



## Dangerous Goods - Hazardous Materials Group & Network

### Release 2011 – 768 Newsy Stuff

<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/DangerousGoods>

**October 26 2011**



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#### SCOTLAND, ABERDEEN, OCTOBER 15 2011. ABERDEEN RIVER HIT BY THREE-MILE OIL SPILL >> HELICOPTER PILOTS SPOTTED OIL SHEEN ON RIVER DON

*alison rennie*



A clean-up operation has been launched after a major oil spill in an Aberdeen river, the Evening Express can reveal today. The oil slick, spanning three miles (5km), was spotted on the surface of the River Don by helicopter pilots. An investigation by water and environment chiefs discovered the accidental leak came from a business at the Pitmedden Industrial Estate, in Dyce.

<http://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/Article.aspx/2472672>

#### USA, MN, ST PAUL, OCTOBER 15 2011. FUEL REMOVED, REPLACED AT TWO RENVILLE COUNTY GAS STATIONS AFTER ETHANOL BLENDING MISHAP.

The Minnesota Department of Commerce reports that fuel with higher-than-allowed concentrations of ethanol has been replaced at 37 stations in southern Minnesota, including two in Renville County and one in Redwood County. The Minnesota Department of Commerce reports that fuel with higher-than-allowed concentrations of ethanol has been replaced at 37 stations in southern Minnesota, including two in Renville County. The Department has identified 38 gas stations and 10 secondary distributors in Minnesota that received gasoline with above-regulation concentrations. Investigators suspect 15 to 20 additional stations may have received non-regulation fuel from secondary distributors, according to information released Friday by the Department. The investigation found concentrations of ethanol as high as 63 percent in a station in Springfield, and at 17 percent at another in Windom. The state requires a 10 percent ethanol concentration in regular fuel. The higher concentration ethanol was identified, removed and replaced at these gas stations in Renville and Redwood Counties: 212 & 1 Stop, Danube; Farmer's Co-op Oil, Renville; and Cenex, Redwood Falls. The Commerce Department also reported that two secondary distributors in Renville County, the Farmers Union Oil Company and the Cenex Renville Cooperative, Renville, also received the high blend of ethanol. The higher-than-allowed concentrations are blamed on a mishap at Magellan Midstream Partners Petroleum, Mankato. As of Friday, it has removed and replaced the fuel from 37 of the 38 identified locations. Other stations that had received but have replaced the fuel are in locations including Albert Lea, Austin, Belle Plain, Blue Earth, Essig, Gibbon, Mankato, New Ulm, Nicollet, Owatonna, Saint Peter, Sleepy Eye, North Mankato, Windom, and Winthrop.

<http://www.wctrib.com/event/article/id/85643/>

#### ISA, MT, GREAT FALLS, OCTOBER 15 2011. PIPELINE LEAK SPILLS 750 GALLONS OF DIESEL IN GREAT FALLS

**Watch the Video** <http://www.kxlh.com/news/pipeline-leak-spills-750-gallons-of-diesel-in-great-falls/>

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality has confirmed an underground pipeline leak of 750 gallons of diesel at the Montana Refining Company in Great Falls. According to DEQ officials, the refining company first reported the leak on Wednesday. MRC tells us that the leak has now been cleaned and officials are continuing to work with the state. The leak reportedly happened on a buried pipeline at the company's loading facility. DEQ Enforcement Administrator John Arrigo says oil didn't reach surface water and it didn't seem likely the spill would get into the Missouri River waterway because the company caught it in time. Still, he says the amount of oil spilled made this a big leak, noting, "I would say 750 gallons is a large spill in comparison to the amount of fuel they may be loading in a tanker truck at any one time. Tanker trucks can carry 5 to 8,000 gallons, so 750 is a larger part of that. I would say for this situation it's a large spill." Arrigo says the company must submit a report to the state following the clean up. He says unless soil samples don't seem accurate, the state has no reason to follow up with an on-site visit. Refinery Manager Dana Leach says that the leak has been completely cleared and soil samples have already been taken. Officials at Connacher Oil & Gas, the company that owns the Montana Refining Company, declined to comment on the leak.

[http://www.kxlh.com/news/pipeline-leak-spills-750-gallons-of-diesel-in-great-falls/#!prettyPhoto\[gallery\]/0/](http://www.kxlh.com/news/pipeline-leak-spills-750-gallons-of-diesel-in-great-falls/#!prettyPhoto[gallery]/0/)

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### USA, NV, LAS VEGAS, OCTOBER 15 2011. SHRADER & ASSOCIATES OBTAIN \$7.5 MILLION VERDICT AGAINST KINDER MORGAN

The national law firm of Shrader & Associates obtained a \$7.5 million verdict against Kinder Morgan Energy Partners, L.P. for the wrongful death of Rick Lewis, who was exposed to benzene while working as a gasoline tanker-truck driver at its bulk loading facility. Shrader & Associates represented the family of Rick Lewis, a gasoline tanker-truck driver in California and Nevada. From 2002-2008, he loaded gasoline at the Kinder Morgan terminal in Las Vegas on a daily basis and delivered the fuels to various retail outlets. Gasoline contains up to 3% [benzene](#). Plaintiffs alleged that Mr. Lewis's repeated exposures to benzene in gasoline at the Kinder Morgan terminal caused him to develop [Myelodysplastic Syndrome \(MDS\)](#). MDS is a disease of the bone marrow which causes the abnormal production of blood cells and platelets. It is generally incurable and requires chemotherapy, transfusions, and bone marrow transplants. Benzene is a known carcinogen which can cause various forms blood and bone marrow diseases and leukemia. Mr. Lewis was diagnosed with MDS in March 2008 and died in May 2009 at the age of 58. Kinder Morgan Energy Partners, L.P. operates thousands of miles of gasoline pipelines and approximately 180 bulk terminals nationwide. The dangers of benzene exposure from bulk gasoline operations, including damage to DNA, have been recognized by several public health agencies and published in the medical and scientific literature for decades. Plaintiffs' lawsuit alleged that Kinder Morgan failed to monitor its operations for benzene exposure during routine operations, disregarded normal safety and industrial hygiene practices, and failed to warn its employees and contractors about the hazards associated with benzene exposure. "The jury's verdict confirms that Kinder Morgan acted in a negligent manner in distributing benzene-containing gasoline without ever warning of the dangers associated with benzene exposure," lead trial lawyer Justin Shrader said. "The verdict underscores that corporations have a duty to workers to protect them from hazards associated with their facilities and products. Although we cannot bring Mr. Lewis back, we hope that this verdict will send a message that these inactions will not be tolerated." Cause No. A5666869: Lewis, et al. v. Kinder Morgan Energy Partners, LP, District Court, Clark County Nevada, Dept. 27, Honorable Nancy Allif

<http://www.prweb.com/releases/2011/10/prweb8875406.htm>

### CHINA, QINGDAO, OCTOBER 15 2011. OIL SPILL DISCOVERED IN CHINA'S BOHAI SEA



An oil spill was discovered in north China's Bohai Sea Friday evening and is being assessed for damage, maritime authorities said, reported Xinhua news agency. The Tianjin branch of the China National Offshore Oil Corp. said it discovered the spill after an oil slick was spotted near the Jinzhou 9-3 oil field, which is located in Liaodong Bay, around 5 p.m. In a report, the company said the source of the oil is an underwater pipe that was damaged by the anchors of ships passing through the bay. The State Oceanic Administration (SOA) has initiated a level-three emergency response to the spill and has dispatched a plane and a monitoring vessel to assess any possible damage. The spill comes after the government's pledge to inspect offshore petroleum drilling and exploration businesses to prevent future oil spills. The pledge was a response to a severe oil spill that occurred in Bohai Bay in June,

wreaking havoc on local tourism and aquatic farming. The June spill originated from a platform belonging to ConocoPhillips China, a subsidiary of U.S.-based oil giant ConocoPhillips. The company has been criticized for its failure to clean up the spill in accordance with a deadline imposed by the Chinese government. The Bohai Sea is the innermost gulf of the Yellow Sea and comprises Laizhou Bay, Liaodong Bay and Bohai Bay.

