

Securing Justice for Fire Victims

In addition to direct damage, large-scale fires can discharge toxic chemicals and other hazardous materials into our environment with a devastating effect on health, local and regional economies, and business and property values. Environmental pollution may occur swiftly and catastrophically—from fires, oil and coal ash spills, transportation carrier accidents, and explosions at refineries, oil rigs and other industrial facilities—or over an extended period, such as from the leakage of industrial pollutants into groundwater supplies and rivers used by communities for drinking water.

Lieff Cabraser possesses the expertise and financial resources to thoroughly investigate fires and environmental exposure cases and hold those responsible accountable. We have successfully prosecuted cases against many of the world's most powerful corporations obtaining multiple billions of dollars in recoveries, including for families, businesses and property owners throughout the U.S. The following is a summary of our notable fire and environmental law cases.

Santa Barbara Plains All American Pipeline Oil Spill

We serve as Court-appointed Class Counsel in the lawsuit arising from the May 2015 Santa Barbara County Plains All American Pipeline rupture. Oil from the pipeline flowed into the Pacific Ocean, soiling beaches and drastically impacting local fisheries. We represent homeowners, oil platform workers, and fishers whose livelihood was directly impacted by the oil spill. Our cases allege defendants did



not follow basic safety protocols when they installed the pipeline, failed to properly monitor and maintain the pipeline, ignored clear signs that the pipeline was corroded and in danger of bursting, and failed to promptly respond to the oil spill when the inevitable rupture occurred.

Porter Ranch Southern California Natural Gas Leak Cases

Lieff Cabraser was chosen by the LA County Superior Court to help lead two important class action cases on behalf of homeowners and businesses that suffered economic injuries in the wake of the massive Porter Ranch gas leak, which began in October of 2015 and lasted into February of 2016. In this largest release of toxic and climate-changing methane in U.S. history,



huge quantities of gas spewed out of Southern California Gas's Aliso Canyon Facility and into the air of Porter Ranch, a neighborhood located adjacent to the Facility and 25 miles northwest of Los Angeles. The disaster forced thousands of residents to abandon their homes for months while the leak continued, and for several months thereafter, impacting local businesses as well. Evidence suggests the leak was caused by at least one old and malfunctioning well used to inject and retrieve gas. Southern California Gas Company allegedly removed the safety valve on the well that could have prevented the leak. As a result, the gas leak has left a carbon footprint larger than the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Lieff Cabraser has filed multiple class action complaints—one on behalf of Porter Ranch home-

For a free, confidential no-obligation review of your case, please contact attorney Lexi Hazam in Lief Cabraser's San Francisco office.

1-415-956-1000
lhazam@lchb.com

**Lief
Cabraser
Heimann &
Bernstein**
Attorneys at Law

owners and another on behalf of Porter Ranch businesses. Southern California Gas has argued in response that the injuries suffered by homeowners and businesses cannot proceed as class actions, and separately, that businesses cannot recover their economic losses resulting from the leak. In May 2017, the Superior Court rejected all of these arguments. The class action cases are proceeding with discovery into Southern California Gas Company's role in this disaster.

BP Gulf of Mexico Oil Disaster

We serve on the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee representing fishermen, property owners, business owners, and wage earners economically harmed by the Deepwater Horizon oil rig blowout and oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico on April 20, 2010. The Court has approved two class action settlements with BP that will fully compensate hundreds of thousands of victims of the environmental disaster. To date, businesses, and individuals that suffered financial losses or property damage have received over \$10.2 billion through the class action settlement program.



Kingston, Tennessee TVA Coal Ash Spill

Lief Cabraser represents hundreds of property owners and businesses harmed by the largest coal ash spill in U.S. history. On December 22, 2008, more than a billion gallons of coal ash slurry spilled when a dike burst on a retention pond at the Kingston Fossil Plant operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in Roane County, Tennessee. A wall of coal ash slurry traveled across the



Emory River, polluting the river and nearby waterways, and covering nearly 300 acres with toxic sludge, including 12 homes and damaging hundreds of properties. In March 2010, the Court denied in large part TVA's motion to dismiss the complaint. In the Fall of 2011, the Court conducted a four week bench trial on the question of whether TVA was liable for releasing the coal ash into the river system. The issue of damages was reserved for later proceedings. In August 2012, the Court found in favor of plaintiffs on their claims of negligence, trespass, and private nuisance. The case is now in mediation proceedings.

Martin County, Kentucky Coal Ash Sludge Spill

On October 11, 2000, a coal waste storage facility owned by Massey Energy ruptured, spilling 1.25 million tons of coal sludge (a wet mixture produced by the treatment and cleaning of coal) into rivers and waterways in Martin County, Kentucky, near the town of Inez. Hundreds of properties were contaminated, with some properties covered by five feet of coal sludge.



This was one of the worst environmental disasters in the Southeastern United States.

With co-counsel, Lief Cabraser represented over 400 clients in property damage claims, including claims for diminution in the value of their homes and properties. In April 2003, the parties reached a confidential settlement agreement on favorable terms to the plaintiffs.