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Newsroom: Logan on 2015's Record Settlements

Roger Williams University School of Law

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Newsroom

December 28, 2015

Logan on 2015's Record Settlements

Professor David Logan on the BP/Deepwater Horizon case's \$20 billion in fines — the largest in U.S. history — and other landmark legal settlements of 2015.

From The National Law Journal: [“Feds Snag Significant Tort Wins: Massive civil, criminal fines mark 2015 cases,”](#) by Amanda Bronstad



December 28, 2015: Mass torts were at the heart of colossal legal settlements in 2015, particularly involving the federal government.

In October, BP PLC agreed to an unprecedented \$20 billion deal with the U.S. Justice Department to resolve environmental violations that stemmed from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. One month earlier, the Justice Department inked a \$900 million deferred-prosecution agreement with General Motors Co. to resolve criminal penalties associated with its ignition-switch recalls in 2014.

And the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, under pressure to increase its civil penalties against automakers with safety defects, imposed record fines of up to \$200 million in November against Takata Corp. over faulty air bags and \$105 million in July against Fiat Chrysler Automobiles N.V. [...]

[T]he big deals with the government came as the Obama administration wrapped up its final term, **said David Logan, a professor at Roger Williams University School of Law.** Although the U.S. Supreme Court has made it difficult to pursue class actions, the Obama administration has turned to its executive powers to hold companies accountable.

"Among many parts of his coalition were people who championed environmental and consumer rights," **he said.** "The president and his people know he's getting near the end of his trail, and getting these buttoned up with big dollar figures help secure his legacy as an aggressive president." [...]