

Why was Tioga oil spill reported 12 days after the fact?

By [Dickinson Press Staff](#) on Oct 13, 2013 at 12:00 a.m.

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We can only imagine what went through the mind of Tioga farmer Steve Jensen when he came upon the oil leak on the family homestead two weeks ago while harvesting wheat.

The leak spilled about 20,600 barrels of oil onto his land -- the equivalent of 865,200 gallons or about 29 railcar tankers.

Jensen questioned why Tesoro Logistics didn't detect that more than 20,000 barrels had leaked and said he would like to see better monitoring systems put in place.

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Tina Barbee, a Tesoro Logistics spokeswoman, said pipelines are monitored by a remote pipeline control center that monitors pressure and pumps. When asked if the monitoring center would have detected a leak, Barbee said that will be part of the company's investigation. Tesoro Logistics also flies over pipelines to monitor them, Barbee said, adding that she did not know the most recent aerial inspection of this pipeline.

"It is consistently monitored, on average, weekly," Barbee said.

Jensen, who is a pilot, said the spill likely would have been visible from the air.

Tesoro Logistics said in a statement Thursday that no one was hurt and there are no known impacts to wildlife or the surrounding environment.

Gov. Jack Dalrymple said he initially heard about the sizable spill Wednesday evening and learned more details Thursday.

"It appears there is no immediate threat to public safety or to health. Those are the main things," Dalrymple said.

The spill could cost \$4 million and take four years to clean up.

Understandably, Tioga is a rural area but do Tesoro Logistics and the governor really expect us to believe a spill of this size posed no known impacts to water, wildlife, the surrounding environment, public health or safety?

We hope Tesoro Logistics and the governor are right in fact that the spill posed no threats to the public because the public didn't know about it until 12 days after the spill was detected.

"There will be many questions to be answered about how it occurred and how was it detected and whether there was anything that could have been done that would have made a difference," Dalrymple said.

The other question that needs to be answered is why did it take 12 days to inform the public?

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