



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT

Alaska OCS Region

3801 Centerpoint Drive, Suite 500

Anchorage, Alaska 99503-5823

FEB 24 2014

Ms. Suzan Simonds  
SAExploration  
8240 Sandelwood Place, Suite 102  
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

Dear Ms. Simonds:

On November 5th, 2013, SAExploration submitted an application to BOEM to obtain a Geological and Geophysical (G&G) permit under the 30 CFR 551 regulations to conduct geophysical exploration operations on certain Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) lands. The activity is in the Beaufort Sea area shown on the map accompanying your application. Seismic operations will be conducted on both Federal and State of Alaska lands. SAExploration will conduct the subject operations using the equipment described in the Operation Plan. Operations are proposed to begin on or after February 24th, 2014, and will be completed on or before May 31, 2014. The proposed program is a 3D on-ice winter survey using vibroseis as the energy source.

Your application submittal states that SAExploration has requested a Letter of Authorization (LOA) from US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for polar bears. BOEM requires a copy of the LOA and the Incidental Take Statement (ITS) prior to conducting seismic operations. An LOA is issued when USFWS has determined that an action would only affect small numbers of marine mammals, have no more than a negligible impact on the stock, and not have an unmitigable impact on subsistence use. The procedures outlined in this authorization are required to avoid conflict with subsistence activities which may be conducted during a portion of the time proposed for this seismic operation.

OCS Permit 14-01 is hereby granted to conduct geophysical exploration operations on the OCS in the area and manner described in the application. A detailed track map of planned operations must be submitted to this office prior to the start of seismic operations. All operations are subject to the enclosed stipulations (see attachment 1) and approved Permit for Geophysical Exploration for Mineral Resources on the OCS (attachment 3). In all cases, the specific mitigating measures identified in the USFWS LOA will apply and shall supersede any differing BOEM requirements related to marine mammals, including protocols for monitoring programs. Information related to compliance with the provisions in the LOA and of the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act may be obtained from the

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Alaska Region  
1011E.Tudor Road  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503  
Telephone (907) 786-3467

Regulation 30 CFR 551.6(a)1 requires that your G&G operations must not interfere with or endanger operations being conducted under any lease, right-of-way, easement, right-of-use, Notice, or permit issued or maintained under the OCS Lands Act.

This permit is effective from the date of approval until May31 2014, or the completion of the survey, whichever occurs earlier. Please be advised that this office requires a weekly report of daily operations (see attachment 2). We will require a completion report as detailed in the permit within 30 days following cessation of field operations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Wall".

Rance R. Wall  
Regional Supervisor  
Resource Evaluation

- 3 Attachments
  - Stipulations
  - Weekly Operations Report
  - Forms BOEM-0327 and BOEM-0328

**Bureau of Ocean Energy Management  
Alaska OCS Region  
Seismic Survey G&G Permit Stipulations for Permit 14-01**

- No solid or liquid explosives shall be used without specific approval.
- Permittee operations shall be conducted in a manner to ensure that they will not cause pollution, cause undue harm to aquatic life, create hazardous or unsafe conditions, or unreasonably interfere with other uses of the area. If any difficulties are encountered with other uses of the area or any of the above mentioned scenarios occur during operations under this permit, they shall be reported to the Regional Supervisor, Resource Evaluation. Serious or emergency conditions shall be reported without delay.
- When any operator becomes aware of the potentially harassing effects of operations on marine mammals, or when any operator is unsure of the best course of action to avoid harassment of marine mammals, every measure to avoid further harassment shall be taken until the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is consulted for instructions or directions. However, human safety shall take precedence at all times over the guidelines and distances recommended herein for the avoidance of disturbance and harassment of marine mammals.
- The Permittee shall notify BOEM, NMFS, and USFWS in the event of any loss of equipment that could pose a danger to the environment, marine mammals, and other wildlife resources.

The following monitoring and mitigation measures are related to the requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and Endangered Species Act (ESA). The mitigation and monitoring requirements defined in any USFWS (the Federal agency having MMPA jurisdiction for Pacific walrus, polar bear, and sea otter) Incidental Take Authorization (ITA) obtained by the seismic survey operator shall replace and supersede any differing provisions concerning marine mammal measures listed below.

- **Polar Bear** – Seismic survey operators shall adhere to any mitigation measures identified by the USFWS to protect polar bears from being harassed and/or injured.
- SAE will not conduct seismic source operations in water (ice) deeper than 10 foot (3 meter) bathymetric depth. Receiver placement can occur beyond the 10 foot (3 meter) bathymetric depth.
- SAE will implement mitigation measures to avoid damaging seal lairs or harassing or injuring **ringed seals**. These mitigation measures include:
  - 1) Survey all on ice travel routes and operation areas where ringed seals may occur using a 150 m buffer around each travel route and seismic source. PSOs shall be present to detect any ringed seal activities.
  - 2) Operations must cease immediately if any damage to a seal lair occurs. SAE must contact BOEM immediately and SAE must get BOEM approval before restarting operations.

## **Weekly Operations Report for submittal to BOEM**

- Weekly Summary Report
  - Map showing data collected to date
  - Summary of operating time by categories listed below
  - Compilation of line kms or miles and/or sq kms or sq miles collected
  - Daily record of weather
  
- Daily operation records will include
  - All dates and times in AK local time
  - Survey name
  - Track line # that data were collected on
  - Also provide shape files of the track lines collected during the reporting period including all of the daily information listed above as metadata on a weekly basis.
  
- Safety Incident Report including any spillage of petroleum products (if applicable) for same time period
  
- PSO Report for same time period

Send to Pete Sloan, G&G Permitting Coordinator, Alaska Region, BOEM,  
Pete.Sloan@boem.gov or call 907-334-5328 (office) or 907-382-1134 (cell)