

Toxic Chemicals Used on Gulf Oil Spill While Alternative Goes Unused

Ecologically friendly dispersants worth \$1 billion only for release

By JAMES OTTAR GRUNDTVIG

Even as British Petroleum and the U.S. government have clashed in public over the toxicity of the oil dispersant BP has used on the Gulf oil spill and workers cleaning up the spill have been hospitalized apparently due to the toxic effects of the oil and dispersant mixture, a large quantity of a less toxic dispersant has been sitting in a warehouse in Norway waiting to be shipped to the Gulf.

According to Mr. Sjur W. Knudsen, the managing director of the Norwegian Clean Seas Association for Operating Companies (NOFO), the organization tasked with responding to oil spills in Norway's waters, the order placed on May 3 by BP Exploration and Production out of Tulsa, Oklahoma, for approximately 150 metric tons of the dispersant Dasic Slickgone has been held up due to "bureaucratic red tape" in the United States.

Dasic Slickgone does not appear on the EPA's list of 12 "pre-approved" oil dispersants in the National Contingency Plan Product Schedule and to be used in the United States would require special approval from the EPA.

The day before BP placed the order with NOFO, on May 2, CNBC reported that BP had bought the

"entire inventory" of the oil dispersant product Corexit 9500, which represents 95 percent of the U.S. market for oil dispersants.

The milder, soap-water-like Dasic Slickgone, made by Dasic International Ltd., in the United Kingdom, is the main oil dispersant approved for use in the North Sea, due to its lower toxicity. It has been tested, studied, and used during NOFO's unique annual drill. "We conduct an outdoor laboratory, in which we pump oil into the sea to simulate a real oil spill," Mr. Knudsen explained.

Norway is also one of the few places in the world to warehouse such a large quantity of oil dispersants available to be shipped at a moment's notice.

The dispersant Corexit 9500 that BP has been spraying over the Gulf spill and injecting one mile deep into the blowout vent, is banned by the U.K. and Norway, due to its high toxicity. "[Corexit] 9500 is forbidden to use in the North Sea offshore oil industry," Mr. Knudsen explained.

Mr. John Belk, technical director at Dasic International, Ltd, claimed in an e-mail that "Dasic is the dispersant of choice in many of the other areas around the world, including South Africa, Saudi Arabia

and Kuwait, Singapore, New Zealand and Australia."

Massive amount

BP has been using massive amounts of the oil dispersant Corexit 9500 to try to break up the Gulf oil spill. As of May 24, Lisa Jackson, administrator of the EPA, estimated that BP had already used 700,000 gallons of the dispersant in the Gulf.

On May 20, concerned about the toxicity of Corexit 9500, Ms. Jackson ordered BP to find an alternative to it within 24 hours, "if operationally possible."

BP determined it had no other effective alternatives available in large quantities and failed to comply.

On May 27, Ms. Jackson testified before Congress that BP had reduced its use of dispersants from an estimated 70,000 gallons a day to 12,000 gallons a day.

At the same hearing, Ms. Jackson claimed that BP was more interested in defending its choice to use Corexit than in finding other options.

An uncontrolled experiment Rep. Peter Defazio (D-Oregon) in a May 28 letter to Ms. Jackson urged her to prohibit the use of Corexit and said, "Based on EPA's own National Contingency Plan Product



SAFE DISPERSANT NOT APPROVED: Workers pick up oil patches that they washed up on the beach to be stored in drums for removal from the Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The dispersant BP is using has caused workers to be hospitalized, while less toxic dispersants are used because they are approved by the EPA. (AP Photo/Chris Wedel)

Schedule, Corexit is one of the least effective and most toxic dispersants available on the market."

At the May 27 congressional hearing, Congressman Jerrold Nadler (D-New York) compared the use of Corexit to that of Agent Orange. He also said, "We are conducting an uncontrolled experiment with all the marine and human life in the Gulf Coast region that could result in thousands and thousands of people getting sick or dying."

The Washington Post reported on May 27 that seven oil spill cleanup workers were hospitalized with "nausea, dizziness, and headaches."

The Louisiana TV station WDSU reported on one worker who does not smoke who was told by his doctor that his lungs resembled those of a three-pack-a-day smoker.

WDSU quoted marine toxicologist Riki Ott as saying the situation in the Gulf is similar to the Exxon Valdez disaster, in which thousands

of clean-up workers were sickened.

Some fishermen are continuing to work even though they are already sick, for fear of being fired by BP and being left without a job, according to WDSU.

Nalco, the manufacturer of Corexit 9500, says on its website that "All of the ingredients contained in Nalco's dispersants are safe and found in common household products, such as food, packaging, cosmetics, and household cleaners. Individually and collectively the ingredients are safe when used as directed."

Every single available resource

Mr. Belk confirmed the purchase order by BP of the Dasic Slickgone in Norway.

