

THE NEWS ROOM

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THE BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY  
MANAGEMENT,  
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Office of Public Affairs

## **BOEMRE Releases Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Chukchi Sea Lease Sale 193**

*Analysis Addresses District Court Concerns, Public Comments*

**ANCHORAGE, Alaska** – The Bureau of Ocean Energy, Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) today released a Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Chukchi Sea Oil and Gas Lease Sale 193, held in February 2008. The Final SEIS provides additional environmental analysis that supplements the review originally completed as part of the planning for Lease Sale 193. Specifically, the Final SEIS addresses concerns raised by the U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska in its July 21, 2010, decision remanding Lease Sale 193 back to the agency, incorporates additional public comment, and includes a new analysis of the environmental impacts of a hypothetical Very Large Oil Spill (VLOS) scenario.

"We have worked diligently to address the District Court's concerns in a thorough and comprehensive manner," said BOEMRE Director Michael R. Bromwich. "This will ensure that decisions relating to this lease sale will be made in a careful, balanced manner using the best scientific information available."

In 2008, Lease Sale 193 was challenged in court by a coalition of environmental groups and Alaska Native organizations. In July 2010, the District Court remanded the sale back to BOEMRE for further analysis under the *National Environmental Policy Act*. In its decision, the court stated that the bureau was not required to re-do the lease sale's entire Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), but rather to address a specific set of concerns.

To address these concerns, the agency drafted a SEIS, which was released for public comment in October 2010. Following the opportunity for public comment, the agency prepared a revised version of the draft, which was released for public comment in May 2011.

The revised SEIS included an analysis of the potential environmental effects of a hypothetical VLOS scenario. A VLOS scenario is hypothetical, and is not an analysis of a well that any operator has actually proposed to drill. When an operator submits an Exploration Plan, that plan must specify the wells it proposes to drill and include an oil spill response plan that includes Worst Case Discharge values for these proposed wells. These values take into account specific depth, pressure, oil and anticipated reservoir properties for the proposed wells. These values may be lower than the hypothetical VLOS scenario used for the overall environmental analysis.

BOEMRE held public hearings in Alaska communities including Kotzebue, Point Hope, Point Lay, Wainwright, Barrow, Fairbanks and Anchorage; and conducted government-to-government consultations. Over 360,000 comment letters or cards were received from various entities: Alaska State and local governments; organizations; tribes; corporations; nongovernmental; industry; business and trade organizations; members of the Alaska State legislature; members of other state legislatures; federal agencies; and the public at large. After a rigorous review of these comments, BOEMRE updated the Final SEIS to reflect important stakeholder and public feedback.

In preparing the Final SEIS, BOEMRE's analysis included a careful review of the U.S. Geological Survey's June 2011 report, "An Evaluation of the Science Needs to Inform Decisions on Outer Continental Shelf Energy Development in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas, Alaska." Those data gaps addressed in the report that fall within the scope of the SEIS had also been previously identified and are currently being addressed by BOEMRE analysts. The report's recommendations will help guide BOEMRE's ongoing and future efforts to broaden and deepen the bureau's scope of knowledge on the Arctic environment.

The Final SEIS is now available online at:

[http://alaska.boemre.gov/ref/EIS\\_EA/2011\\_041\\_FSEIS/2011\\_041x.htm](http://alaska.boemre.gov/ref/EIS_EA/2011_041_FSEIS/2011_041x.htm)

Copies are available on CD while supplies last. To request a copy, please submit a request to: BOEMRE Alaska OCS Region, 3801 Centerpoint Dr. Ste. 500, Anchorage, Alaska 99503-5820; or call (907) 334-5200 or (800) 764-2627.

The Federal Register notice announcing the Final SEIS will be published Aug. 26, 2011, at which time BOEMRE will begin accepting public comments. To comment, go to:

<http://www.boemre.gov/publiccomment.htm> or send mail to:

Comments on the "Final SEIS, Chukchi Sea Lease Sale 193"  
c/o Regional Director, BOEMRE Alaska OCS Region  
3801 Centerpoint Drive Ste. 500  
Anchorage AK 99503-5820.

Comments received on or before the deadline of Monday, Sept. 26, 2011, will be considered by the Secretary of the Interior in determining whether to affirm, modify or cancel Lease Sale 193. The final decision is due to the District Court no later than Oct. 3, 2011.

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