

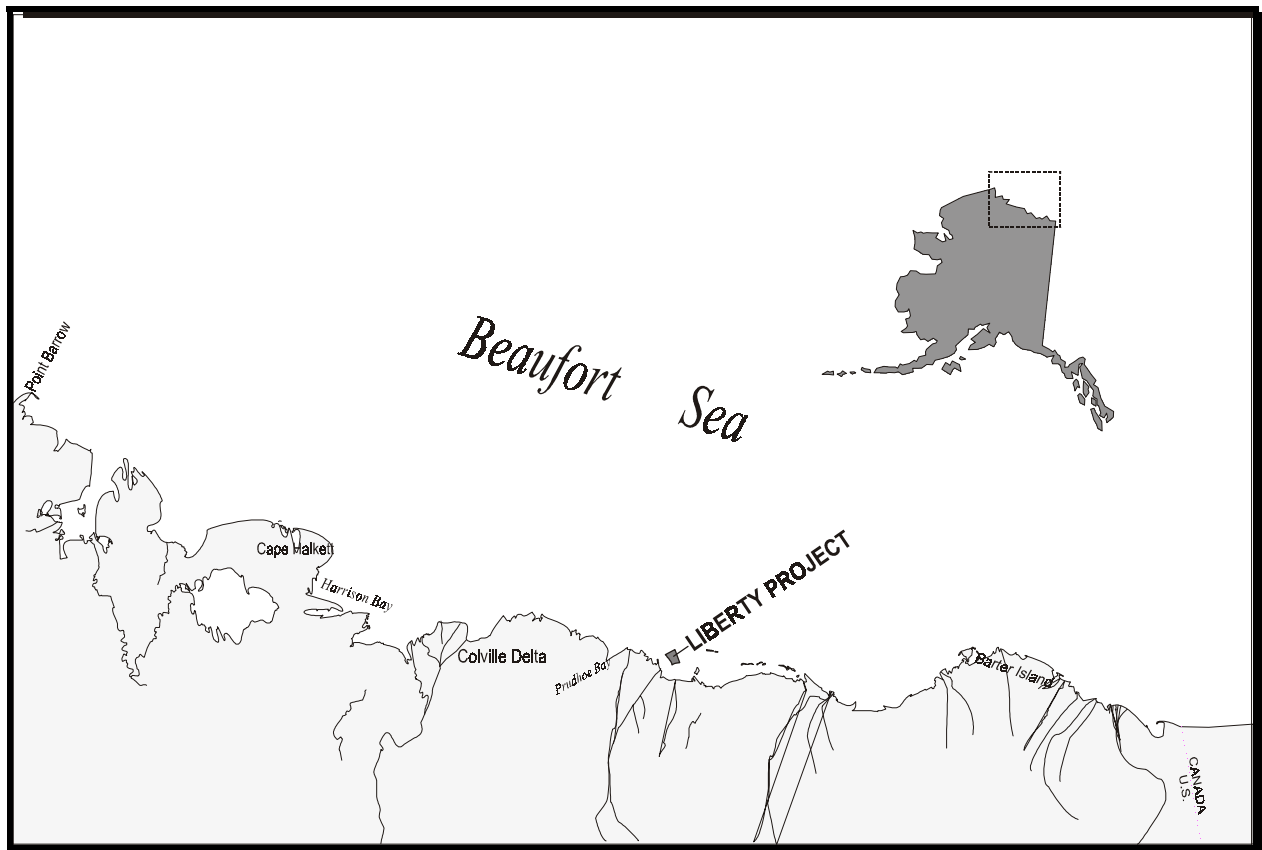
MMS

Public Notice

U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Alaska OCS Region
949 E. 36th Avenue, Room 308
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

Start of Public Comment Period: January 12, 2001
Close of Public Comment Period: March 13, 2001

