



County of Santa Cruz

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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ELLEN PIRIE
SECOND DISTRICT

MARDI WORMHOUDT
THIRD DISTRICT

TONY CAMPOS
FOURTH DISTRICT

JEFF ALMQUIST
FIFTH DISTRICT

AGENDA: 2/6/01

January 29, 2001

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: PROPOSED OFFSHORE OIL DRILLING

Dear Members of the Board:

Attached is information from the Environmental Defense group regarding attempts by the oil industry to remove constraints on offshore oil drilling as part of the upcoming Five-Year Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program now being prepared by the Minerals Management Service (MMS) at the U.S. Department of the Interior.

It appears that the industry lobbying group is asking MMS to use its new Five-Year Program to lift the current Congressional Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) moratorium on new offshore leasing. In addition, there may be an attempt to somehow override the Presidential Deferral of offshore leasing that is supposed to remain in effect until 2012. Finally, since oil drilling in those areas not covered by the moratorium, primarily Alaska and parts of the Gulf of Mexico, could indirectly cause negative impacts on coastal California, we have additional reasons to be concerned.

Environmental Defense is requesting local governments adopt the attached resolution containing comments to MMS regarding the Five-Year Oil and Gas Leasing Program and urges MMS to continue to respect the Congressional moratorium and Presidential Deferral.

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Also attached is information regarding a Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on Exploratory Drilling Activities in Federal Waters Offshore Santa Barbara County, California. The proposed action would allow expanded oil drilling off the Santa Barbara County coastline. According to Environmental Defense, the attached resolution would serve as a meaningful comment on the Santa Barbara Notice of Intent.

In the past, Santa Cruz County has been in the forefront of efforts to prevent offshore oil drilling not only in our area, but all along the California coastline.

While we now have protection because of our inclusion in the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, it is still important to support those communities attempting to prevent environmental damage in their areas.

Therefore, I recommend that the Board of Supervisors adopt the attached resolution submitting comments to the federal Mineral Management Service regarding the proposed Five-Year Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program and urge that the Congressionally imposed oil drilling moratorium and the Presidential Deferral of offshore oil drilling continue to be observed, and, also, responding to the Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on the oil drilling proposal off the coast of Santa Barbara County.

Sincerely,



MARDI WORMHOUDT, Supervisor
Third District

MW:lg
Attachments

cc: Congress Member Sam Farr
Richard Charter

1136H3

BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

0117

RESOLUTION NO.

On the motion of Supervisor
duly seconded by Supervisor
the following resolution is adopted

RESOLUTION IN RESPONSE TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR'S
MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON THE
PREPARATION OF A NEW FIVE-YEAR OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF (OCS)
OIL AND GAS LEASING PROGRAM FOR 2002-2007, AND THE NOTICE
OF INTENT TO PREPARE AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE
PROPOSED FIVE-YEAR PROGRAM (FEDERAL REGISTER DOCUMENT 00-31629)

WHEREAS, Section 18 of the OCS Lands Act (43 USC 1344)
requires the Department of Interior to solicit information from
interested and affected parties during the preparation of a Five-
Year OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Interior's Minerals
Management Service is preparing such a program for 2002-2007, and
an accompanying Environmental Impact Statement; and

WHEREAS, the direct and indirect implications of these
proposed activities for the economic, social, and environmental
resources of the County of Santa Cruz are potentially
significant; and

WHEREAS, the coastal zone of the State of California will
experience direct effects from activities derived from and
associated with the proposed Five-Year OCS Oil and Gas Leasing
Program; and

WHEREAS, the County of Santa Cruz encourages the Minerals
Management Service to fully respect the limitations on its
activities delineated in the bipartisan Congressional OCS
moratorium which was reaffirmed in the Department of Interior
Appropriations Bill for FY 2001, in addition to abiding by the
letter and intent of the "Presidential OCS Deferrals," issued by
Presidents Bush and Clinton under Section 12 of the OCS Lands
Act; and

WHEREAS, the County of Santa Cruz continues to have concerns
about the implications of OCS activities on coastal
jurisdictions, including adverse impacts on air and water
quality, shoreline industrialization and land use issues within
the coastal zone, and public safety and wildlife damage risks
associated with the limitations of current oil spill cleanup
capabilities; and

RESOLUTION IN RESPONSE TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR'S MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON THE PREPARATION OF A NEW FIVE-YEAR OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF (OCS) OIL AND GAS LEASING PROGRAM FOR 2002-2007, AND THE NOTICE OF INTENT TO PREPARE AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE PROPOSED FIVE-YEAR PROGRAM (FEDERAL REGISTER DOCUMENT 00-31629)

