

## **BOEMRE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM: PROPOSED STUDY**

**Region:** Alaska

**Planning Area(s):** Beaufort and Chukchi Seas

**Title:** A National Research Council (NRC) Study: Responding to Oil Spills in Arctic Environments

**Cost Range:** \$100,000 for BOEMRE's contribution (\$80,000 from ENVD and \$20,000 from the Engineering and Research Branch)

Total cost of the project would be between \$500,000 to \$1 million

**Period of Performance:** FY 2011-2013

### **BOEMRE Information Need to Be Addressed:**

The ability to respond to oil spills under Arctic conditions is a continuing public concern associated with oil development in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas. The Deepwater Horizon spill, and the time it took to stop the oil flow, has raised more questions about preparedness and the limits of clean-up technologies. This NRC study will provide an up-to-date, unbiased analysis of current capabilities that will support BOEMRE's environmental reviews, help focus research priorities, and assist with development of mitigation approaches.

### **Description:**

Background: The National Research Council (NRC) functions under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), the National Academy of Engineering (NAE), and the Institute of Medicine (IOM). The NAS, NAE, IOM, and NRC are part of a private, nonprofit institution that provides science, technology and health policy advice under a congressional charter signed by President Abraham Lincoln that was originally granted to the NAS in 1863. Under this charter, the NRC was established in 1916, the NAE in 1964, and the IOM in 1970. The four organizations are collectively referred to as the National Academies.

The NRC has proposed a study on Responding to Oil Spills in Arctic Environments. NRC's work is supported by grants/contracts from other entities. Other agencies and groups would also contribute to this study.

Objectives: The NRC would: assess the current state of the science regarding oil spill response in Arctic environments; develop a decision tool for use of various spill response technologies under the types of conditions and spill scenarios encountered at high latitudes; review new and ongoing research; describe promising new concepts and technologies for improving response to oil spills in Arctic environments; and recommend strategies for advancing research and addressing information gaps.

Methods: NRC's consensus studies provide comprehensive reports on scientific topics of relevance to the nation. They do this by recruiting best available experts for committee service. The Ad hoc committees are assembled for the specific topic of concern and provide pro bono service. They strive for balance in their make-up and avoid conflicts of interest. The National Academies provide oversight of the process. This intensive peer review process is recognized as federal standard by OMB.

**Revised Date:** June 23, 2011