

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM: Ongoing Studies

Region: National

Planning Area(s): Beaufort and Chukchi Seas

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

BOEM Cost: \$80,000

Period of Performance: FY 2011-2013

Conducting Organization(s): National Research Council (M11PX00116)

BOEM Contact: [Guillermo Auad](#)

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.

Other federal agencies and groups 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.

Importance to BOEM: The ability to respond to oil spills in Arctic environments is a continuing public concern associated with energy 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 BOEM's environmental reviews, help focus research priorities, and assist with development of mitigation approaches.

Current Status: The NRC secured the funding from the sources needed to start this study in May of 2012. They will start the study in June of 2012.

Final Report Due: March 31, 2013

Publications: None

Affiliated Web Sites: None

Revised Date: March 14, 2012

ESPIS: Environmental Studies Program Information System

All *completed* ESP studies can be found here:

http://www.data.boem.gov/homepg/data_center/other/espis/espisfront.asp