<http://www.mysinchew.com/node/65165>

### USA, CA, LOS ANGELES, OCTOBER 16 2011. EXPLOSION PLANNED IN SYLMAR

*catherine saillant*

Authorities will detonate one or more canisters of volatile gas. Part of the 210 Freeway and Foothill Boulevard in Sylmar will be closed, perhaps for several hours, beginning early Sunday. Federal environmental officials were planning to detonate at least one canister of highly volatile gas at a Sylmar industrial park early Sunday and were set to shut down a portion of the 210 Freeway as a safety precaution. Authorities say that a canister of gas, a mixture of oxygen and hydrogen, is too volatile to move. Instead it will be exploded on site at Rainbow of Hope, an alternative energy company at 12349 Gladstone Avenue. An August explosion at the building ripped a hole in the roof and blew two workers onto the street, officials said. One of them,

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Timothy B. Larson, sustained critical injuries in the blast. A similar explosion in June 2010 at a Simi Valley facility being operated by Larson's father, Timothy A. Larson, killed his brother, Tyson Larson, 28. The family-owned business, which has also operated under the name Realm Industries and Realm Catalyst Inc., is the subject of inquiries by Cal/OSHA and the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) into whether the company had proper permits and stored chemicals and explosive gases properly. Los Angeles arson investigators are also looking into the Aug. 9 blast. On Friday, businesses and residents in the vicinity of the plant were notified about the impending detonation. Officials expect little or no damage from the explosions, which will be triggered by a charge placed on the canister by a Los Angeles police bomb squad, said Nahal Mogharabi, an EPA spokeswoman. As many as three canisters will be detonated, but some of them may be empty, she said. "Finding out is too dangerous and is the reason they are being intentionally ruptured tomorrow," Mogharabi said. A total of 23 canisters of pressurized chemicals and gases remained after the August explosion, and the EPA was called in to help remove them as safely as possible, said Harry Allen, an EPA section chief for the region that covers Southern California. Six are still on site, including as many as three that contain the explosive hydrogen mixture, officials said. Residents of Lake View Terrace and other nearby communities may hear the explosion, set for 6:30 a.m., but should not worry, the [Los Angeles Police Department](#) said in a press release. As a precaution, the 210 Freeway, about 600 feet south of the blast site, will be closed for up to several hours beginning at 6 a.m. between Maclay Avenue and the 118 Freeway. A parallel section of Foothill Boulevard will also be closed, the California Highway Patrol said. Larson patriarch Timothy A. Larson has been involved in alternative energy for several years, at some point bringing his sons into the business. A few months after his death, Tyson Larson was granted a patent for a process he and a co-inventor named William A. Stehl said could create energy from water molecules by using an electrical circuit to create resonance in the molecule. The energy they created, they said, could be used to power motorized vehicles. Stehl was indicted last year in U.S. District Court in northern New York on allegations he sold investors on a similar process to create energy from water. The indictment alleged that Stehl and a co-defendant used the money for personal expenditures.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-hydrogen-blast-20111016,0,2423703.story>

### NEW ZEALAND, TAURANGA, OCTOBER 16 2011. N.Z COUNTS WILDLIFE COST FROM OIL SPILL

neil sands

 **Watch the Video** <http://www.euronews.net/2011/10/15/volunteers-rush-to-join-new-zealand-oil-clean-up/>



*Hundreds of dead and injured birds have been recovered.*

In a wildlife rescue centre on New Zealand's Bay of Plenty, volunteers grimly bag the oil-soaked bodies of dead birds, victims of the country's biggest sea pollution disaster. Huge green bins are lined up in one corner of the centre at Tauranga to receive growing numbers of avian carcasses in the wake of an oil spill from the container ship *Rena*, which ploughed into an offshore reef on October 5. "It's not something you can ever prepare yourself for," vet Pauline Conayne told reporters, as volunteers clad in protective boiler suits carried out post-mortems on oil-covered birds in a screened-off area nearby. "When you see photos it touches your heart, but when you see it in person it's really devastating and quite hard. We're actually looking at bringing in a counsellor on-site." The number of dead birds that have been recovered in the North Island bay, which teems with wildlife and is a nesting area for rare species such as the endangered New Zealand dotterel, stands at 1,000. But Conayne estimates that may be only a fraction of the total killed on the oil-blackened beaches, wetlands and estuaries of an area regarded as one of New Zealand's environmental jewels. "What we're seeing as far as the dead population that has been brought in is only a very small portion of what has died out there," she said. No mammals are known to have died so far but wildlife teams are scouring the huge bay checking the seals, dolphins and whales that frequent its once pristine waters. Conayne said a handful of fur seals had been "pre-emptively" captured to keep them out of the path of the oil slick from the *Rena*, which remains stuck on the reef amid fears it will break up and release more fuel. At the wildlife centre a media minder, perhaps mindful of the region's reliance on tourism, tried to shepherd reporters away from a tent marked "post-mortem", telling volunteers not to display dead birds in view of prying cameras. But with oil-saturated birds washing up on a 60-kilometre (37 mile) of coast, images of environmental devastation have already been beamed around the world. The World Wildlife Fund's New Zealand marine specialist Bob Zuur described the sights confronting wildlife teams working along the coast. "We've been scaling the rocks looking for wildlife, it's difficult to

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see the birds and they appear frightened," he said. "We saw a shag about 20 metres offshore, flapping in the water, trying to clean itself. It couldn't fly, it couldn't dive, it didn't know what to do, and we couldn't reach it. It was heartbreaking." Yet there have been success stories, particularly treating little blue penguins -- the smallest species of the flightless birds, which have responded well to treatment for oil contamination. "Throughout the day they're fed, they're swum, and generally taken care of and loved to death," Conayne said, standing before a small swimming pool converted into a makeshift penguin watering area. The birds usually have a feisty nature and are behaving as normal, she explained. "The penguins are trying to tear people to shreds, so that's really good." WWF's Zuur said it would take years to know the full impact of the oil spill on the Bay of Plenty's ecosystem, which also contains huge marine kelp forests and is home to a large fishing industry. Conayne worries constantly about the disaster's impact on wildlife. "I look at every bird that flies over now and ask myself, 'Do you have oil, are you OK?'" she said.

#### Related Links

- [Crews struggle to drain oil-leaking ship off New Zealand](#)
- [NZ cargo ship salvage efforts continue](#)
- [Rena not stable](#)

[http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5g\\_THJxMzc7TVtOtt-PWUyc3vj\\_LQ?docId=CNG.04541aa3b8c29c653e3f84007ad858ab.91](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5g_THJxMzc7TVtOtt-PWUyc3vj_LQ?docId=CNG.04541aa3b8c29c653e3f84007ad858ab.91)

#### NEW ZEALAND, TAURANGA, OCTOBER 16 2011. RENA SALVAGE CREWS START PUMPING

 **Watch the Video** <http://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/rena-crisis/5792006/Rena-salvage-crews-start-pumping>

 **Photo's [29]** [Rena disaster: Ship, crew and cargo](#)

 **Photo's [42]** [Rena disaster: Environmental impact](#)



**Risky Challenge:** Salvors are winched by helicopter on to the 47,230-tonne Rena which is teetering on the edge of the Astrolabe Reef.

Salvage crew arrive onboard the stricken Rena as they look to contain damage following the ship's grounding. Salvage crews have started pumping oil from stricken container ship Rena and will stay onboard overnight to get as much oil off as possible before poor weather returns, possibly by late tomorrow. The 47,230-tonne cargo ship grounded on the Astrolabe Reef on October 5, spilling oil and containers into the sea. Salvage crews have spent the past few days preparing to remove oil from the ship with Maritime New Zealand salvage manager Bruce Anderson

confirming this evening that pumping had begun. He said MNZ had received a plan from the salvage crew that will allow them to stay on the vessel overnight and all of tomorrow. "The safety of the salvage team is paramount and I had to be satisfied that there is a workable plan to rescue the people from the vessel if something goes wrong. "I have now seen the plan which states the steps they will take to ensure the safety on board overnight to complete preparations and then start pumping fuel to the tanker Awanuia that is lying off the Rena's stern." "The team has encountered a number of technical difficulties, but the calm conditions and the forecast for the next 24 hours give them a good opportunity to get this work underway." While the weather has been good for the past few days, it is expected to deteriorate late tomorrow which may impact on the operation. "This is a hugely challenging and risky operation even in full daylight - these are incredibly brave and dedicated people working very hard to protect the beaches and coastline of the Bay of Plenty."

#### More Oil Leakage Likley

He wanted to stress however that more oil would be released at some point due to the nature of its position in the stricken ship. "There will be more oil released. How much we don't know yet. When we don't know." Around 90m of the ship was firmly positioned on the reef but another 60m of the vessel was hanging off into deep water. "The only thing holding that vessel....is the buoyancy of all the air in the engine room." Bad weather could destabilise the ship. "There is every chance the vessel could slip off the reef." While the weather forecast was good for today, higher waves were expected on Monday evening, Anderson said. Transport Minister Steven Joyce said the boat remained in a "very precarious position". "There is every likelihood that further oil may be lost. We are nowhere near out of the woods by any means." Meanwhile, there has been a report of a container off the Whakatane coast. On the beaches, more than 500 volunteers had been expected to assist the clean up effort

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at Papamoa and Maketu today, combined with around 140 NZ Army personnel. There had been 618 tonnes of oiled sandy waste recovered, MNZ said.

