Eric Holder, the Attorney General of the United States, announced today that the U.S. Department of Justice has filed a lawsuit alleging that BP, Transocean, and seven other firms caused or contributed to the massive Deepwater Horizon oil spill earlier this year. The lawsuit seeks response costs, natural resource damages, and economic damages under the Oil Pollution Act, as well as civil penalties under the Clean Water Act.

According to the government's media release:

> According to the complaint, important safety and operating regulations were violated in the period leading up to the April 20, 2010 Oil Spill, including:
>
> - Failing to take necessary precautions to keep the Macondo Well under control in the period leading up to the April 20th explosion;
> - Failing to use the best available and safest drilling technology to monitor the well's conditions;
> - Failing to maintain continuous surveillance; and
> - Failing to use and maintain equipment and material that were available and necessary to ensure the safety and protection of personnel, equipment, natural resources, and the environment.
>
> The complaint alleges that these violations caused or contributed to the massive oil spill, and that the defendants are therefore responsible for removal costs and damages without limitation under the Oil Pollution Act.

I haven't yet seen the complaint, but it will be interesting to see how this plays out. Notably missing from the list of defendants is Halliburton, a contractor alleged to have had a key role in some of the events leading to the blowout.