

THE NEWS ROOM

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THE BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY
MANAGEMENT,
REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Office of Public Affairs

BOEMRE Seeks Public Comment to Inform New Beaufort Sea Environmental Assessment

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) today announced that public comment is invited in connection with an Environmental Assessment (EA) it will prepare on a revised Exploration Plan (EP) submitted by Shell Offshore, Inc. This revised EP involves shallow water exploratory drilling in the Beaufort Sea, and will be completed in accordance with new safety and environmental standards implemented since the Deepwater Horizon explosion and oil spill.

An exploration plan describes all exploration activities planned by the operator for a specific lease or leases, including the timing of these activities, information concerning drilling vessels, the location of each planned well, and other relevant information that is needed to meet important safety standards.

The EP proposes drilling four exploratory wells in water depths of approximately 110-125 feet, each located 16 to 23 miles off the coast of northern Alaska. Shell's EP was deemed submitted today. Consistent with federal regulations, an EP is deemed "submitted" once all supporting materials and documentation have been provided, and have met regulatory requirements. Once a plan is deemed submitted, BOEMRE has 30 calendar days to analyze and evaluate it.

As part of its review, the bureau will prepare an EA specific to the proposed exploration activities. Upon completion of the technical and environmental review, BOEMRE must decide whether to approve the plan, require modifications, or disapprove the plan.

There are two separate opportunities to provide comments being announced today. The 30-day time frame for review includes a 10-day public comment period to allow an opportunity to review and comment on the issues that should be considered by BOEMRE in preparing the EA for the plan. The deadline to receive these comments is July 15, 2011. BOEMRE's Alaska region will also accept comments on the revised EP and the related Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan (ODPCP) for up to 21 days (until July 25, 2011) as part of its government-to-government consultations with tribal governments and the State of Alaska.

The EP and related ODPCP are available for review at:

http://www.alaska.boemre.gov/ref/ProjectHistory/2012Shell_BF/2012x.HTM

To provide public comment, and to view the comments that have been submitted, go to: <http://www.boemre.gov/PublicComment.htm> and click on "Open Comment Documents" for a full listing.

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