### **Clean-Up Cost**

Joyce today revealed the cost of the on-going Rena oil spill clean-up. So far around \$3.5 million had been spent on oil clean up operations, but that did not include the cost of the salvage of the ship, Joyce told TVNZ this morning. "The cost of the oil response so far is around \$3.5 million; the cost of the salvage I don't know but that's entirely at the ship's owner's account - the cost of the salvage and the containers," he said. However Joyce said the total cost for the salvage and oil clean-up could run into the tens of millions of dollars. Joyce would be meeting with representatives from the company which chartered the Rena, the Mediterranean Shipping Company.

### **Beach Re-Opens**

Officials have re-opened a section of beach previously closed by the Rena oil spill this morning. A small section of beach between Mt Maunganui, from the Base Track, along to Moturiki Island was now open to public access, Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) said. Assessments of the beach and water quality had cleared the section of beach being opened, said MNZ National On Scene Commander Nick Quinn. "We've had beach clean-up teams there getting rid of the oil, and this morning we had environmental assessment teams digging down into the sand to check for any buried oil. "They've dug a number of trenches down into the sand and established that it's clear. "We have also conducted water sampling, which has confirmed the water in that area has returned to pre-spill conditions." Changing tides and weather conditions could bring oil back to the beach, however. Other areas had been closed so work to clean up oil could be carried out. The area from Moturiki Island to Maketu Point, including the Maketu Estuary, was now closed off. Additionally, clean-up teams were at the Mount as some oil had been found in rock pools there, he said.

### **Frightening Job**

A salvor who descended deep into the twisting bowels of the wreck of the Rena has described it as one of the most frightening tasks of his career. Anderson said his team had attached four "platforms" around the ship, from which they would lower pumps to get the oil off. They were unable to start the process yesterday but today may see the first oil removed. If it works, up to 50 tonnes of oil can be removed every hour. The Rena's current oil load would take around 14 hours to remove. Crews were pushing everything they could to get pumping oil off the stricken ship, Anderson said. "But they are systematic people, they have to make sure all the processes will work. The last thing they want is to make things worse," he said. "It's far too dangerous for them to stay on the vessel overnight. If she moves or comes off the reef, they have got a nano-second to get off. The only way to do that is to get in the water and there are strong currents there – we don't need someone injured or killed." Anderson said salvaging the Rena was particularly challenging. "I was talking with one of the salvage officers, and this guy has been doing this for a long time. He led the initial inspection party and he said this was one of the worst wrecks he'd ever got on. This thing is grinding and groaning away as it is twisting and mashing parts of it up. "He said going on board that vessel was one of the scariest things he'd done. We shouldn't underestimate the complexity of what they're doing. They don't want to be inside the vessel, they are trying to work on the outside because that is the safest place." One of the most terrifying areas was the engine room. Several times the salvors had climbed down a five-storey ladder to reach the base of the room, with the ladder tilted badly by the ship's listing position, Anderson said. There was also 60cm of water on the floor. "Imagine that while you're doing that, you've still got this whole thing creaking and groaning around you." Meanwhile, hopes the ship was resting completely on the reef were dashed by divers, who reported the ship's bow had settled on the reef but the stern was hanging dangerously in space, Anderson said. "She is not as stable as we hoped and that concerns me." He said a change in the weather and bigger swells could cause the ship to break up or move. "You just don't know what is going to take it off." Anderson also warned that people should be braced for more oil. "We can't control a lot of this stuff and if we have another storm and the vessel starts rocking, we are likely to see more releases." Environment Minister Nick Smith said while the volunteer effort had seen 70 per cent of the beaches cleared, it was not all good news. Some of the Rena's oil appeared to now be trapped in the ship's duct keel. "There may be as much as 100 tonnes, and it could be released if weather conditions turn to a larger swell."

### **Feeding the Volunteers**

Volunteers labouring to clean up oil-coated Bay of Plenty beaches have been bolstered by deliveries of baking and cut lunches from locals. "A local bakery delivered trays of hot sausage rolls and pies as well as cut lunches. Cartons of apples, bananas and oranges were also donated. A number of locals also baked muffins and dropped them in for the volunteers," said MNZ on-scene commander Nick Quinn. A local radio station had run a barbecue for volunteers at Papamoa Surf Club and one of the

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banks ran a refreshment station. "Its very hard physical work cleaning up oil, and this has really given a boost to those people out on the beaches and around the shoreline," Quinn said.

### Related Links

- [Marine life suffer from oil spill](#)

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/rena-crisis/5792006/Rena-salvage-crews-start-pumping>

### CANADA, EDMONTON, OCTOBER 16 2011. SHELL SET TO PLUG LEAK THAT CREATED POND AT OILSANDS MINE >> NEVER-SEEN-BEFORE PROBLEM SHOWS IMPORTANCE OF ADDITIONAL SEISMIC WORK IN AREAS EARMARKED FOR MINING

dave cooper



*The flooded pit at Shell's Muskeg River mine now holds about seven million cubic metres of salty water after a deep crack formed in the rock below the mined-out area last year, allowing water from a deep aquifer to flow upwards. It was the first time an oil sands firm has faced such a situation. Shell is building a drilling pad in the pond and will inject hot asphalt and then cement into the crack to permanently seal the leak next year.*

When water started appearing at the bottom of a Muskeg River mine pit north of Fort McMurray last October, crews assumed it was normal seepage from surrounding rock. But it quickly became clear that this was something different — the water was not slowly rising from the basal aquifer, but flowing in under pressure, bubbling up from the bottom of the pit. It was salty, and it stank of rotten eggs, thanks to low levels of hydrogen sulphide. So it was clearly coming from a deeper aquifer, and that meant it needed to be patched. But how to do it? Shell Canada tested the site to learn more about its geology and has recently come up with an innovative plan to permanently seal the crack in the floor of the mined-out pit, named cell 2A. It also has a way to deal with the seven million cubic metres (seven billion litres) of salty water now sitting in the former mine pit — a deep pond that is still growing at 200 cubic metres (200,000 litres) per hour. "This situation in cell 2A was unexpected and something that has never happened to any oil sands mine before. But what we have now learned is going to change the way we operate, and I think the other firms will be doing the same," said John Rhind, vice-president of heavy-oil operations for Shell Canada Energy, the operator and majority owner of the Albian Sands project. And that means doing additional seismic work throughout areas that are planned for mining, so geologists can detect weak areas in the underlying limestone — the 150-metre-thick rock that lies above the deep saline aquifer that is the source of the water in cell 2A. In this area of the Muskeg River mine, Shell had removed 40 metres of overburden and up to 70 metres of oil sands. Crews were cleaning out the bottom of the cell, down to the limestone base, when the water began gushing in. "We immediately got the heavy equipment out of there. We had already started to build this cell to hold tailings, so we continued to build up the berms" to contain the salty water, Rhind said. Water initially gushed in at 2,000 cubic metres (two million litres) per hour. Geologists know the aquifer under cell 2A originates in Saskatchewan, where fresh water enters the ground and becomes salty as it moves through the salt-rich layer of porous rock. The aquifer eventually seeps into the Athabasca River. Shell estimates a five-metre-long crack that snakes up through the limestone is the source of the problem. The firm is currently filling in a small portion of the pond above the leak, dumping sand over a layer of rip-rap (rubble to allow drainage from the leak to continue) to create a base for a drill rig. "We are going to drill holes from this pad that we are creating, which will allow us to take core samples, and also be a way to inject sealant." Shell considered using a floating drilling barge, but if the hydrogen sulphide gas returned it would be a safety hazard for the crew. "The pad is the safest approach," he said. Shell brought in its experts from around the world, people with experience in the Gulf of Mexico and the North Sea, and scientists from Houston and Amsterdam to study the problem. Normal cement injection won't work because of the incoming water flow, so Shell intends to inject a hot asphalt material to create a temporary seal. Then grouting cement will be pumped down to make the seal permanent. Drilling should be completed by January, and Rhind figures it will take another 10 months to complete the sealing process. Dealing with the remaining water is a simpler problem. Shell can't use the salty water in its processes, but another oil firm may be able to pipe it to its facility. Perhaps the easiest solution is to slowly add dry sand from the tailings handling process. "Dry sand would slowly absorb the water. There would be about 30 per cent water in the sand, and other tailings areas receive wetter sand," Rhind said. Reclamation could then proceed as normal, "and as our aboriginal neighbours tell us, the real architects of the land, the beaver, will come in and finish off the landscape," he adds. The Energy Resources

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Conservation Board is closely following the Shell project, spokesman Bob Curran said. "We believe what Shell is doing is appropriate," he said. He could not comment on any moves to ensure all firms do full seismic work at future mine sites to detect any weakness in the limestone cap rock which overlies the deep aquifer. But Rhind says Shell is sharing all its seismic data with its competitors, Suncor, Syncrude, Canadian Natural and Esso. "They are happy. Everybody in the industry will learn what we have learned," he said. "And from this point forward, we are doing the extra seismic at Muskeg and our new Jackpine Mine so we know what we are dealing with under the oilsands."