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS), AND LOCATIONS AND DATES OF PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR BP EXPLORATION (ALASKA) INC.'S PROPOSED BEAUFORT SEA OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT/LIBERTY PROJECT



Project Location

PROPOSAL BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc. (BPXA) is proposing to develop the Liberty Project in Federal Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) waters of the Alaskan Beaufort Sea. BPXA's action, located approximately 20 miles offshore northeast of Prudhoe Bay, is a self-contained development/ production facility located on a new manmade offshore gravel island in Foggy Island Bay. The gravel island will be located in water about 22 feet deep, inside the barrier

islands (Lease Sale 144, OCS Y-01650), and 1.5 miles west of the abandoned Tern Island. The Liberty Project is about 6 miles off the coast nearly midway between Point Brower to the west and Tigvarik Island to the east. Also proposed is construction of about 6.1 miles of an offshore buried oil pipeline and about 1.5 miles of onshore elevated pipeline connecting the island facilities to the Badami Pipeline; two gravel pads, one at the shoreline crossing and another at the connection point to the Badami Pipeline; an onshore gravel-mine site at the Kadleroshilik River, used during construction and then rehabilitated; and onshore and offshore ice roads.

PERMITTING AGENCIES In February 1998, BPXA submitted a Development and Production Plan (DPP) to Minerals Management Service (MMS) for the proposed Liberty Project in accordance with 30 CFR 250.204, and a pipeline Right-of-Way application, as required under 30 CFR 250.1010. In response to this submittal, MMS determined on February 23, 1998 that processing of this DPP/application for the proposed project constituted a major federal action that may significantly affect the quality of the human environment pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This application was updated with supplemental information in November 1998 (Revision 1) and July 2000 (revision 2).

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has statutory authority for the placement of dredged or fill materials in waters of the United States, including wetlands under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA); for work performed in or affecting navigable waters of the U.S. under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act; and for the transport of dredged material for the purpose of dumping it into ocean waters under Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act (MPRSA). In response to BPXA's submittal of a permit application, the Corps determined that issuance of a permit for BPXA's proposed project constituted a major federal action that may significantly affect the quality of the human environment pursuant to NEPA.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has primary responsibility for implementation of Sections 301, 306, 311, and 404 of the CWA. EPA shares responsibility with the Corps for implementation of Section 404 of the CWA and implementation of the MPRSA. EPA has primary responsibilities for implementation of Title V of the Clean Air Act (CAA) in offshore waters. Finally, EPA conducts a review and evaluation of the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for compliance with NEPA and Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations pursuant to Section 309 of the CAA. EPA determined under provisions of the Clean Water Act and 40 CFR Part 6 Subpart F that permitting by the EPA for BPXA's proposed project also constituted a major federal action that may significantly affect the quality of the human environment.

COORDINATED FEDERAL REVIEW Assuming the role of lead federal agency, MMS, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C.4371 et seq.), initiated a cooperative agreement with two other federal agencies with regulatory requirements (the Corps and EPA) to write this EIS. Other federal agencies MMS coordinated with in preparation of this EIS included: the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS); the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS); the Department of Transportation Office of Pipeline Safety; the U.S. Coast Guard; and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Within the State of Alaska, MMS coordinated with the Division of Governmental Coordination; the Department of

Natural Resources; the State Pipeline Coordinator's Office; and the Department of Environmental Conservation. The North Slope Borough (NSB) was also contacted regarding this EIS.

