

For immediate Release:
April 10, 2015

Contact:
John Callahan
john.callahan@boem.gov
907.334.5208

BOEM Invites Public Comment to Inform Environmental Assessment and Analysis of Chukchi Sea Exploration Plan

Shell's Revised Multi-Year Arctic Exploration Plan Deemed Submitted

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) today has deemed submitted Shell Gulf of Mexico, Inc.'s revised multi-year Exploration Plan (EP) and invites the public to review and comment on it. The revised EP describes Shell's proposal to conduct exploration drilling in the shallow waters of the Chukchi Sea Outer Continental Shelf, off the northwest coast of Alaska. It is available for review at: www.boem.gov/shell-chukchi.

An EP describes all exploration activities planned by the operator for a specific lease or leases, including the timing of these activities, information concerning drilling vessels, the location of each planned well, and actions to be taken to meet important safety and environmental standards and to protect access to subsistence resources.

"We will be carefully scrutinizing this revised EP to determine whether it meets stringent environmental and regulatory standards," said Dr. James Kendall, the director of BOEM's Alaska OCS Region. "We have posted Shell's revised EP online, and we invite the public and all interested stakeholders to review the document and provide us with comments."

After determining that the revised EP and accompanying information submitted by Shell are sufficient to begin a full regulatory and environmental analysis, BOEM has deemed the revised EP submitted. The bureau now has 30 calendar days to analyze and evaluate the revised EP in accordance with federal law. As part of this analysis, the bureau will prepare a site-specific Environmental Assessment (EA) of the proposed exploration activities pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act.

Shell's revised EP proposes to continue the multi-year Chukchi Sea exploration drilling program the company began in July 2012. This program includes drilling up to six wells within the Burger Prospect, located in approximately 140 feet of water about 70 miles northwest of the village of Wainwright. Shell would conduct its operations using the drillship M/V Noble Discoverer and the semi-submersible drilling unit Transocean Polar Pioneer, with each vessel providing relief-well capability for the other. The two drilling units and their supporting vessels would depart the Chukchi Sea at the conclusion of each exploration drilling season.

Upon completion of the technical and environmental analysis, BOEM will decide whether to approve the revised EP, require modifications, or disapprove it. Prior to conducting any operations, in addition to BOEM's review of the EP, Shell will need to receive approval from the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement and other relevant Federal agencies.

The public has two separate opportunities to provide comments:

- A 10-day comment period (April 20, 2015) for the public to comment on any issues that BOEM should consider in preparing the EA for the revised EP.
- A 21-day comment period (May 1, 2015) for the public to submit comments on the revised EP.

Instructions for public comment are at: www.boem.gov/shell-chukchi

###

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) promotes energy independence, environmental protection and economic development through responsible, science-based management of offshore conventional and renewable energy resources.

###