

Lawsuit Filed on Behalf of Impacted Commercial Fishermen in The Orange County Oil Spill Case

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Late yesterday, Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy LLP filed a Class Action lawsuit on behalf of commercial fishermen whose fishing operations have been impacted by the Orange County oil spill. The proposed class representatives are lobster fishermen who operate out of Dana Point Harbor. Lobster trapping season was scheduled to begin on October 6, 2021, just days after crude oil began spewing from the pipeline owned and operated by Amplify Energy off the coast of Huntington Beach in the early morning hours of October 2, 2021.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is working with the State's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment to conduct sampling and testing of aquatic life as part of the process to re-open affected fisheries. Lobster season runs from October to mid-March, with the majority of lobsters being caught in the early weeks before the water turns cold. Orange County lobster fishermen will, unfortunately, lose out on the best part of the lobster season this year.

According to the Department of Fish and Wildlife's License and Revenue Branch, the ex-vessel value of California spiny lobster throughout the State was over \$13 million in 2020. Lobster fishermen operate out of the Dana Point Harbor as well as harbors and coastal communities up and down the California coast, including those impacted by the Orange County oil spill.

The Complaint is one in a string of lawsuits being brought against Defendants Amplify Energy Corporation and its subsidiaries, Beta Operating Company LLC and San Pedro Bay Pipeline Co., in federal court as a result of the oil spill. More lawsuits are expected to be filed in the coming weeks and months as the impacts on local businesses and fishermen continue to be identified.

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Practice Areas

Environmental Law

LAWSUIT FILED ON BEHALF OF IMPACTED COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN IN THE ORANGE COUNTY OIL SPILL CASE

“Fishermen are hardworking folks who respect and rely on Mother Nature for their livelihoods to take care of their families. They don’t deserve to be the victims of a devastating and preventable oil spill disaster – all for oil company profits.” -

Nanci Nishimura of Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy

“The unfortunate timing of this catastrophe is hitting hard for impacted fishermen, including commercial lobster fishermen. The parties responsible for the spill need to be held accountable for the losses to people’s livelihoods.”

- Kelly Weil of Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy

The Plaintiffs are represented by Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy.

Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy has been filing cases to keep the environment safe and clean for over 50 years, including the Alaska Oil Spill, Santa Barbara Oil Spill, San Bruno Pipeline Explosion, and most recently, the SoCalGas Aliso Canyon Well Blowout.