As a result, preparation of an EIS under NEPA was undertaken to identify and evaluate a range of potentially applicable technologies and construction options, including BPXA's proposal, the No Action proposal, and a variety of alternatives that were developed in light of the most significant issues raised from scoping. The alternatives examine: three island locations and pipeline routes; four pipeline designs; two types of upper slope protection for the production island; two gravel mine sites; two pipeline burial depths; and a combination of these possibilities. The MMS based the EIS analyses on estimates of the kinds and amounts of activity onshore and offshore that could result from: transporting personnel and equipment offshore; constructing the self-contained man-made gravel island; installing structures and equipment on the island; drilling wells; constructing the common carrier oil pipeline buried in an undersea trench to an onshore landfall and then elevated onshore by vertical support members to a tie-in with the existing onshore Badami oil pipeline. In addition, the project includes the building of two gravel pads, one at the onshore landfall and the other at the Badami tie-in site. This project includes a new gravel mine site as well as onshore and offshore ice roads. The EIS additionally serves as the environmental analysis for the BPXA's Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan (ODPCP) and the construction and operation of a pipeline that would be associated with any Right-of-Way (ROW) for the OCS portion of the proposed Liberty pipeline. This DEIS is intended to meet the NEPA compliance and/or other public notice requirements of agency actions.

A Biological Assessment is being prepared by MMS on the Liberty DPP to conform with the requirements of Section 7 (a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended. The Biological Assessment will be submitted to both the FWS and the NMFS to initiate formal consultation under the ESA. The Biological Assessment identifies potential effects to threatened and endangered species as a result of development/production of the Liberty Project, including subsequent transport of crude oil along the U.S. West Coast and East Coast routes to refinery destinations. Both FWS and NMFS will write and issue a Biological Opinion on this proposed project. MMS's Biological Assessment will appear as part of the Final EIS as will both Biological Opinions.

COORDINATED STATE REVIEW The State will be coordinating their own review of the Liberty Project, once they establish and initiate their Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP) review process. For further information on the State process contact Mr. Glenn Gray, Division of Governmental Coordination, State of Alaska, Juneau, Alaska or call 1-907-465-8792.

STEPS IN THE EIS PROCESS

Federal Notice of Intent (NOI) to Prepare EIS
February 23, 1998

Scoping is On-Going
Public Scoping Meetings were held March-April, 1998.
This was the first opportunity to learn about this proposed project and provide input on what the public felt needed to be addressed in the EIS.

Issuance of Draft EIS
Draft EIS is published and made
available for public review (January 12, 2001)

Public Information Meetings on Draft EIS
This is your opportunity to meet with the EIS
staff to ask questions about the Draft EIS.

Comment Period on Draft EIS—(January 12 to March 13, 2001)
This is your opportunity to review the Draft EIS and to provide
comments to the agencies.

Public Hearings on Draft EIS
An additional opportunity to provide
comments on the Draft EIS.

Issuance of Final EIS
Final EIS has been completed and
is available for public review.

Comment period on Final EIS
This is the final opportunity to
provide comments on the EIS.

Record of Decision
Public statements of agency decisions

CONTENTS AND AVAILABILITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The Beaufort Sea Oil and Gas Development/Liberty Project Draft EIS, available to the public on January 12, 2001, is a three-volume document [OCS EIS/EA, MMS 2001-001], containing related documents as appendices. These three volumes are:

Volume I -- Executive Summary, Sections I through IX, Bibliography, Index

Volume II -- Tables, Figures, and Maps for Volume I

Volume III -- Appendices

The summary is also available as a separate document: Executive Summary [MMS 2001-002].

The complete EIS is available on CD-ROM [MMS 2001-001 CD] and on the Internet [<http://www.mms.gov/alaska/cproject/liberty/>].

To save natural resources and prevent wasteful reproduction of the Draft EIS, interested parties are strongly encouraged to review the document at one of the following public locations:

- Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission Office, Barrow, Alaska
- Alaska Inter-Tribal Council, 431 West 7th Avenue, Suite 201, Anchorage, Alaska
- Alaska MMS Public Information Resource Center, 949 E. 36th Avenue, Room 330, Anchorage, Alaska
- Alaska Resources Library and Information Services (ARLIS), U.S. Department of the Interior, 3150 C Street, Suite 100, Anchorage, Alaska
- Alaska State Library, State Office Building, 333 Willoughby, Juneau, Alaska
- Army Corps of Engineers Library, U.S. Department of Defense, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska
- Barrow City Office, Barrow Alaska
- Fairbanks North Star Borough Public Library (Noel Wien Public Library), 1215 Cowles Street, Fairbanks, Alaska
- Kaktovik City Office, Kaktovik, Alaska
- Kaveolook School Library, Kaktovik, Alaska
- Juneau Public Library, 292 Marine Way, Juneau, Alaska
- North Slope Borough Office, Barrow, Alaska
- North Slope Borough School District Library/Media Center, Barrow, Alaska
- Northern Alaska Environmental Center Library, 218 Driveway, Fairbanks, Alaska
- Nuiqsut City Office, Nuiqsut, Alaska
- Nuiqsut Library, Nuiqsut, Alaska
- Tuzzy Consortium Library, Barrow, Alaska
- University of Alaska, Anchorage Consortium Library, 3211 Providence Drive, Anchorage, Alaska
- University of Alaska Fairbanks, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, 310 Tanana Drive, Fairbanks, Alaska
- University of Alaska, Fairbanks Institute of Arctic Biology, 311 Irving Building, Fairbanks, Alaska

- University of Alaska-Juneau Library, 11120 Glacier Highway, Juneau, Alaska
- Valdez Consortium Library, 200 Fairbanks Street, Valdez, Alaska
- Z.J. Loussac Library, 3600 Denali Street, Anchorage, Alaska

The entire Draft EIS, or any of its separate volumes, is available to any member of the public that requests a copy for review purposes. The volumes can be obtained on written request to: MMS Alaska OCS Region, Attention: Mr. Fred R. King, 949 E. 36th Avenue, Room 308, Anchorage, Alaska, 99508-4363, or by calling 1-800-764-2627. Please request only the volumes you will really use.

DRAFT EIS AND REVIEW COMMENT PERIOD

The public is invited to provide comments on the Draft EIS, the Project Description, draft NPDES permit, and draft UIC permit during the public comment period from January 12, 2001, to March 13, 2001. Comments may be submitted in writing, or verbally in person at one of the scheduled public hearings.

If you want to comment to Federal agencies on

- **The draft EIS, or either the Corps or EPA proposed permit(s):**
 - Send a letter to: Regional Director, Minerals Management Service, Alaska OCS Region, Room 308, Anchorage, Alaska, 99508-4363.
 - Fax your letter ahead (also mail a hard copy to address above) to MMS at: (907) 271-6805.
 - Attend one of the public hearings scheduled in Barrow, Kaktovik, Nuiqsut, Fairbanks, and Anchorage.

Each comment received on the Draft EIS, or the Corps or EPA proposed permit(s), is reviewed and compiled for use in developing the final documents. Comments specific to the EPA's draft permit will be forwarded to the EPA for their consideration, and those specific to the Corp's draft permit will be forwarded to the Corps. Responses to written and oral comments on the Draft EIS are included in the Final EIS, along with an explanation of which sections in the EIS are relevant to the particular subject.

The MMS encourages you to submit comments. Your comments represent the public's concerns about the proposed project, and they will directly affect the development of the Final EIS and the Corps and EPA final permits.

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS

The MMS will be conducting a series of public information meetings to provide an informal opportunity for interested parties to go through the Draft EIS, draft NPDES permit, and draft UIC permit. Public information meetings will provide guidance on how to find information contained in these documents and how to effectively submit comments. Agency representatives will explain how the document is being developed in coordination with state agencies, and will be available to answer questions, but not resolve issues or take testimony. Five public information meetings will be held on the following dates:

