

‘Recipe for Disaster’: Trump Guts Offshore Drilling Rules Put in Place after Deepwater Horizon Spill

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Just two weeks after the [nine-year anniversary](#) of the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster—the largest ocean oil spill in U.S. history—the Trump administration on Thursday [moved to dismantle offshore drilling](#) regulations aimed at preventing another catastrophic leak.

The White House’s revised Well Control Rule—which could save the fossil fuel industry [close to a billion dollars](#) over the next decade—was unveiled by **Interior Secretary David Bernhardt**, a former oil lobbyist who advocacy groups have described as a “[walking, talking conflict of interest](#).”

Diane Hoskins, campaign director at Oceana, called the Trump administration’s move “a major step backward in offshore drilling safety.”

“Gutting the few offshore drilling safeguards established in wake of the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster is reckless and wrong,” Hoskins said in a [statement](#). “More drilling and less safety is a recipe for disaster. We should be implementing new safety reforms, not rolling back the few safety measures currently in place.”

The Trump administration today weakened crucial offshore drilling safety standards that were put in place after the 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon oil disaster, which killed 11 people and covered the seas with millions of barrels of oil. <https://t.co/y9MY87Vuuk>

— NRDC [@NRDC](#) [May 2, 2019](#)

This administration is constantly trying to literally poison Americans. <https://t.co/gTTbVBVkkh>

— Thor Benson ([@thor_benson](#)) [May 2, 2019](#)

The rule will go into effect 60 days after it is published in the Federal Register, [which could happen as early as Friday](#).

[According to](#) the *New York Times*, one of the major components of the Trump administration’s plan “is a significant reduction in the requirement for oil companies to test fail-safe devices called blowout preventers, which are intended to be a last line of defense

against disasters like Deepwater Horizon.”

The White House’s revisions also included slight tweaks to the language of existing regulations that environmentalists warned could have massive effects.

As the *Washington Post* [reported](#):

“Safety-bureau regulators removed a key word from language describing the level of down-hole pressure the agency requires operators to maintain in a given well to avoid an accident. The word it removed is ‘safe.’”

Chris Eaton, oceans attorney with Earthjustice, said his organization “will use every tool we have to prevent these rollbacks.”

“The Trump administration is rolling back mechanisms and technology designed to protect rig workers and prevent another disaster offshore,” Eaton said in a [statement](#). “These rollbacks are a hand out to oil company CEOs at the cost of endangering the lives of their workers and heightening the risk for another environmental catastrophe off America’s coastlines.”

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Featured image: U.S. Coast Guard crews work to put out a fire during the Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010. (Photo: U.S. Coast Guard)

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