

FCC REPORTS for AL PUNTO, JUNE 2010

===6/20/10===

Engineer and petroleum expert-Horacio Medina

OIL SPILL LATEST

Time: 8:00

The depth of the blowout is 5,000 feet; this makes the effort even more difficult. Robotic space exploration provides a very good analogy for deep-sea drilling. One major challenge is logistics - moving hardware on the surface to the seafloor. That process often involves building a drill pipe first. To do that, rig workers must assemble the pipe one 90-foot section at a time in a stop-start sequence - lowering the assembly another 90 feet into the water with each new segment. To get to the depth of the wellhead they must assemble and carefully lower at least 55 segments. Vast amounts of natural gas contained in crude escaping from the blown Gulf of Mexico oil well could pose a serious threat to marine life by creating "dead zones" where oxygen is so depleted that nothing lives. The danger presented by the methane has been largely overlooked, with early efforts to monitor the oil spill focusing on the more toxic components of oil. But scientists are increasingly worried about the gas that can suffocate sea creatures in high concentrations. At least 4.5 billion cubic feet of natural gas and possibly almost twice that amount have leaked since April 20.

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