Officials at BP Deepwater Horizon refused to comment on why the Dasic Slickgone had not been shipped to the Gulf. In information Officer Ray Viator wrote in an e-

mail on June 3, "I checked with someone on the BP environmental team working with dispersants and she said she was not familiar with this product (Dasic)."

BP officials in Tulsa also refused to comment on why the Dasic Slickgone had not been shipped to the Gulf.

The EPA chose not to respond to questions about why the shipment of Dasic Slickgone had not been approved for use in the Gulf.

On April 29 President Obama said, "We will use every single available resource to deal with the oil spill." Until the EPA finds a way quickly to provide approval for an available, less toxic alternative to a more toxic product, President Obama's words will be without effect.

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America's 10 Most Endangered Rivers

By JUNE KELLUM Epoch Times Staff

Natural gas extraction planned for Pennsylvania and New York has made the Upper Delaware River the most threatened in the United States according to an annual report by river watchdog organization American Rivers.

The Upper Delaware supplies drinking water to 17 million people. Proposed extraction through the unproven method of hydraulic fracturing involves injecting chemicals into the ground, generating highly toxic waste water.

Jessie Thomas-Blate, the Most Endangered Rivers coordinator at American Rivers, said that the Delaware River Basin Commission is not issuing fracturing permits until new regulations, scheduled for later this year, are established. The commission will not conduct an environmental impact study before issuing the new regulations, she said.

The annual reports are a call to action. Thomas-Blate said this year they are asking people to write their congressmen in support of the Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals Act of 2009, which will force natural gas companies to disclose the chemicals used in the hydraulic fracturing process.

Since 1985 American Rivers has released yearly reports indicating which rivers face the most imminent threats from pollution, dams, and mining projects.

The most endangered rivers on the list are not necessarily the most polluted. The criteria



MOST ENDANGERED RIVERS: American Rivers released report on the most threatened rivers in the U.S. American Rivers

for determining the most endangered rivers are largely based on whether a major decision affecting the river's fate will be made in the coming year. "We want to make sure that these rivers don't turn into those most polluted rivers," said Thomas-Blate.

The Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta in California was the most endangered river in 2009 and is No. 2 this year for the same "outdated flood and water management." American Rivers wants more protection for the river to be incorporated into the conservation and flood management plans for the Bay Delta area.

Ongoing coal mining and mountaintop removal put the

Gauley River in West Virginia at No. 3 this year. American Rivers is asking the EPA to apply stricter water quality standards and not issue mining permits unless those standards are met, according to Thomas-Blate.

Other rivers are endangered in 2010. The Little River in North Carolina is endangered by construction of a new dam. The Cedar River in Iowa is at risk due to outdated flood management. The Upper Colorado is threatened by water diversions, the Chetco in Oregon could be harmed by mining. Idaho's Teton River is at risk from a new dam. The Monongahela River in Pennsylvania and West Virginia is also

endangered from natural gas extraction, and the Coosa River in Alabama could be hurt by hydro-power dams.

Successes

The report also highlights successful conservation efforts. Thomas-Blate said that these successes do not mean the rivers are "completely pristine and perfect," but that the reason they were listed has been successfully resolved.

In 2005 the EPA dropped its proposal to dump partially treated sewage into New York's Susquehanna River after the river was listed as endangered. The Susquehanna is now threatened

Number of U.S. Soldiers in Afghanistan Surpasses Those in Iraq

By JOSHUA PHILIPP Epoch Times Staff

The number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan surpassed those in Iraq in May. There are 94,000 U.S. forces in Afghanistan, and 92,000 in Iraq, according to the Pentagon.

The number jumped from 87,000 in Afghanistan in early May. "Everybody is moving toward the light," said Gen. George W. Casey Jr., according to the American Forces Press Service. Casey also said that nearly 90 percent of soldiers in the Army have either been deployed, are awaiting deployment, or are in training.

President Barack Obama said in December, 2009, that the U.S. will begin a gradual withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan in July, 2011.

Under the current strategy, much of the work being done in Afghanistan is not aimed at eliminating the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, but rather on building a strong Afghan govern-

ment, and training the Afghan national security force. Gen. Stanley McCrystal said in May that the Afghan national security force is approximately 225,000 strong.

By the end of the year, the number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan is set to peak at 98,000, once the troop surge is complete. All U.S. combat forces are set to withdraw from Iraq by September 1, while a complete U.S. military withdrawal is set for completion by the end of 2011.

Less than 1,000 U.S. troops have been killed in the war in Afghanistan since 2001, while 4,400 have died in Iraq since the invasion in 2003. Of note though, until recently there were far more U.S. troops in Iraq than in Afghanistan.

In 2001, there were 2,500 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, which grew to 17,000 in 2004, and then to around 22,000 in 2007. In Iraq in 2006 and 2007, there were close to 170,000 U.S. troops.

Hall and Oates Boycotts Arizona Over Immigration Law

By JACK PHILLIPS Epoch Times Staff

Hall and Oates announced this week

throughout our dealings with them. This is our response to a very specific action of the state."

Derrick Hall, the president of the