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/business/Shell+plug+leak+that+created+pond+oilsands+mine/5553028/story.html>

### USA, WA, GIG HARBOR, OCTOBER 16 2011. BARGE WITH CRANE SINKS IN GIG HARBOR, SPILLING FUEL

*margaret santjer*



The state Department of Ecology is overseeing the response to the incident, which spilled an unknown amount of fuel. A barge with a 5-ton deck crane sank in the harbor Saturday morning, spilling an unknown amount of fuel into the water, the state Department of Ecology said. The barge owned by Marine Floats of Tacoma went down sometime between 8 and 9 a.m. at 3421 Harborview Drive, said Curt Hart, a spokesman for the Ecology Department's Spills Program. Marine Floats reported the incident to the department and deployed boom to contain the fuel from the crane, Hart said. The Gig Harbor fire department deployed an additional 200 feet of boom to keep the thin sheen from spreading. The barge is underwater, but floating above the

bottom, and divers have secured lines to it, Hart said. "They're trying to pump water off of it to try to get it to float, and then will try to bring it to shore," he said. "That should happen over the next 12 hours, by about 2 a.m. tomorrow." The department wants to make sure nothing happens during the operation to make the barge roll, Hart said. Treated timber that was on the barge and fuel from the crane have been successfully removed, Hart said. It's not known how much fuel leaked into the water or how much was at risk of spilling, something that the Ecology Department will investigate. The spill left a thin sheen of oil on the water, which likely is too thin to recover, Hart said. It will break up, and some will likely mix with the water and some will evaporate. But damage to aquatic life starts as soon as something like that hits the water he said. "That'll be part of the assessment we'll do, what was the environmental impact," he said. "At this point it's too early to tell." It's not known what caused the barge to sink. A message left on Marine Float's voicemail wasn't immediately returned Saturday afternoon. According to the [Marine Floats website](http://www.marinefloats.com), the Tacoma company "designs, manufactures, constructs and maintains commercial and residential marinas, dock systems, covered moorage and other waterfront solutions."

#### Original Story:

Gig Harbor fire and police departments and the state Department of Ecology are responding to an oil spill in the harbor. According to [a statement from the Ecology Department](http://www.gigharborpatch.com/articles/fuel-spills-in-gig-harbor), a barge owned by Marine Floats with a 5-ton deck crane sank in the harbor Saturday. "The sunken barge has leaked an unknown amount of fuel, causing an oil sheen on the water. The fuel has been removed from the barge crane," the department said. "The barge owner has deployed boom and absorbent materials to help contain the spill."

<http://gigharbor.patch.com/articles/fuel-spills-in-gig-harbor>

### USA, N.J, WALDWICK, OCTOBER 16 2011. HIDDEN HAZARD: UNDERGROUND OIL TANKS CARRY RISK OF LEAKS

*kathleen lynn*



*An underground 1,000-gallon oil tank being removed from a front lawn in Teaneck. Many buyers will walk away from properties if they learn of the existence of such a tank, often preferring houses heated with natural gas.*

When Marianne and Matthew Schottenfeld began thinking of selling their [Waldwick](http://www.waldwicknj.com) home in early 2009, a real estate agent advised them to remove the underground heating-oil tank. "We thought it was going to be pretty painless and inexpensive," Matthew said. "But the contractor discovered that the tank was corroded, and oil had leaked into the ground. It was downhill from there." The Schottenfelds' property is completely clean now, but it took more than \$60,000 and 2 1/2 years. Although their case is extreme, it illustrates the trouble these hidden tanks can create for

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homeowners, buyers and sellers. "They're very frightening things," said Richard Kelly, an [Oradell](#) real estate lawyer. There are an estimated 120,000 buried residential oil tanks in New Jersey, according to the New Jersey Fuel Merchants Association. That number has been shrinking as homeowners remove the tanks, either by replacing them with aboveground tanks or switching to natural-gas heat. In many cases, a home sale forces the issue. Because of the tanks' potential for pollution, most homebuyers demand they be removed before the deal can go forward. "I haven't had a buyer in years who accepts a house with a tank in the ground," said Sheldon Neal, a Re/Max agent in [Oradell](#). "Many buyers will say right up front, 'I want gas, I don't want to look at oil,' because of the perception that these tanks are a problem," said Deborah Graske of Abbott & Caserta Realtors in [Ho-Ho-Kus](#). Mortgage lenders and homeowners' insurance companies also are wary of underground tanks. As a result, many real estate agents advise sellers to deal with the tanks before they even put the house on the market. Sellers don't always know whether there's an oil tank on the property because a previous owner may have abandoned the tank and switched to gas heat years earlier. If there's a question, home inspectors often look for signs indicating there's an abandoned tank on the property, like old pipes or oil feed lines in the house. Inspectors specializing in oil tanks are sometimes called in to sweep the property with a metal detector to search out an old tank and do test borings of the soil nearby to see if there are any leaks. If a tank is found, removing it typically costs around \$1,500 to \$2,000 — if it's not leaking. But if it has leaked oil, cleanup costs can run into the tens of thousands. That's what happened to the Schottenfelds, whose tank leaked oil into their neighbor's property as well as their own. Tests found that the leaks probably started 25 to 30 years ago. Joe Solari, vice president of Aim Tank Services in [Wayne](#), said that in his experience about 60 percent of removed tanks are leaky. When a leak is discovered, the state Department of Environmental Protection must be alerted, and the cleanup process begins. Insurance won't necessarily take care of the cost. Homeowners' policies in New Jersey generally won't pay for oil damage to the homeowner's property, although most cover damage to groundwater or a neighboring property, according to the state Department of Banking and Insurance. Insurance companies try to limit their exposure to tanks. New Jersey Manufacturers Insurance Co., for example, will not cover liability for oil leaks unless the homeowner buys a special endorsement, which is offered only in the first year of coverage. And USAA won't write a new homeowners' policy for any property that has an underground tank, although it continues to renew policies on such properties. Homeowners can get insurance through their oil companies, covering up to \$100,000 in cleanup costs on the homeowner's property. That insurance carries restrictions, including the requirement that if an underground tank is removed, the homeowner installs another tank and sticks with oil heat for at least a year, since the oil industry would like to keep the customers rather than see them switch to gas heat. Jenni and Paul Harmon, newlyweds who recently bought a Cape Cod home in [Waldwick](#), accepted an underground oil tank only because there was a \$100,000 policy provided through the oil dealer. "It definitely gave us some peace of mind," said Paul Harmon, a customer service supervisor. The Harmons, nonetheless, plan to remove the underground tank within a few years. Other buyers just want the tanks out immediately. "Even if there's insurance on the tank, maybe half of buyers just look to get rid of it," said Barbara Weismann, a real estate agent with Weichert in [Tenafly](#). Some homeowners, especially in the past, have dealt with unneeded underground tanks by having them cut open, drained of oil and filled with sand or foam — a process called decommissioning or abandoning in place. In those cases, the town typically inspects the tank and issues documents saying the tank abandonment was properly handled. But these days, the state DEP strongly advises that tanks be removed rather than abandoned. "When you don't remove them from the ground, it's pretty hard to determine if there's a hole in there," said Gary Sanderson, coordinator of the DEP's residential tank program. In fact, if you abandon a tank in place, you may find yourself paying a second time to have it removed later because many home buyers are asking that previously decommissioned tanks be taken out. That's what Kelly advises buyers to do because he's seen several cases where a tank leaked oil into the ground, even though it was apparently decommissioned properly. Martin Fong and his wife, Elisa, recently found a [Leonia](#) house they liked but discovered it was heated by oil, with an underground tank still in use. Though tests suggested the tank was not leaking, the Fongs wanted it out. "We definitely wouldn't want to get into a situation where we would have to be responsible for a cleanup and all these other headaches," said Fong, a finance professional. The sellers provided a credit to pay for the tank removal and agreed to be liable for any clean-up costs. The Fongs converted to gas heat in September. To their relief, after the tank was removed, no oil was found in the ground. Celia Riggio, a real estate agent with Terrie O'Connor Realtors in [Wyckoff](#), said an underground oil tank recently held up the sale of a three-bedroom [Hillsdale](#) ranch. The home was in "a wonderful neighborhood" and attracted a lot of attention from potential buyers, she said. But all balked at the oil tank, even after the seller offered a credit for the cost of removing the tank and converting to gas heat. The home sold only after the sellers took care of the tank and the conversion to gas themselves. "Although we knew the oil tank would be an obstacle, we underestimated just how big an obstacle it would prove to be," Riggio said. "I would advise any