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WHEREAS, the Five-Year Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2002-2007 must fully disclose cumulative impacts of all associated activities in combination with existing OCS leases and activities, must consider the lack of availability of adequate scientific information needed to support reasoned leasing decisions, and must disclose the anticipated impacts derived from the proposed action on existing uses of the sea and seabed; and

WHEREAS, the Five-Year Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2002-2007 must consider the laws, goals, and policies of affected states; and

WHEREAS, the present inadequacy of oil spill cleanup and containment technology must be disclosed and evaluated in the Five-Year Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2002-2007, particularly as this inadequacy relates to the lack of effective oil spill cleanup in Alaskan frontier OCS regions; and

WHEREAS, because the U.S. Department of Interior is presently promoting as part of a separate decision-making process the adoption of additional fiscal incentives to the oil industry for deepwater drilling activities and is also considering broad utilization of risky floating storage and processing vessels, the implications of these initiatives must be fully considered in the Five-Year Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program; and

WHEREAS, because the drilling of delineation wells on active OCS leases offshore Central California is presently the focus of a separate and concurrent MMS Environmental Impact Statement process, and because these OCS leases are subject to a legal challenge by the State of California and co-plaintiffs, the cumulative region-wide implications of OCS delineation and production activities in this area should be fully evaluated in the proposed Five-Year Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program; and

WHEREAS, since key environmental studies identified by the National Research Council and by the Minerals Management Service have not been completed, such studies must be completed, peer-reviewed, and evaluated in preparing the Five-Year Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program.

RESOLUTION IN RESPONSE TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR'S MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON THE PREPARATION OF A NEW FIVE-YEAR OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF (OCS) OIL AND GAS LEASING PROGRAM FOR 2002-2007, AND THE NOTICE OF INTENT TO PREPARE AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE PROPOSED FIVE-YEAR PROGRAM (FEDERAL REGISTER DOCUMENT 00-31629)

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the County of Santa Cruz hereby adopts this resolution in response to the Request for Comments on the Preparation of a New Five-Year Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2002-2007, and the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Five-Year Program (Federal Register Document 00-31629).


PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz, State of California, this _____ day of _____, 2001, by the following vote:

AYES: SUPERVISORS
NOES: SUPERVISORS
ABSENT: SUPERVISORS

TONY CAMPOS, Chairman
Board of Supervisors

ATTEST: _____
Clerk of said Board

Approved as to form:

 1/31/01

County Counsel

DISTRIBUTION: U.S. Department of Interior, Minerals Management Service
Minerals Management Service, Attn: Exploratory Activities EIS, Office of Environmental Evaluation
(770 Paseo Camarillo, Camarillo, CA 93010-6064)
Congress Member Sam Farr
Congress Member Mike Honda
Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Barbara Boxer
Richard Charter, Environmental Defense

OCS ACTION ALERT
For Local Governments

NEW OFFSHORE DRILLING PLAN IN THE WORKS

ACTION NEEDED: Resolutions and letters responding to the call for public comment on the new Five-Year Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program being Issued by the U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service.

CRITICAL DATE: Must be received by February 1, 2001

WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE: All County governments, City Councils, Governors, public interest organizations, and private citizens concerned about their coastline.

DIRECTED TO: 5-Year Program Manager, Minerals Management Service (MS-4400), Room 2324, 381 Elden Street, Herndon, Virginia 20170. Hand deliveries will be accepted at 1849 C Street, NW., Room 4230, Washington, D.C. Comments may also be submitted by email to MMS5-yr.document@mms.gov.

Copies of your comments and resolutions on the scope of the EIS should also be sent via email to MMS5-year.eis@mms.gov

WHAT'S GOING ON:

New initiatives for offshore drilling will be delineated in a new Five-Year Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program now being prepared by the Minerals Management Service (MMS) at the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The new Five-Year Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program will determine the size, timing, and location of all new offshore lease sales to be held on the federal Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) in U.S. coastal waters between the years of 2002 and 2007.

Involvement in the preparation of this OCS Leasing Program by all affected parties is critical, including County Boards of Supervisors, City Councils, and ^{CIVIC} groups and individuals. Offshore drilling activities have profound implications for coastal communities, including adverse impacts on air and water quality, shoreline industrialization and land use issues within the coastal zone, and public safety and wildlife damage risks associated with the inadequate state of current oil spill cleanup capabilities. Communities for which coastal-dependent tourism, commercial fishing, or shoreline recreation opportunities are important economic considerations will want to pay particular attention to the preparation of the new Five-Year OCS Leasing Program. In addition to formulating the Leasing Program itself, MMS will also be preparing and circulating an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for their OCS Program.

