Welcome

Public Meeting

Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement

Proposed Geological and Geophysical Activities in the Mid- and South Atlantic OCS Planning Areas
Public Meeting Schedule

- Jacksonville, FL  April 16, 2012
- Savannah, GA  April 18, 2012
- Charleston, SC  April 20, 2012
- Norfolk, VA  April 24, 2012
- Annapolis, MD  April 25, 2012
- Wilmington, DE  April 26, 2012
- Wilmington, NC  April 26, 2012
- Atlantic City, NJ  April 27, 2012
• We have distributed a Draft Programmatic EIS for a 60-day comment period.
  
  • The Notice of Availability for the Draft Programmatic EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on March 30, 2012.

• We are here today to record and collect your comments on the Draft Programmatic EIS to assist in preparing the Final Programmatic EIS.

• Public input is an important part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.
• Assess the potential environmental impact of various types of G&G activity conducted on the Mid- and South Atlantic OCS

• Evaluate mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate impacts on affected resources

• Provide information and an analysis of impacts for BOEM and other agencies before decisions to authorize G&G activities
Authorize G&G activities required to support all three programs managed by BOEM in the Mid- and South Atlantic OCS Planning Areas (the area of interest [AOI])

- Oil and gas
- Renewable energy
- Marine minerals (sand)
Types of G&G Activities

- **Geological**
  - Coring
  - Shallow test drilling
  - Deep stratigraphic tests

- **Geophysical**
  - 2- and 3-dimensional seismic
  - Controlled source electromagnetic surveys (CSEM)
  - High-resolution geophysical surveys
    - Multibeam echosounder, sidescan sonar, and boomers
  - Gravity and magnetic surveys (sea and airborne)
Impact-Producing Factors

• Routine Operations
  • Active acoustic sound sources
    • Seismic airgun surveying
  • Electromechanical sound sources
  • Aircraft traffic and noise
  • Drilling and coring
    • Operational wastes
  • Seafloor disturbances
    • Bottom sampling
    • Drilling and coring, including discharges
    • Placement of anchors, cables, and sensors
  • Onshore base support services
  • Vessel traffic, noise, exclusion zones, and wastes
  • Trash and debris

• Accidental Events
  • Fuel spills
Environmental Resources

- Benthic Communities
- Fish and Fisheries (commercial and recreational fisheries, essential fish habitat)
- Marine Mammals
- Sea Turtles
- Coastal and Marine Birds
- Protected Species (among above)
- Socioeconomic Issues
  - Archaeological resources
  - Marine protected areas
  - Recreational resources
  - Human resources and land use
  - Other marine uses
• Alternative A (Proposed Action)
  • Time/area closure for Northern Right Whales’ seasonal management areas (SMA’s)
  • Notices to Lessees and Operators (NTL’s), with some modifications, based on BOEM/BSEE current practices in Gulf of Mexico that include the following:
    • Mitigation measures and protected species observers (NTL 2012-Joint-G02)
    • Vessel strike avoidance (NTL 2011-Joint-G01)
    • Marine trash and debris awareness (NTL-2012-BSEE-G01)

• Alternative B
  • All mitigations in Alternative A
  • Expanded time/area closures for Northern Right Whales’ SMA’s
  • Closure area for nesting sea turtles – central Florida
  • Separation between simultaneous seismic surveys
  • Required passive acoustic monitoring

• Alternative C
  • No Action for Oil and Gas G&G Activity, Status Quo for Renewable Energy and Marine Mineral G&G Activities
Alternative A

- Alternative A (Proposed Action) – Allow all G&G activities in the AOI from shore out to 350 nmi, with mitigations that include the following:
  - Entire AOI; survey protocols for active acoustic sound sources (airguns and electromechanical sources [high-resolution geophysical surveys])
  - Time/area closure for Northern Right Whales’ SMA’s
    - Mid-Atlantic SMA from November 1 to April 30
    - Southeast SMA from November 15 to April 15
  - SMA’s; no airgun use during closure periods; other survey types on a case-by-case basis
  - Guidance for vessel strike avoidance and marine debris awareness
  - Avoidance and reporting for sensitive benthic communities and archaeological resources
  - Military/NASA coordination
  - Passive acoustic monitoring recommended
Time-Area Closures

No Airgun Surveys (others case-by-case)

- Right Whale Critical Habitat (Nov 15 – Apr 15)
- Mid-Atlantic Seasonal Management Area (Nov 1 – Apr 30)
- Southeast Seasonal Management Area (Nov 15 – Apr 15)
Alternative B: Allow all G&G activities in the AOI from shore out to 350 nmi, with mitigations that include the following:

- All mitigations that are part of Alternative A
- Expanded time/area closures for Northern Right Whales’ SMA’s
  - Additional closure zone; shore out to 20 nmi to close gaps in the Mid-Atlantic SMA – November 1 to April 30
  - Additional closure zone; shore out to 20 nmi south of Southeast SMA – November 15 to April 15
- Time/area closure for sea turtles during nesting season
  - Off Brevard County, Florida – May 1 to October 31
- 40-km (25-mi) separation distance between simultaneously operating deep-penetration seismic airgun surveys
- Seismic-survey protocol includes required passive acoustic monitoring
Time-Area Closures

No Airgun Surveys (others case-by-case)

- Right Whale Critical Habitat (Nov 15 – Apr 15)
- Mid-Atlantic Seasonal Management Area (Nov 1 – Apr 30)
- Southeast Seasonal Management Area (Nov 15 – Apr 15)
- Sea Turtle Closure Off Brevard County (May 1 – Oct 31)
- Additional 20-nmi Closure Zone (Nov 1 – Apr 30)
- Additional 20-nmi Closure Zone (Nov 15 – Apr 15)
Alternative B

- Time/Area Closure for Sea Turtles off Brevard County, Florida
  - During the nesting season from May 1 to October 31
Alternative C

- Alternative C (No Action) – defined as follows:
  - No Action for the oil and gas program
    - Permitting for prelease G&G exploration would not occur
  - *Status Quo* for the renewable energy and marine mineral programs
    - Activity authorized by these programs would occur on a case-by-case basis, as they do now
## Example of Impacts – Airguns

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Alternative A</th>
<th>Alternative B</th>
<th>Alternative C</th>
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<td>Benthic Communities</td>
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<td>Marine Mammals</td>
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<td>Sea Turtles</td>
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<td>Negligible-Minor</td>
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<td>Commercial Fisheries</td>
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Consultations

- Consultations Required by Law for Protected Species and Conducted during NEPA Evaluation

- Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act
- Marine Mammal Protection Act
### Next Steps – Project Schedule

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<td>Revise to Final PEIS</td>
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• Comment period closes on May 30, 2012.

• Comments collected at this meeting may be
  • Oral comments – 3-minute maximum
  • Written comments – leave at the registration table

• Comments may be emailed to GGEIS@boem.gov.


• Label and mail “Comments on the G&G Draft Programmatic EIS”

Gary D. Goeke  
Chief, Regional Assessment Section  
Office of Environment (GM 623E)  
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management  
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region  
1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394