



BLOWOUT: THE LEGAL LEGACY OF THE DEEPWATER HORIZON CATASTROPHE
April 13, 2011
Roger Williams University School of Law
Bristol, Rhode Island

AGENDA

One of our nation's worst environmental and human disasters began on April 20, 2010, when the Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded, killing 11 people, injuring 17 others, and spilling millions of gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico. What is the state of the law one year later, as the human and environmental toll rises? This conference will convene national leaders, elected officials and legal experts to examine the law's response to this calamity to date and consider the future legal legacy. We will consider issues of agency capture, tort liability, natural resource damages, and changes to law and regulation contemplated by Congress and the President's National Commission.

8:00 a.m. **Registration Opens**

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. **Continental Breakfast**

9:00 – 9:15 a.m. **Welcome**
Ronald O. Champagne, President, Roger Williams University
David A. Logan, Dean, Roger Williams University School of Law
Susan E. Farady, Director, Marine Affairs Institute, RWU School of Law

9:15 – 9:30 a.m. **Keynote: Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) (video recorded)**

9:30 – 11:00 a.m. **Panel I: Origin of a Disaster**
Deepwater Horizon was sited in accordance with existing regulations and policies, yet the blowout and its aftermath demonstrated significant weaknesses in the current regulatory system. This panel will examine how this disaster unfolded, including the laws regarding offshore oil and gas, protection of the marine environment, the health and safety of maritime workers, and the role of regulators and industry.

Moderator: **Michael Burger**, Professor, RWU School of Law
Panelists: **Stephen Da Ponte**, Atty., USCG Headquarters, Office of Maritime and International Law
Juliet Eilperin, Reporter, The Washington Post
Garret Graves, Director, Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, State of Louisiana
Sidney Shapiro, Associate Dean for Research and Development, Wake Forest University School of Law
David Westerholm, Director, Office of Response and Restoration, National Ocean Service, NOAA

- 11:00 – 11:15 a.m. **Break**
- 11:15 – 12:30 p.m. **Panel II: Assessing Damage to Marine and Human Communities**
 The Gulf of Mexico ecosystem experienced significant harm as a result of the Deepwater disaster. This panel will discuss the challenges of assessing damage to ecosystems and the human communities that surround them following an environmental disaster.
- Moderator:** Susan Farady, RWU School of Law
Panelists: Harold T. Chittum, III, Chittum Skiffs
 Kevin Dean, Esq., Motley Rice
 James J. Opaluch, Professor & Dept. Chair, Environmental and Natural Resource Economics, University of Rhode Island
 Jill Rowe, Biologist, Applied Science Associates, Inc.
- 12:30 – 1:30 p.m. **Lunch**
Keynote Speaker: Christopher M. Reddy
 Sr. Scientist, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute
- 1:30 – 2:45 p.m. **Panel III: Sue or Settle? The Adequacy of Tort Law to Fairly and Expeditiously Compensate Victims of Mass Disasters**
 The Deepwater Horizon catastrophe caused extensive damages to businesses on the Gulf of Mexico and beyond. This panel will explore whether tort law is up to the task, either procedurally or doctrinally, to fairly compensate victims of mass disasters or whether a compensation fund is preferable.
- Moderator:** David A. Logan, RWU School of Law
Panelists: George W. Conk, Adjunct Professor & Sr. Fellow, Stein Center, Fordham University School of Law
 Deborah E. Greenspan, Atty., Dickstein Shapiro LLP
 Donald A. Migliori, Esq., Motley Rice
- 2:45 – 3:00 p.m. **Break**
- 3:00 – 3:15 p.m. **Keynote Speaker:** Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) (*video recorded*)
- 3:15 – 4:45 p.m. **Panel IV: The Legal Legacy**
 The wake of the Deepwater disaster included numerous legislative hearings, introduction of numerous pieces of legislation and high-level investigative Commissions. Will legislation significantly change law and policy in environmental, energy and tort arenas? What will the lasting legal legacy of the Deepwater Horizon be?
- Moderator:** Dennis Nixon, Associate Dean/Professor, University of Rhode Island
Panelists: Fred H. Bartlit, Jr., Esq., Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott LLP, Chief Counsel to National Commission on BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill
 Thomas C. Galligan, Jr., President and Professor of Humanities, Colby-Sawyer College
 David Pettit, Senior Attorney, Natural Resources Defense Council
 Jonathan K. Waldron, Esq., Blank Rome LLP
- 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. **Reception** *Redlefsen's, Bristol, RI*
- 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. **Dinner** *Redlefsen's, Bristol, RI*