This new Five-Year Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program has raised particular concern due to the fact that the National Ocean Industries Association, an oil industry trade group, has asked the MMS to use 'its new Five-Year Program to seek to lift the current congressional OCS moratorium on new offshore leasing. Recently renewed by Congress for the nineteenth consecutive year, the annual OCS moratorium currently precludes new leasing off the entire U.S. West Coast, the U.S. East Coast, offshore parts of Florida, and in Alaska's Bristol Bay. Unless renewed by Congress in the next few months, the present moratorium protections would automatically terminate on October 1, 2001.

The preparation of the new Five-Year Program may also be effected by other factors. In 1991, former President George Bush directed the prestigious

National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences to conduct a yearlong study and several public hearings.

The National Research Council then concluded that there did not exist sufficient scientific evidence to indicate that new OCS leasing within the moratorium areas could proceed and ensure that the environment could be protected. As a result of this NRC study, then-President Bush issued the 'presidential OCS deferral', under section 12 of the OCS Lands Act, which delays any new OCS leasing in these areas until at least the year 2002. Little additional scientific data has been collected since that action, so in 1998 President Clinton extended the presidential OCS deferrals precluding new leasing in these areas until after the year 2012.

As a result of the congressional moratorium and the presidential OCS deferrals, MMS has indicated that the areas included in the presidential OCS deferrals will not be considered in the preparation of their new Five-Year OCS Leasing Program. Oil industry advocates, however, have been increasing their pressure for the moratorium areas to be included in this new Five-Year Program and opened to leasing. Due to this increasingly vocal oil industry threat to the OCS moratorium areas, and because increased drilling anywhere on the federal OCS has implications for all coastal jurisdictions as a result of tankering and OCS-related onshore industrialization, all local agencies are encouraged to comment throughout the current planning process.

While initial appearances would tend to indicate that the 2002-2007 Leasing Program can be expected to focus primarily on the entire Alaska OCS, and on those parts of the Gulf of Mexico not currently protected by the moratorium or residential deferrals, other geographic areas are likely to be affected indirectly by new leasing in these regions. Impacts of offshore drilling can be expected to have implications on the coastal resources of distant areas. During a separate but concurrent planning process, MMS is currently scoping an EIS for proposed delineation drilling on already-leased OCS tracts offshore Central California, where as many as five new production platforms are expected to be constructed. While development of this area is currently subject to legal challenge by the State of California and co-plaintiffs, the release of any substantial quantity of oil from anticipated OCS operations in this area would introduce new oil spill risks to a significant portion of the California coastline. Likewise, additional OCS production offshore Alaska can be expected to increase the jeopardy posed by oil spills along a broad swath of marine transportation corridors extending well into the lower-48 states.

For these reasons, local jurisdictions in states potentially impacted by new OCS oil and gas activities should track the preparation of the new Five-Year Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program with great care. The current comment period provides local agencies with a critical opportunity to express their views, document any concerns, and establish legal standing in the planning process, while ensuring that dangerous precedents are not set elsewhere and that coastal planning priorities and local economies are adequately respected.

The Federal Register Notice for this comment period is attached, as is an appropriate draft Resolution Commenting on the Proposed Five-Year Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2002-2007. The Federal Register Notice also contains a timeline of anticipated steps in this process during the coming year. If your agency needs additional assistance in preparing comments, please contact Richard Charter at rcharter@environmentaldefense.org or at Environmental Defense, Oceans Program, 5655 College Avenue, Oakland, CA

94618, or at 510 658-8008, extension 247. Additional information can also be obtained by visiting the Minerals Management Service website at <http://www.mms.gov> or by contacting Mr. Ralph Ainger, MMS' Five-Year Program Manager, at (703) 787-1215.

Prepared by the OCS Local Government Coordination Program, A Project of Environmental Defense, Oceans Program,
5655 College Avenue, Oakland, CA 94618, to subscribe, email to Richard Charter at: rcharter@environmentaldefense.org

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Minerals Management Service

Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on
Exploratory Drilling Activities in Federal Waters Offshore Santa
Barbara County, California

AGENCY: Minerals Management Service, interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact
Statement and announcement of public scoping meetings.

SUMMARY: In accordance with section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), the Minerals Management Service (MMS) is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to identify and assess potential impacts and mitigation measures associated with multiple projects. The projects include the sequential drilling of 5-8 delineation wells from a single mobile offshore drilling unit on existing leases in Federal Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) waters in the Santa Maria Basin and western Santa Barbara Channel. Previously, 28 exploration wells have been drilled in the area where activities are proposed. The purpose of the proposed drilling is to further delineate oil and gas resources on leases or units that have previous commercial discoveries of oil and gas. Delineation wells are a type of exploration well. Notice is hereby given that the public scoping process has been initiated to prepare an EIS that will address the impacts of and alternatives to the proposal. The purpose of the scoping process is to solicit public comment regarding the full spectrum of issues and concerns, including a suitable range of alternatives, and the nature and extent of potential environmental impacts and appropriate mitigation measures that should be addressed in the EIS process. It is anticipated that a draft EIS will be available in Summer 2001.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Questions concerning the draft EIS should be directed to Mr. Maurice Hill, Office of Environmental Evaluation, Pacific OCS Region, Minerals Management Service, 770 Paseo Camarillo, Camarillo, California 93010-6064; phone 805.389.7815.