- Barrow, Alaska: Monday, January 22, 2001, 7:30 to 10 p.m., at the Inupiaq Heritage Center
- Nuiqsut, Alaska: Tuesday, January 23, 2001, 7 to 10 p.m., at the Kisik Community Center
- Kaktovik, Alaska: Wednesday, January 24, 2001, 7 to 10 p.m., at the Kaktovik Community Center
- Fairbanks, Alaska: Thursday, January 25, 2001, 6 to 9 p.m., at the Fairbanks North Star Borough Public Library (Noel Wein Library), 1215 Cowles Street
- Anchorage, Alaska: Tuesday, January 30, 2001, noon to 3 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. at the Z.J. Loussac Library, Wilda Marston Theatre, 3600 Denali Street

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings are formal meetings where comments from the public are recorded and transcribed for use in developing the Final EIS, and the Corps and EPA final permits. Those wishing to submit oral or written comments on the Draft EIS, and the Corps and EPA draft permits may do so at the scheduled public hearings. A court reporter will record the proceedings of each public hearing, and an Inupiat translator will be present at the hearings held in Barrow, Kaktovik, and Nuiqsut. Five public hearings on the Draft EIS will be held on the following dates:

- Anchorage, Alaska: Thursday, February 15, 2001, noon to 3 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. at the Z.J. Loussac Library, Wilda Marston Theatre, 3600 Denali Street
- Barrow, Alaska: Monday, February 19, 2001, 7:30 to 10 p.m., at the Inupiaq Heritage Center
- Kaktovik, Alaska: Tuesday, February 20, 2001, 7 to 10 p.m. at the Kaktovik Community Center
- Nuiqsut, Alaska: Wednesday, February 21, 2001, 7 to 10 p.m. at the Kisik Community Center
- Fairbanks, Alaska: Thursday, February 22, 2001, 6 to 9 p.m., at the Alaskaland Exhibit Hall, 2600 Airport Way

If you wish to testify at a hearing, you may register prior to the hearing to schedule a preferred time to testify by contacting the Alaska Region at the above address or Mr. Fred King at (907)

271-6696 or toll free 1-800-764-2627 not later than 3 days prior to the hearing date. Every effort will be made to accommodate individuals who have not pre-registered to testify. Time limitations may make it necessary to limit the length of oral statements to 10 minutes. You may supplement an oral statement with a more complete written statement and submit it to the hearing officer at the hearing or by mail until March 13, 2001. Written statements submitted at a hearing will be considered part of the hearing record. If you are unable to attend the hearing, you may submit written statements at the address below until March 13, 2001.

We will accept comments on the Draft EIS until March 13, 2001. Address your comments to the Regional Director, Minerals Management Service, Alaska OCS Region, 949 East 36th Avenue, Room 308, Anchorage, Alaska 99508-4363.

AGENCY'S EVALUATIONS AND DECISIONS

MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE (MMS)

The MMS is requesting comments on the Draft EIS. Comments on any of the alternatives detailed within the Draft EIS is appreciated, as well as the analyses of each alternative (including the five component alternative sets) as depicted within the Draft EIS. MMS is soliciting comments from: the public; Federal; State; and local agencies and officials; Indian tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by MMS to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny the applicant's proposal.

Under separate cover, the MMS is also requesting comments on BPXA's Development Production Plan (DPP), the Environment Report (ER), and the Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan (ODPCP). For information on these reviews, contact Mr. Jeff Walker, Regional Supervisor Field Operations, Mineral Management Service Alaska OCS Region, Room 308, Anchorage, Alaska, 99508-4363, or call 1-907-271-6169.

CORPS OF ENGINEERS (CORPS)

Refer to separate Corps Public Notice (attached).

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

Refer to separate EPA Public Notice (attached).

NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH (NSB)

The Liberty Unit development would require a rezoning from the NSB's Conservation Zoning District to the Resource Development District. The NSB Planning Commission will act on BPXA's rezone application by resolution. The NSB Assembly will make the final rezone decision by ordinance if the application is approved.

**REMEMBER: ALL COMMENTS MUST BE POSTMARKED
PRIOR TO THE CLOSE OF THE COMMENT PERIOD—*March 13, 2001.***