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BP and Halliburton seeking damages as a result of the oil spill that sullied the Gulf of Mexico three years ago.

Apr. 20, 2013

TAMPA – Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi said on April 19 that she will file a lawsuit against BP and Halliburton seeking damages as a result of the oil spill that sullied the Gulf of Mexico three years ago.

The state's announcement came the same day the state of Mississippi and the city of Tampa announced their own suits against BP and its partners.

"The state of Florida suffered considerable economic losses as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill," Bondi said in a news release. "BP and Halliburton must be held accountable."

Bondi will file the suit under the federal Oil Pollution Act, just barely within the law's three-year statute of limitation, in U.S. District Court in Panama City.

The state declined to say how much money in damages it will seek. But officials said Florida lost revenues from various sources as a result of the spill, including sales taxes, corporate taxes, documentary stamp taxes and taxes on alcoholic beverages and cigarettes.

Florida also wants punitive damages under maritime and Florida common law "due to the egregious nature of the misconduct" that led to the disaster, Bondi's announcement said.

This lawsuit will not address damages to the state's environment, which Bondi's office said continue to be studied.

Already, Louisiana and Alabama are involved in a massive federal trial in New

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“It doesn’t make sense for the state to join that lawsuit,” Scott said then. His office did not immediately respond to news of Bondi’s pending lawsuit.

Working for Crist, Yerrid helped draft a proposed settlement that would have established a fund for Florida to draw from as it discovered damages from the spill.

It would have been similar to the \$20 billion fund the company created to respond to business and personal claims.

But when Scott took office, Yerrid said, the idea fizzled.

“Ultimately, I hope the state of Florida succeeds, but it is really unfortunate that so much time has been allowed to pass without any resolution,” he said.

BP spokesman Scott Dean said the company had no comment.

Meanwhile, Tampa filed its own suit against BP, Transocean and several other companies.

In January, the city claimed it had sustained or will suffer nearly \$59.4 million in damages because of lost revenues from local taxes and fees.

In a brief letter dated Monday, BP denied the claim, saying Tampa’s “losses are not the result of the oil spill” because BP’s oil did not damage or destroy a natural resource close to the city.

Nonsense, said Yerrid, who hired forensic accountants to document the damages.

“Conventions were canceled,” he said. “Rooms were canceled. Tourists did not come. Tourists that were here left. There is absolutely zero question about the impact.”

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