Texas Sues BP for Damages Related to Oil Spill

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HOUSTON (AP) — Texas on Friday became the fifth state to sue British oil company BP over the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, seeking damages related to the worst offshore oil spill in U.S. history.

The lawsuit, filed by the office of Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott in federal court in Beaumont, is seeking lost tax revenue, lost revenue from state parks, damages to natural resources and civil penalties for each day that oil was spilled and for every barrel of oil that was illegally discharged.

The April 2010 blowout of BP's Macondo well triggered an explosion that killed 11 workers on the rig and spilled millions of gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico.

"Today's filing follows years of work with Texas' sister Gulf states and the federal government, as well as BP, to resolve damages associated with harm caused to the Gulf. Because the parties to date have been unable to fully resolve claims related to the disaster, the state filed today's enforcement action to preserve the state's claims against BP and other defendants," Abbott's office said in a statement.

In an email, BP spokesman Scott Dean declined to comment on the lawsuit. Other defendants named in the lawsuit include rig owner Transocean Ltd. and Halliburton, BP's cement contractor on the rig.

Last month, Florida and Mississippi sued BP over the oil spill. Louisiana and Alabama sued BP earlier and are participating in a federal trial that is ongoing in New Orleans to determine the liability of BP and others. Abbott's office said it expects its lawsuit will be consolidated with the case already underway in New Orleans.

The lawsuit did not give a specific dollar amount for the damages, but one section of the lawsuit says that under the Texas Natural Resources Code, BP and the other companies named in the lawsuit could be liable for damages up to $350 million.

Abbott's office argues the oil spill cost the state a variety of tax revenues, including sales taxes, hotel occupancy taxes and mixed beverage taxes. The suit also alleges the spill reduced revenues at three state parks and injured, destroyed or contaminated coastal habitats and a variety of wildlife.

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