

FOR RELEASE:
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Office of Public Affairs

BOEMRE Begins Review, Invites Public Comment on Categorical Exclusions

WASHINGTON – The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) today announced that it is initiating the public comment stage of its review of its use of categorical exclusions (CEs) for decisions regarding energy development on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).

Consistent with recommendations provided by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), BOEMRE announced on August 16, 2010, that it would undertake a review of its use of categorical exclusions to ensure that its policies are in full compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). During the period in which BOEMRE is conducting its review, Director Michael R. Bromwich has directed the agency to restrict its use of categorical exclusions for offshore oil and gas development to activities involving limited environmental risk. More information can be found at: <http://www.doi.gov/news/doinews/Categorical-Exclusions-for-Gulf-Offshore-Activity-to-be-Limited-While-Interior-Reviews-NEPA-Process-and-Develops-Revised-Policy.cfm>.

“BOEMRE is committed to strengthening our oversight responsibilities and making decisions that fully consider the potential environmental impacts,” Director Bromwich said. “We will ensure compliance with NEPA as we re-examine the types of environmental reviews required for offshore operations.”

CEQ regulations (40 C.F.R. § 1508.4) define “categorical exclusion” as a category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment; which have been found to have no such effect in procedures adopted by a federal agency in implementation of these regulations; and for which neither an environmental assessment nor an environmental impact statement is required.

BOEMRE is inviting the public as well as federal, state and local government agencies, and other interested parties to comment on the appropriate use of and suggest revisions to existing BOEMRE CEs, and to highlight issues that BOEMRE should address during the review. The notice is available in the Federal Register’s “Reading Room” at: <http://www.ofr.gov/inspection.aspx>. It will be published on the Federal Register tomorrow.

The public is invited to submit comments no later than November 8, 2010, (30 days after publication) in one of the following ways:

1. For written comments, please label your submission “Comments on the Review of Categorical Exclusions for Outer Continental Shelf Decisions” and mail (or hand carry) to James F. Bennett, Chief, Environmental Assessment Branch, Environmental Division (MS 4042), Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement, Headquarters, 381 Elden Street, Herndon, VA 20170.
2. To submit electronic comments, go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the entry titled “Enter Keyword or ID,” enter docket ID BOEMRE- 2010-0036, then click search. Follow the instructions to submit public comments and view supporting and related materials available for this collection.

The full CEQ review of BOEMRE (then-MMS) NEPA procedures can be found at:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/initiatives/nepa/mms-review>.

Contact: [BOEMRE Public Affairs](#)