

Local Lawyers Unimpressed With Transocean's Bid To Limit Its Oil-Spill Exposure

By [Richard Connelly](#), Thursday, May. 13 2010 @ 2:01PM

Transocean, the Houston company that owned and operated the Deepwater Horizon rig that is currently gushing huge amount of oil into the Gulf, is looking to limit the amount of damages they may have to pay.

[The company filed a motion](#) in federal court here today, citing an old law intended for ships, says it should pay no more than \$26.7 million in liability.

With lawyers and plaintiffs still rushing to the courthouse, the move was met with derision from local attorneys suing the company.

"Transocean has compounded this terrible tragedy with a shameful legal filing that is intended solely to protect the company's interests," says Houston attorney Kurt Arnold. "They haven't even said they're sorry, much less take responsibility. Now, they're running off to court in hopes of getting a ruling that will limit their liability to what is on the bottom of the ocean. I think the filing is completely frivolous."

Mark Lanier, the celebrated tort attorney famous for his Christmas parties here every year, told Bloomberg news he doesn't expect the Transocean's move to succeed.

"We expect the court will ultimately lift the limitation," Houston lawyer Mark Lanier, who represents commercial fishermen and shrimpers in several lawsuits over the spill. "The other defendants are more hurt by this than the plaintiffs."

The filing, though, might help push the move to have all the litigation related to the spill be centered here in Houston instead of Louisiana.

Something for which the downtown hotels are no doubt keeping their fingers very, very crossed.