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homeowner with an oil tank to convert to gas, if natural gas is an option, before putting their home on the market." Kelly said he advises buyers not to just accept a credit for the removal of an oil tank, because if there's a leak, the cost can be much more than expected. "You don't know what you're assuming," he said. If a leak is discovered, the state advises homeowners to find a clean-up contractor on the DEP's list of certified companies, which can be found on the DEP's website. As with all home projects, homeowners should get several bids and check references before hiring a company, the DEP said. The cost of cleanup depends on how extensive the contamination is, and whether the oil got into the groundwater. Costs range from about \$8,000 to more than \$100,000 for major leaks, though the DEP says \$15,000 to \$20,000 is a more typical range. Once the cleanup is done, the contractor sends a report to the DEP (and the homeowner sends in a \$400 fee). If the DEP is satisfied, it issues a "no further action" letter, signaling that the property is free of contamination. The DEP issued about 2,600 "no further action" letters last year. A state grant program may pay for part of the cost of a tank removal and cleanup, if a homeowner qualifies. To apply, you have to have income below \$250,000 and net worth below \$500,000 (not counting the primary residence and retirement plans.) Even if you meet those standards, you may not get a grant, because the state Economic Development Authority will make the decision based on your ability to pay. Currently, there is a backlog of people waiting to get money from the program, and a homeowner who applies today may not get any money till 2014, the DEP says. The Schottenfelds' oil leak is now completely cleaned up, and they have a "no further action" letter from the DEP. Most of the Schottenfelds' costs were covered by their homeowner's insurance, because the damage to the neighbor's property from the leaking tank triggered their liability coverage. But getting the claims paid was complicated, because the couple had switched insurance companies several times over the years, and they had to determine which policy was in force when the oil leaked. In the end, the Schottenfelds expect their out-of-pocket costs to run about \$10,000 to \$15,000.

[http://www.northjersey.com/realestate/131936673\\_Buried\\_oil\\_tanks\\_can\\_break\\_deals.html?page=all](http://www.northjersey.com/realestate/131936673_Buried_oil_tanks_can_break_deals.html?page=all)

### USA, N.D, MANDAN, OCTOBER 61 2011. TESORO REMOVES CONTAMINATED GAS

*michelle san miguel*

 **Watch the Video** [http://www.kfyrtv.com/News\\_Stories.asp?news=52814](http://www.kfyrtv.com/News_Stories.asp?news=52814)



The gasoline problems continue for drivers. Tesoro is continuing to remove contaminated gas that has made its way to gas stations across western and central North Dakota. Tesoro says earlier this week they discovered that unleaded gas and gas blended with ethanol was contaminated at the Tesoro Refinery in Mandan. Diesel was not contaminated. Tesoro wouldn't say what gas stations received the contaminated gas, but they say they're working to remove it from all gas stations. They say all of the stations should be back to normal by Monday. Tesoro says if you've filled up with any tainted gasoline, it's unlikely to cause any permanent engine damage, but you should have your vehicle checked out right away. "The main impact is it we'll be running rough or have problems in terms of cold starting

properties. The people ought to there again take it to their dealer and service station to have the fuel removed and refueled," said Ron Day, Tesoro's environmental health and safety manager. Those who noticed that their cars are experiencing any of these problems are asked to call 877-876-5383. The line is open daily from 8 to 5. Tesoro says they will reimburse people for any service charges and for the fuel cost.

[http://www.kfyrtv.com/News\\_Stories.asp?news=52814](http://www.kfyrtv.com/News_Stories.asp?news=52814)

### AUSTRALIA, N.S.W, YENDA, OCTOBER 18 2011. VAT VANDALS DRAIN NSW WINERY OF \$800K

**Map:** [Yenda 2681](#)

Saboteurs have attacked a winery in south-western New South Wales, destroying nearly 500,000 litres of wine. Police say the offenders entered the business at Yenda, near Griffith, some time last weekend. They drained 10 tanks holding 490,000 litres of mixed wine, worth more than \$800,000. Police are appealing for public help to identify those responsible and have asked anyone with information to call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

#### **Related Links**

- [NSW Police: Appeal for assistance following vandalism at winery - Yenda](#)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-10-18/vat-vandals-cost-nsw-winery-800k/3577168>

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#### NEW ZEALAND, TAURANGA, OCTOBER 16 2011. OIL SPILL CLEAN UP TOPS \$3M SO FAR



*The cost of salvage and retrieving containers will fall to the ship's owners.*

The cost of cleaning up oil spilled from the container ship *Rena* has reached \$3.5 million. Revealing details on Sunday of the financial effects of the spill, Transport Minister Steven Joyce also said he had been unhappy with the response of the firm that chartered the vessel. Mr Joyce told TVNZ's Q+A programme the total cost of the disaster will depend on what happens with the oil still aboard the stricken ship. Some 350 tonnes of oil has leaked from the vessel since it grounded on Astrolabe Reef on 5 October, polluting the ocean and nearby Bay of Plenty beaches. More than 1300 tonnes of fuel remains on board. While the final cost of the oil response could run into the tens of millions of dollars, Mr Joyce said, some of that would be met by

insurers of the ship's owners Costamare. The minister did not know what the cost of the salvage operation would be but said that, and the cost of dealing with the containers, would be up to the owners.

#### Charter Company Told To Step Up

Mr Joyce said he was not happy with the response last week of the Mediterranean Shipping Company, the world's second largest container shipping firm, which chartered the vessel. He says the firm has shrugged off responsibility and he has called a meeting with its representatives for Monday morning. "They have to step up and be part of this exercise," he said. Mr Joyce defended early salvage efforts after the ship first hit Astrolabe Reef, saying salvage experts succeeded in containing oil aboard the ship, thus limiting the scale of the disaster.

[http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/rena-grounding/88383/oil-spill-clean-up-tops-\\$3m-so-far](http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/rena-grounding/88383/oil-spill-clean-up-tops-$3m-so-far)

#### USA, WASHINGTON DC, OCTOBER 18 2011. HIGH COURT TO HEAR SHELL-NIGERIA RIGHTS CASE



*An indigene of Bodo, Ogoniland region in Rivers State, tries to separate with a stick the crude oil from water in a boat at the Bodo waterways polluted by oil spills attributed to Shell equipment failure August 11, 2011. The Bodo community in the oil-producing Niger Delta region sued Shell oil company in the United Kingdom, alleging that spills in 2008 and 2009 had destroyed the environment and ruined their livelihoods.*

The Supreme Court said it would consider a lawsuit against Royal Dutch Shell PLC that poses the question of whether corporations can be sued in U.S. courts for allegedly aiding human-rights abuses overseas, Brent writes. The move brings before the high court a case involving protests against oil exploration in Nigeria that date back some two decades. Quick recap: The battle won international attention in

1995 when the Nigerian military regime executed celebrated author Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other local activists. Shell in 2009 agreed to pay more than \$15 million to settle one lawsuit related to the activists' deaths, but the oil giant still faces other legal claims that its subsidiaries enlisted the aid of the Nigerian government to suppress local opposition. The plaintiffs in the Supreme Court case accuse Shell of aiding government forces that killed and abused thousands of people in the oil-rich Ogoni region, where Shell was exploring for oil. Shell has denied the allegations. A spokeswoman Monday declined to comment, citing the court proceedings. The issue before the Supreme Court isn't whether Shell aided the Nigerian government but whether it can be sued at all over an alleged offense of that nature, Brent says. The answer will have implications for other companies that have faced lawsuits in U.S. courts over their actions abroad. The first U.S. Congress, in 1789, passed the Alien Tort Statute, which allows foreign citizens to file U.S. lawsuits based on alleged violations of international law. The law was rarely used for two centuries, but plaintiffs have relied on it in recent years to target companies for their alleged complicity in abuses committed abroad. The Second U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New York threw out the lawsuit against Shell last year, ruling 2-1 that corporations can't be sued under the Alien Tort Statute. The court's majority ruled that international law doesn't recognize corporate liability for international crimes. Two other federal appeals courts issued rulings this summer that explicitly disagreed with the Second Circuit. The Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in the Shell case, *Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Petroleum N.V.*, early next year, with a decision expected by the end of June. Even if the high court rules against Shell on the question of corporate liability, the company still may prevail in the underlying case.

