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Office of Public Affairs

BOEMRE Approves Operations for Eighth Deepwater Well

Drilling Permit Meets Critical New Safety Standards

NEW ORLEANS – The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) today approved a deepwater permit for the drilling of an eighth well that complies with rigorous new safety standards implemented in the wake of the Deepwater Horizon explosion and resulting oil spill. This includes satisfying the requirement to demonstrate the capacity to contain a subsea blowout. The approved permit is a permit to sidetrack for ENI U.S. Operating Company, Inc.'s Well #SS001 in Mississippi Canyon Block 460 in 2,823 feet water depth, approximately 57 miles southeast of Venice, Louisiana.

"This is the eighth deepwater well permitted to drill since February 17, when industry demonstrated that it had the capacity to handle subsea blowouts and spills," said BOEMRE Director Michael R. Bromwich. "The progress in permitting deepwater drilling is directly related to industry's ability to meet and satisfy the enhanced safety requirements associated with deepwater drilling, including the capability to contain a deepwater loss of well control and blowout."

ENI's Well #SS001 is a sidetrack well. A sidetrack well is drilled to a new geologic target or a new location within the original target from the existing wellbore. The operator had a rig on location when drilling preparation activities were halted due to the temporary drilling suspensions imposed following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

As part of its approval process, the Bureau reviewed ENI's containment capability available for the specific well proposed in the permit application. ENI has contracted with the Helix Well Containment Group (HWCG) to use HWCG's capping stack to stop the flow of oil should a blowout occur. The capabilities of the capping stack meet the requirements that are specific to the characteristics of the proposed well.

BOEMRE has worked diligently to help industry adapt to and comply with new, rigorous safety practices. These standards ensure that oil and gas development continues, while also incorporating key lessons learned from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. This new permit meets the new safety regulations and information requirements in Notices to Lessees N06 and N10, and the Interim Final Safety Rule.

For a list of well types, pending and approved permits, and information on new safety regulations, go to:
http://www.gomr.boemre.gov/homepg/offshore/safety/well_permits.html.

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