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Published on Sunday, April 3, 2011 by **the Daily Mail/UK**

**BP Plans to Restart Deepwater Drilling in Gulf of Mexico a Year After Worst Oil Spill in History**

Oil giant BP plans to restart deepwater drilling in the Gulf of Mexico this summer, just a year after an explosion on one of its rigs sparked the worst spill in history.

The group hopes to start work on 10 wells in the Gulf after being granted permission by U.S. regulators to continue work stopped after the Deepwater Horizon spill.

The move is likely to fuel public anger a year after the disaster, which occurred when the BP well exploded, killing 11 workers and causing an environmental crisis.

BP is spending around \$41 billion on cleaning up the spill and to cover damages, but investigations into the disaster are far from over.

U.S. prosecutors were last week reportedly considering pursuing manslaughter charges against managers and are examining statements made by bosses, including former chief executive Tony Hayward, during congressional hearings last year.

It has also agreed to allow 24-hour access to the U.S. government as part of the deal.

A source close to the company said: 'BP is hoping to resume drilling in the summer once it shows it can satisfy applicable regulatory conditions, as set out by the U.S. offshore regulator.'

But the permission has only been granted to allow BP to maintain or increase production on existing wells and does not cover exploration.

BP could seek approval to start exploratory drilling later in the year, according to The Sunday Times.

News of the Gulf of Mexico drilling is expected to outrage environmentalists, but comes as a welcome development for the embattled oil firm.

The company is still reeling after a Swedish tribunal last month ruled a £10 billion deal between BP and Russia's Rosneft should be put on hold because of a dispute with shareholders at Russian partner TNK-BP.

It has put the group's shares under pressure and led to doubts over chief executive Bob Dudley, who replaced Mr Hayward following the Gulf spill.

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