<http://blogs.wsj.com/law/2011/10/17/high-court-to-hear-shell-nigeria-rights-case/>

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#### CHINA, SHAANXI PROVINCE, TONGCHUAN CITY, OCTOBER 18 2011. GAS BLAST KILLS 11 MINERS IN CHINA

A gas blast has killed 11 people at a coalmine in northern China in the latest accident to hit the country's mining industry. 21 miners were working underground on Sunday when the blast struck at the Tianyu coalmine in Tongchuan City, Shaanxi province, a spokesman for the city government was quoted as saying by the official Xinhua news agency. The bodies of 11 miners were retrieved, while the 10 others were lifted safely above ground, the spokesman said. China's mining industry has a notoriously poor safety record. Last year 2433 people died in coalmine accidents in China, according to official statistics - more than six workers a day. Labour rights groups say the death toll is likely much higher, partly due to under-reporting of accidents as mine bosses seek to limit their economic losses and avoid punishment.

<http://www.skynews.com.au/topstories/article.aspx?id=674216&vld=>

#### CHINA, HEILONGJIANG PROVINCE, JIDONG, JIXI, OCTOBER 18 2011. NO SIGN OF LIFE DETECTED IN FLOODED COAL MINE IN NE CHINA



Rescuers go down a pit for a rescue mission at Jindi Coal Mine in Jidong County, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, Oct. 15, 2011. Rescuers said on Saturday they had found no signs of life since 13 miners got trapped under the flooded coal mine on Tuesday.

Rescuers said on Saturday they had found no sign of life four days after 13 miners were trapped under a flooded coal mine in northeast China's Heilongjiang Province. Efforts to pump water out of the mine continued, though the prime time for rescue efforts had passed, according to Peng Jianxun, deputy head of the State Administration of Coal Mine Safety (SACMS). Police have detained the boss of Jindi Coal Mine, a licensed private mine in Jidong county, who apparently tried to cover up the accident after the flood hit the mine on Tuesday afternoon. The mine owner later confessed to the police that 24 people were underground when the accident happened, with 11 of them managing to escape. The cause of the accident

is still under investigation, and it is still unknown how many hours it would take to drain the mine.

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-10/15/c\\_131192812.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-10/15/c_131192812.htm)

#### NIGERIA, PORT HARCOURT, OCTOBER 18 2011. ABONNEMA WHARF - PORT HARCOURT'S DANGEROUS JETTY

*bashiru abdullahi*

Abonnema wharf community is a popular but dangerous jetty in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital. It is a waterfront community with an estimated population of over 23, 000 different families, living close to petroleum tank farms belonging to different oil companies, such as Sigmund Nigeria Limited ( now Aiteo energy resource), Sorelink oil and Dozzy oil and gas. Angala-Pele- Poku, as it was originally known in the 1960s, the overcrowded shanty community, where 3-4 people share a sleeping room, is usually a busy commercial area, where tankers queue up daily to load refined petroleum products. It is also situated not too far from the Rivers State Government House, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) , the Rivers State Secretariat among others, which raises concern among many as well as residents of the area, of a possible explosion that may affect not just the 23, 000 families, but also government institutions. This year, a major tragedy, witnessed by this reporter was averted when a fully loaded petroleum tanker exploded at a distance not too far from one of the companies that owns petroleum tank farms, damaging houses and forcing thousands of people to flee their homes for safety, considering the crowded nature of the houses, and a possibility of the fire extending to the tanks. This reporter with two other journalists from Business Day and a Port Harcourt based newspaper, experienced the hazards of their profession when they were surrounded by youths in Abonnema Wharf, for the trying to find out the cause of a tanker explosion, that sent the entire residents and oil companies in the area to scamper for safety. It took the intervention of some elders in the community, who took this reporter and his colleagues into their compounds, only to gather from a source that "Those boys attacking you people are the same boys who caused the explosion by going under the tanker to smoke Indian hemp, and they are afraid that when you get to find out and publish, they may be in trouble." Mr. Jim Tom-George is the Public Relations Officers of the Abonnema Wharf House Owners Association (AWHOA). He told this reporter "As a community, we have written petitions to the Rivers State Commissioner of police over the safety of the community from the activities of these oil companies, but nothing has been done about that." Residents of Abonnema Wharf, who are believed to be 80% employed by the coastal marine, 25 % civil servants/oil workers

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### Release 2011 – 768 Newsy Stuff

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and predominantly from the Ijaw and Kalabari ethnic groups, have continuously raised alarm over their safety, as regards the activities of oil companies surrounding them. "The world must come to our aid! Tank farms are explosions waiting to happen. Living with petroleum tank farms is Hell!. Petroleum tanks will kill us, remove them now! Abbonnema Wharf community is not a refinery but home to over 23, 000 families. Take away your tanks of death," Abbonnema residents protest. The PRO of AWHOA said that the community had repeatedly written several petitions to relevant authorities as well as the oil companies, expressing concern over the impending danger, but had never gotten a favorable response. "We have been writing petitions to the government on this, but nothing has been done. What we are saying is that government should always take the lives of this community into consideration, when siting any economic development project. The Department for Petroleum Resources (DPR) who gave these companies the licenses to operate, should have carried out an environmental impact assessment. In developed countries, petroleum tank farms are built kilometers away from peoples' residential areas. Now between January and February 2007 we experienced pollution from the sandblasting of tank farms, which sent residents to hospital and clinics for medical treatment. In May 2007, a fire caused by a fuel leakage raged for over thirty minutes. In August 2008, over 120 drums of petroleum oil facility spilled onto the streets of Abbonnema Wharf, and members of the community were left to initiate clean-up efforts. In the process, hundreds of jerry cans were filled up. So also in January this year, a tanker loaded with refined petroleum sparked a fire that damaged houses, cars, crops and properties. It also resulted to injuries that sent many young people to the hospital." Tom George observed. This reporter gathered that in the early 1960s, the petroleum tank depots in Abbonnema Wharf were originally used for the storage of palm oil, before they were later sold to the oil companies, and were converted for the storage of refined petroleum products. The number of tanks surrounding the community according to a source, are estimated at 50 with Shorlinks owning about 5, while Sigmund has about 24 tanks, with the remaining are owned by other oil companies. In a petition written by the Abbonnema landlords/landladies Association to the Rivers State Ministry for Environment, the community pointed out that "The above umbrella body of landlord/landladies of Abbonnema Wharf community writes to draw the Ministries and agencies attention to the grave, ongoing environmental hazards in Abbonnema Wharf community, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, threatening public health and the environmental safety of the residents regarding Sigmund, Shorelink, Dozzy and other tank farm depots, located close to residential homes. Businesses and the natural habitat of aquatic livestock, conflagration arising from possible explosion will devastate not only Abbonnema Wharf, but also the Government House in Port Harcourt, state secretariat complex, Braithwaithe memorial hospital Central Bank Port Harcourt, part of old GRA and the whole mile one, NPA Rivers Port, Rivers State court complex, and offices which are just within scorching distance of the depots." This reporter also gathered that the entire community including Njemazi (already demolished) is planned for demolition by the Rivers State government, as it is being regarded as safe havens for criminal elements who terrorise the state. "Despite the presence of security personnel and check points along the entry to Abbonnema Jetty, criminals still have a field day. If you are living here in Abbonnema, you have to be careful of buying things from the youths. This is because most of these things are stolen properties. One funny thing about these youths is that when they run out of money after selling those stolen goods to you, they come back for another payment. If you refuse giving them something, they will threaten to go back and inform the original owner that you bought his or her stolen goods," A resident of the area who prefers anonymity, told this reporter. However, the PRO of AHOA said, "The perception of the waterfront communities as being inhabited by criminals, and therefore being impenetrable and difficult to effect arrest in the area, is also not entirely true. It is all a mere excuse laced with deceit to uproot the Rivers Ijaw strong holds from Port Harcourt." On the planned demolition, the PRO accused the state government of buying out properties from the owners, with the intention of using the land for whatever pleases it, including bringing in more oil companies and foreign investors to take over the land for other business venture. The Rivers State Commissioner for Information and communication, Mrs Ibim Semenitari could not be reached for comment, and did not also respond to several telephone calls and text messages sent to her. "The Abbonnema Wharf, if demolished will render an estimated 23,000 different families homeless. We have nowhere to go to from Abbonnema Wharf community and it is made up of extended communities of (Afikpo, Akwuzu, Ojike, Uruala, Elechi and the displaced Njemazi waterfront", he said. Njemanzi, which is one of the over 40 water-front communities, scattered across the state capital, was brought down to rubble by bulldozers of the state government on the orders of Governor Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi on August 28, 2009. Recently, the Regional campaign coordinator of Amnesty International, Mr. Daniel Valls, disclosed in Port Harcourt, while speaking at the launch of 'people live here' campaign to mark the 2011 World Habitat Day, that more than two years after the demolition of Njemazi, over 17,000 residents of the waterfront are still homeless, and that the state government was yet to kick-start its much talked-about urban renewal programme. Experts and residents alike see Abbonnema as the most dangerous jetty to live in, whether it is seen from the perspective of the surrounding oil tanks and its

