

NEW ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATORY STRUCTURE FOR OFFSHORE DEVELOPMENT

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The offshore environment presents particular sensitivities to petroleum development. This lesson has been demonstrated in the nation's past offshore oil spills, such as Santa Barbara in 1969, Valdez in 1989, and most recently Macondo in 2010. Each of these major events has brought with it major regulatory reform, with the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act 1970, the Oil Pollution Act in 1990, and now with the creation of the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement in 2013. This panel will discuss regulatory changes in the wake of Macondo from the creation of a new bureau to focus on enforcement of offshore operations, to a new emphasis on environmental compliance, to specific rules governing blow out preventers. The panelists will discuss how these changes to the regulatory regime apply lessons learned from the Gulf spill while attempting to enhance environmental protection and restore faith in the Government's ability to safely develop offshore resources.

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