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**AWO Announces Record Low Oil Spills as Earth Day Approaches**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – As Earth Day approaches, the American Waterways Operators (AWO) is pleased to announce that 2010 saw the lowest-ever recorded number of tank barge oil spills. The 2010 spill statistics newly released by the U.S. Coast Guard show that the American tugboat, towboat and barge industry had a record low of 75 spills and a record low volume of 919 gallons spilled.

AWO is recognized as the industry's safety leader, with its members required to comply with the AWO-developed Responsible Carrier Program, a safety management system that mandates operational audits every three years. The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90) has successfully helped the industry to put in place safeguards that have dramatically improved the industry's safety record. Tank barges now account for the least number of oil spills of any source, including offshore drilling rigs, fixed shoreside facilities, and recreational vessels.

Still, especially during this Earth Day week, AWO members recognize that one drop of oil spilled is one too many for the planet. AWO is in the process of continuously developing new initiatives for improving industry safety – including a historic towing vessel inspection program – in order to achieve its goal of zero spills. Also, by 2015 all barges will be double-hulled to protect the environment. The towing industry has the fewest emissions of any commercial transportation mode. But building on our commitment to environmental stewardship, AWO assisted the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in developing tough new standards for the next generation of towing vessel engines that are quieter, burn less fuel, and dramatically reduce emissions.

AWO President & CEO Thomas Allegretti said, “The tugboat, towboat and barge industry is taking all these steps to reduce our carbon footprint – already the lowest of all commercial transportation modes – while providing U.S. jobs and delivering the commodities like grain, coal, salt, petrochemicals and petroleum on which our economy depends.”

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