Background

Pursuant to the OCS Lands Act, as amended, and the implementing regulations at 30 Code of Federal Regulations, Sec. 250.203 (Exploration Plan), the MMS reviews Exploration Plans (EP's) and revisions to those EP's to decide whether those plans or revisions

should be approved; should be modified to be consistent with the provisions of the lease, the OCS Lands Act, and the implementing regulations; or should be disapproved. To meet the agency's responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), MMS is preparing an EIS that will provide an assessment of the environmental effects of drilling 5-8 delineation wells offshore the Santa Barbara County coast in Federal waters.

Proposed Action

In accordance with 30 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Sec. 250.11 O(a)(I) (Suspension of Production or Other Operations), the MMS approved the lease operator's requests for suspension of production or operations and established milestones for the operators to submit revisions to their existing EP's by September 2001. All of the leases on which drilling could occur have EP's that have been previously approved by the MMS and granted consistency by the California Coastal Commission (CCC) according to 15 CFR 930.79. The approved EP's identify proposed well locations that have received CCC consistency concurrence but, to date, have not been drilled. Because a number of years have elapsed since these approvals, the MMS has established milestones for the operators of the leases to update their previously approved EP's through revisions. The EIS will address all the proposed delineation drilling activities on several leases. The multi-project activities will be subject to existing laws, regulations, and other requirements. The activities include sequential drilling of 5-8 delineation wells by a single mobile offshore drilling unit. The operators need the information from these wells to identify oil and gas characteristics, reservoir characteristics, and reservoir extent in

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order to determine the location, size, and type of facilities that may be required to develop the resources and thus could be proposed at a future time.

The delineation drilling would occur on units where there have been commercial oil and gas discoveries, and where MMS believes that development could occur in the future. Therefore, the EIS will also include a discussion of the potential impacts of the buildout of production facilities as part of the cumulative analysis. The cumulative analysis will also cover other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable activities in the area of the proposed exploratory drilling. Subsequent to the delineation drilling, detailed Development and Production Plans (DPP's) would be prepared by the operators for the development of the leases in the future and are expected to be submitted to the MMS and subjected to separate NEPA analyses. The DPP's would also be submitted to the California Coastal Commission to ensure their consistency with the California Coastal Management Plan.

Alternatives

Alternatives will include (1) the action of drilling 5-8 delineation wells on undeveloped leases in the Santa Maria Basin and western Santa Barbara Channel, and (2) no action. Other possible alternatives that may be considered include variations on the proposed action and alternatives identified during the scoping process.

Scoping

Scoping is an open process for determining the scope of the EIS and for identifying significant issues related to the proposed action. Scoping also provides an opportunity to identify alternatives to the proposed action and appropriate mitigation measures. All interested persons, organizations and agencies wishing to provide comments, suggestions, or relevant information on the activities may do so as follows:

(1) Send input to Minerals Management Service, Attn: Exploratory Activities EIS, Office of Environmental Evaluation, 770 Paseo Camarillo, Camarillo, CA 9301 o-6064;

(2) Attend and provide comment at the public scoping meetings the MMS will conduct in Santa Barbara County as follows: (a) December 6, 2000, 5:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m. at Fess Parker's DoubleTree Resort, 633 East Cabrillo Blvd., Sierra Madre Room, Santa Barbara, California; (b) January 22, 2001, 5:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m. at Allan Hancock College, Marian Theatre, Bldg. D, 800 S. College Drive, Santa Maria, California. Further details of the meetings will be posted on the MMS, Pacific Region, homepage at <http://www.mms.gov/omm/pacific> and will be advertised in the local media; and

(3) Email input to ExplorationEIS@mms.gov.

A Notice of Availability of the draft EIS for public review and comment will be announced by the MMS and the Environmental Protection Agency in the Federal Register; on the MMS, Pacific Region, homepage; and in the local media. We anticipate that a draft EIS will be available for review in Summer 2001, and a final EIS will be completed in Fall 2001. Public hearings will be held in the local-area following release of the draft EIS. Dates and locations are to be determined.

Dated: November 17, 2000.
 Carolita U. Kallaur,
 Associate Director, Offshore Minerals Management.
 [FR Doc. 00-29921 Filed 11-21-00; 8:45 am]
 BILLING CODE 4310-MR-P