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Oil Spill Hits Major Siberian River

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According to investigators, a damaged tank on board the Priangarsky Timber Processing Complex's transport barge ruptured on the Angara River on Oct. 2. **Investigative Committee**

A Siberian region has declared a state of emergency and law enforcement officers opened an investigation into an oil spill believed to have been caused by a barge, authorities have said.

The Kezhemsky district in the Krasnoyarsk region announced a local emergency Friday days after a barge operated by a local timber company spilled around 500 liters of diesel fuel into a major river.

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According to investigators, a damaged tank on board the Priangarsky Timber Processing Complex's transport barge ruptured on the Angara River on Oct. 2.

The spill poses "a substantial health and environmental threat," western Siberia's transport investigators said in a statement Sunday.

Investigators have opened a criminal case into the mishandling of environmentally hazardous substances. The charges carry a prison sentence of up to two years.

Authorities searched the timber company's offices, questioned its management and the ship's crew.

The Angara is the only river to flow out of Lake Baikal and is the headwater tributary of the Yenisei River.

The state of emergency follows a litany of environmental disasters to hit Russia in 2020, including a massive diesel fuel spill in the Arctic, massive wildfires in Siberia and a mysterious die-off of nearly all seabed marine life along the coast of the Far East Kamchatka peninsula.

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