude spilled after floodwaters exposed the pipeline and it broke.

Government spokeswoman Jeannie Layson said the earlier findings did not comprise the complete investigation, and cannot be compared to the proposed penalty.

Exxon has until late April to appeal. Spokesman Patrick Henretty said the company is evaluating its next steps.

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