

THE NEWS ROOM

FOR RELEASE:  
January 29, 2011

THE BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY  
MANAGEMENT,  
REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Office of Public Affairs

---

## **UPDATE: BOEMRE Continuing to Respond to Natural Gas Leak in the Gulf of Mexico**

**NEW ORLEANS** – The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) is continuing to oversee Apache Corp.'s response to a natural gas leak near East Cameron Block 278 Platform B. The platform is located approximately 93 miles offshore Louisiana, south of Lake Charles, in about 173 feet of water. The platform, which has not been in production for nearly a decade, is currently used to process natural gas and condensate from other facilities.

With BOEMRE's approval and after several safety system evaluations, Apache personnel re-boarded the platform January 19 and began work to kill the leaking well. BOEMRE engineers reviewed and approved the well control procedures to be used from the platform. A remotely operated vehicle (ROV) is continuously monitoring well site conditions to ensure that the work can proceed safely.

Well control procedures from the platform were successful in stopping the flow of natural gas from the well. Apache has begun work to permanently plug the well using procedures that were approved by BOEMRE through a revised permit to modify.

In accordance with BOEMRE's direction, Apache moved a jack-up rig, Hercules 200, on location January 23 to drill a relief well in the event that the source control procedures from the platform are not successful. The rig has completed preliminary steps in preparing the area for drilling and is on stand-by awaiting results of the well-plugging operations.

A BOEMRE Lake Charles District engineer initially received the report of a potential leak on January 16, at approximately 10 a.m. According to Apache's report, the operator was in the process of permanently plugging its associated non-producing natural gas wells when workers spotted what appeared to be natural gas bubbling to the surface near the platform. The platform was safely evacuated and the associated pipelines and facilities have been successfully shut in.

BOEMRE has notified other agencies and is continuing to closely oversee the situation. BOEMRE will also conduct an investigation of the incident.

**Contact:** [BOEMRE Public Affairs - Gulf](#)