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proximity to government establishments, the uncertainty associated with the planned demolition of the area, or the dangers of living with criminal elements. All eyes are now on the Rivers State government.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201110180497.html>

### CHINA, FENGJIE COUNTY, CHONGQING MUNICIPALITY, OCTOBER 18 2011. AT LEAST 8 DEAD IN SOUTHWESTERN CHINA MINE ACCIDENT

At least eight people have been killed and several others remain missing after an explosion ripped through a coal mine in southwestern China, state-run media reported on Monday. The explosion happened at around 1:20 p.m. local time in the Dashu Township of Fengjie County, located in China's Chongqing Municipality, government officials told the state-run Xinhua news agency. According to officials, 16 miners were working in the mine at the time of the gas explosion. Eight of them have been confirmed dead while five others remain unaccounted for. Three workers were successfully rescued, two of them who had injuries. Rescue teams continued to work at the site throughout the day as local authorities have launched an investigation into the cause of the accident. Safety conditions at mines in China have significantly improved in recent years but they remain among the world's most dangerous with 1,083 fatalities in the first seven months of 2011 alone. There were 2,433 fatalities in 2010 and 2,631 in 2009. China in recent years shut down scores of small mines to improve safety and efficiency in the mining industry. The country has also ordered all mines to build emergency shelter systems by June 2013 which are to be equipped with machines to produce oxygen and air conditioning, protective walls and airtight doors to protect workers against toxic gases and other hazardous factors. The first manned test of such a permanent underground chamber was carried out in August when around 100 people - including managers, engineers, miners, medical staff, and the chamber's developers - took part in a 48-hour test at a mine owned by the China National Coal Group in the city of Shouzhou in northern China's Shanxi Province. One of the worst mining accidents in China in recent years happened in November 2009 when 104 workers were killed after several explosions at a coal mine in Heilongjiang province.

<http://channel6newsline.com/2011/10/at-least-8-dead-in-southwestern-china-mine-accident-2/>

### USA, MICHIGAN, OCTOBER 18 2011. THE PIPELINE OF 'POISON' >> THE AFTERMATH OF A TAR SANDS OIL SPILL IN MICHIGAN HAS LEFT A COMMUNITY WITH SICKNESS, ANGER, AND LOSS OF LIVELIHOOD.

dahr jamail

[Watch the Video](#) Al Jazeera's Witness investigates how residents of a Canadian town are engaged in a David and Goliath-style battle over the dirtiest oil project ever known.



An underground pipeline owned by Calgary, Alberta-based Enbridge Energy Partners LP, began gushing into the Kalamazoo River area, and the affected area of the river remains closed to this day.

Deb Miller lives less than 30 metres from the Kalamazoo River in central Michigan, site of one of the largest inland tar sands oil disasters in US history. In July 2010, nearly four million litres of toxic tar sands crude oil gushed into the river following the rupture of the Lakehead Pipeline 6B belonging to Enbridge Energy Partners, a Canadian oil and gas transportation company. Meeting with other area residents at the office she owns with her husband on the banks of the Kalamazoo, Miller describes the adverse health effects she has suffered in the wake of the spill, including migraine headaches, burning eyes, a persistent sore throat, and a

"cloudy brain" condition that she half-jokingly refers to as "Oil Alzheimer's". The Lakehead Pipeline 6B that burst was built in 1969 to transport regular oil, not tar sands crude - which is as thick as peanut butter and must be injected with chemicals in order to enable transportation. The Michigan spill is Enbridge Energy's largest to date in the United States. Outside the office window, oil cleanup workers wearing white Tyvek suits arrive in a boat, apparently to collect samples from the silvery sheen of the river's surface. The river has been closed for over a year.

#### Rashes and Seizures

Despite grave health concerns among the local community, Miller told Al Jazeera that she has yet to receive a visit from her county or state health department. Susan Connolly, a paralegal who resides in the nearby town of Marshall, said her children showed signs of exposure immediately after the spill occurred: "My son started vomiting and my daughter got a weird rash five days into it." Factory worker Sherri Baldwin, whose house is approximately 100 metres from the Kalamazoo, is also concerned

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about her children. "They've been sick off and on over the last year," she told Al Jazeera. "My 12-year-old, David, has been really sick, with rashes all over his body, and his allergies have gotten far worse. My 10-year-old has a rash all over his stomach and back." Confirming that her grandson is now using a nebuliser as a result of respiratory difficulties, Baldwin added: "We are also having problems with our memory. I can't remember anything anymore. I don't let my kids go outside anymore because I don't want them to keep breathing all that crap. My kids are telling me they can't remember things they did even just a short while ago." Nicolas Forte, a 22-year-old construction worker and carpenter who also lives 100 metres from the contaminated river, has meanwhile suffered a total of 43 seizures since the oil spill occurred last July. Forte emphasized to Al Jazeera: "I've never had health problems before this. I was in perfect health before the spill." A survey conducted by the Michigan Department of Community Health three weeks after the Kalamazoo incident found that 60 per cent of nearby residents were experiencing headaches, vomiting, respiratory troubles and other health problems due to the spill.

### **Enbridge's CV**

Enbridge has a long history of spills throughout both the US and Canada. According to Ottawa-based advocacy group the Polaris Institute, Enbridge is responsible for 610 spills - involving more than 22 million litres of oil - between 1999 and 2008. This is approximately half the amount of oil spilled during the Exxon Valdez disaster in Alaska in 1989. Less than two months after the 6B rupture, an Enbridge pipeline leak near Chicago brought on a civil suit against the company by the state of Illinois, which alleged that Enbridge endangered public health and created a public nuisance. Around this same time, the Wisconsin Department of Justice announced that Enbridge had agreed to settle another lawsuit for \$1m over air pollution violations at a storage terminal in the city of Superior. The firm had already pledged to pay [\\$1,100,000](#) to the state of Wisconsin to settle environmental claims regarding its failure to obtain and abide by permits governing its construction of pipelines through wetlands and waterways. That a semblance of justice is often more difficult to come by is clear, however, from testimony by citizens whose lives and livelihoods have been harmed by Enbridge's activities. Consider, for example, the Kalamazoo corn and soybean farmer who described the aftermath of the spill to Al Jazeera as follows: "I would be in my fields and could taste the chemicals, and I began to feel nauseous and shortness of breath." The farmer, who wished to remain anonymous for personal reasons, explained while coughing: "I gave Enbridge the paperwork they asked for about how I was being affected, both physically and with my crops, and they 'lost' my paperwork. The Enbridge guy I was working with was transferred to Australia, and now I'm going to have least \$300,000 of losses in crops from not being able to irrigate them." As for Enbridge's cleanup efforts in the area, Dr Stephen Hamilton - professor of Ecosystem Ecology and Biogeochemistry at Michigan State University and president of the board of the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council - criticised the company's cosmetic approach and its focus on merely disappearing the most visible effects of the disaster, like sheen. At a meeting with Watershed Council members, Hamilton told Al Jazeera: "Public involvement and transparency has been lacking, and we know this because we [the Council] were an environmental advisor in the cleanup effort. We can't tell you who [at Enbridge] is making the decisions, and what information they have, because they only tell us what they want us to know." Noting that the Kalamazoo spill "has totally fouled the river environment and floodplain, as the river was out of its bank and flooding when the spill occurred", Hamilton also expressed frustration at how Enbridge's lack of transparency is impeding a clear assessment of the disaster's impact on area wildlife. Mike Murray, staff scientist for the Great Lakes Regional Centre of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), meanwhile warned of oil's chronic effects on ecosystems: "I have a big concern with longer term impacts from the chemicals in the oil, like polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, [which] tend to be larger molecules and more persistent and can bio-accumulate in the food web and cause harmful effects to fish and wildlife, reproduction, and other problems." Al Jazeera asked Enbridge if the company would comment on safety concerns many people have about their operating practices, as well as for additional information (beyond what has already been provided to the public) about what the company is doing to prevent future spills. Enbridge refused to be interviewed.

### **Government Response?**

Robert Whitesides, a board member of the Watershed Council, blames the state of Michigan for simply parroting Enbridge's own assessments of the disaster. Instead of acting independently, Whitesides told Al Jazeera, the state "started issuing reports generated by Enbridge". A number of residents have additionally accused the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of acting as little more than an apologist for the energy transportation company, and have criticised both Enbridge and the government for what was widely perceived as an inept response to the spill. According to Murray of the NWF, "[t]here was lack of government and company preparedness ... There were definitely a lot of breakdowns [with regards to] implementation [of the response plan] - finding the oil, assessing the size of the spill and allowing independent entities to come in and provide more accurate information." Todd Heywood, a senior reporter who has been covering the Kalamazoo spill for the Michigan

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Messenger, remarked to Al Jazeera: "Enbridge did not give the EPA and other emergency responders the proper MSDS [Material Safety Data Sheets] to respond to until about a week after the spill. There should have been an immediate mandatory evacuation order, but that didn't happen because Enbridge didn't give them the proper information." County Health Officer Jim Rutherford told Al Jazeera that the county response was slowed down by the fact that air-monitoring canisters had to be brought up from the Gulf of Mexico, site of the then recent BP oil spill. Beth Wallace, the Community Outreach Regional Coordinator for the NWF, meanwhile took issue with Enbridge's distribution of a waiver for area residents to sign if they desired air monitoring near their home or business, which included a pledge not to sue the company. Heywood also criticised the EPA and the Michigan Department of Community Health for their relative lack of concern when EPA tests revealed a presence of heavy metals along the mouth of the Kalamazoo, largely in the pockets of submerged oil that formed as a result of the spill. Warned Heywood: "[T]hose heavy metals stay within the bio-system." As for accusations of EPA lenience vis-a-vis Enbridge, EPA incident commander Ralph Dollhopf indeed had nothing but positive things to say in an interview with Al Jazeera about the company's response to the disaster. Asserted Dollhopf: "Their actions reflect an acknowledgement of the severity of the discharge, they take our orders seriously, and they are maintaining a strong workforce of between 600 and 700 people, with a high of around 2,500. They appear to be committed to cleaning up the spill." Significantly, while escorting Al Jazeera through the security checkpoint to the interview with Dollhopf, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator Don de Blasio specified that the agency would not be able to answer any questions pertaining to the human health impact of the Enbridge spill. Enbridge itself refused to be interviewed or to provide precise information addressing specific questions about what the company is doing to prevent future spills.

### Precedents, Parallels, Future Prospects

Dr Riki Ott, a toxicologist and survivor of the Exxon Valdez disaster in Alaska, is much less reluctant to speculate as to the effects of manmade disasters on human life. "Tar sands crude oil is 10 times more toxic than regular crude oil," Ott explained to Al Jazeera. "So of course, we're seeing the same health problems in those exposed to the chemicals in the oil in Michigan as we are seeing in those exposed to BP's oil in the Gulf of Mexico." Al Jazeera has spoken with dozens of victims of the [April 2010 BP oil spill](#), such as Paul Doom, a 22-year-old from Navarre, Florida, who became extremely ill after swimming in the Gulf. His symptoms, which resemble those reported by the residents of Kalamazoo, have included two to five seizures per day, severe headaches, internal bleeding, nosebleeds, bleeding from the ears, diarrhea, paralysis in the left leg and arm and failing vision. "I've had two blood tests for Volatile Organic Compounds which are in BP's oil and dispersants, and they both came back with alarmingly high levels," Doom told Al Jazeera. John Gooding, a resident of Pass Christian, Mississippi, meanwhile stated: "I can't live at my home address anymore because it's too close to the coast ... [T]here is a constant steady chemical smell coming off the Gulf. Even both my dogs had seizures and died." Gooding himself also experiences seizures and suffers from various respiratory and other health problems. Although chemicals used in oil dispersants have been found in his blood as well, the claim he filed with BP in the hopes of obtaining compensation has been denied. Gooding recently travelled to Washington, DC to protest the construction of the [Keystone XL Pipeline](#), which - if approved by US President Barack Obama - would transport tar sands oil from Alberta, Canada to Texas. He commented to Al Jazeera: "I was telling those people living near the proposed pipeline, 'We are your future, because when you have oil spills, this is what your life is going to look like'." Given that tar sands crude is more corrosive than regular oil and is thus far more likely to cause spills, Gooding's prophecy is entirely credible.

### Keystone XL & the Environment

One cause for concern among opponents of the Keystone XL pipeline is its potential to leak into and damage the Ogallala Aquifer, which supplies 78 per cent of the public water supply in Nebraska and one-third of all the water used for irrigation in the US. John Stansbury, a professor of environmental engineering at the University of Nebraska, recently warned in an independent risk analysis of the pipeline: "Even a small, undetected leak from an underground rupture of the pipeline in the Nebraska Sandhills could pollute almost five billion gallons of groundwater with benzene at concentrations exceeding safe drinking water levels." Twenty of the top scientists in the US recently sent the Obama administration a letter outlining how the Keystone XL pipeline constitutes an environmental disaster from a climate change perspective, while Jim Hansen, NASA's chief climate scientist, has said that if the tar sands are tapped heavily for oil, it will be "essentially game over for the climate". On October 5, the Center for Biological Diversity and other environmental groups sued the US State Department and US Fish and Wildlife Service to halt what they termed "illegal construction" on the pipeline. Meanwhile, Robert Whitesides of the Watershed Council in Kalamazoo recently remarked to Al Jazeera: "TransCanada claims they can detect and shut down a leak in six minutes, but the Michigan pipeline rupture gushed tar sands oil for 12 hours before it was detected."

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### Pro-Pipeline Attitude at the State Department?

The environmental uproar has somewhat obscured debate over the purpose of the 2,740km, \$7bn Keystone XL project, proposed by the Canadian oil and gas company TransCanada and sold to the American public as a means to reducing dependence on foreign oil. According to the watchdog group [Oil Change International](#), oil demand in the US has in fact dropped due to the economic crisis, and, for the first time since 1970, domestic oil production is up as a result of shale oil production in North Dakota and Texas. Noting that TransCanada has already secured contracts with companies that are openly planning to export oil - such as Valero, Motiva, and Total - Oil Change International observes that TransCanada's actual intention is to refine the tar sands oil into diesel fuel in order to ship it to the European market, where demand is high. In a report entitled "[Exporting Energy Security: Keystone XL Exposed](#)", the group predicts: "The construction of the Keystone XL will not lessen dependence on foreign oil - rather, it will feed the growing trend of exporting refined products out of the United States, thereby doing nothing to enhance energy security or to stabilize oil prices or gasoline prices at the pump. If completed, it will successfully achieve a long term objective of Canadian tar sands producers - access to export markets beyond the US." The environmental group Friends of the Earth has, via a Freedom of Information Act request, obtained internal emails revealing [amicable ties](#) between a State Department official and a top lobbyist for TransCanada. According to Friends of the Earth, the documents are "deeply disturbing" and indicate "pro-pipeline bias and complicity at the State Department", which oversees TransCanada's application to build the pipeline. Further evidence of bias might be detected in the State Department's final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Keystone XL, issued in August, which acknowledged the adverse impact of oil spills on wildlife: "Some of the possible toxic effects include direct mortality, interference with feeding or reproductive capacity, disorientation, reduced resistance to disease, tumours, reduction or loss of various sensory perceptions, and interference with metabolic, biochemical, and genetic processes." A far rosier conclusion was, however, reached with regard to human immunity from oil spill damage: "Crude oil spills are not likely to have toxic effects on the general public because of the many restrictions that local, state and federal agencies impose to avoid environmental exposure after a spill." Susan Connelly [provided testimony](#) at a State Department public hearing on October 7 that drew attention to a coalition of landowners, conservationists, indigenous peoples, national security experts and religious leaders who urged US President Barack Obama to reject the pipeline proposal. Because the Keystone XL pipeline project involves crossing the US border, it requires a Presidential Permit. The final say on whether to build the pipeline rests with President Obama. His decision is expected before the end of the year.

<http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/features/2011/10/2011101151776808.html>

### USA, MO, JEFFERSON CITY, OCTOBER 18 2011. KOSTER SUES OVER UNDERGROUND TANKS

*bryan cohen*

Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster filed suit on Friday against a Gentry County business for alleged violations of Missouri's Underground Storage Tank Law. Avenue C-Stores, which owns and operates US Oil, a gas station located in King City, allegedly operated without underground storage tank financial responsibility during 2009 and 2010. Missouri law requires that owners and operators of petroleum USTs must have a financial responsibility mechanism in place - most often UST insurance - to ensure that financial resources are available to pay for any contamination by petroleum products from underground storage tanks. Koster said he filed the lawsuit after Avenue C-Stores failed to respond to requests for documents from his office. He is asking the court to issue a permanent injunction ordering the defendant to comply with Missouri UST Law, to pay all costs and fees associated with the lawsuit and to pay a civil penalty of up to \$10,000 per day for each violation of the law. "Underground storage tanks that are not in compliance with the law can pose a serious health threat to Missourians," Koster said. "This legal action is necessary because the defendant failed to voluntarily comply with the law even though given the opportunity to do so."

<http://www.legalnewsline.com/news/234118-koster-sues-over-underground-tanks>

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