

Environmental Impact Statement on Effects of Oil & Gas Activities (Seismic and Exploratory Drilling) in the Arctic Ocean Updates

Open Water Meeting
March 22-24, 2010



Office of Protected Resources

NOAA Fisheries



National Marine Fisheries Service

Proposed Action

- Authorize incidental takes allowing industry “the incidental, but not intentional, taking of small numbers of marine mammals” within the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas
- NMFS and MMS must understand consequences of this action on the environment before issuing authorizations
 - Effects on marine mammal species or stocks
 - Effects on communities and subsistence



Scoping Meeting Locations

- February 18 – Kotzebue
- February 19 – Point Hope
- February 22 – Point Lay
- March 9 – Wainwright
- March 10 – Barrow
- March 11 – Nuiqsut
- March 12 – Kaktovik
- March 23 – Anchorage



Issues and Concerns

- Protection of subsistence resources and Inupiat culture and way of life
- Disturbance to marine mammal migration patterns (bowhead, beluga, etc.)
- Impacts on marine fish, reproduction, growth, and development
- Oil and gas activity impacts on marine mammals and seabirds, including noise, movement, operations



Issues and Concerns (cont.)

- Impacts to threatened & endangered species (including polar bear, walrus)
- Incorporation of Traditional Knowledge in the decision-making process
- Effectiveness and feasibility of marine mammal monitoring and other mitigation measures
- Provide adequate lead time for communities to understand activities and respond



Issues and Concerns (cont.)

- Issues and perspectives vary by community
- Issues involving mitigation of potential effects are likely community/region specific
- Focus will be expanded to include other species
- Many concerns beyond scope of proposed action but will be part of cumulative analyses



Option for Rulemaking

- NMFS is considering a long-term planning process under MMPA for 5-year regulations
 - Rather than annual Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA)
 - Industry will submit petition
 - Implementation goal is 2012
 - EIS would provide NEPA compliance with either annual or 5-year ITAs



2009 Meeting Comments

- NMFS needs to consider other species
- Can dead animals be marked?
- HQ should be involved more with communities other than OWM
- Mitigation measures need to be reviewed
- Monitoring need be reviewed
- External review of IHAs (prior to issuance) was requested



2009 Meeting Comments (cont.)

- Peer review of monitoring
- Regulations/LOAs vs. IHAs and longer term process
- 120 dB Workshop
- EIS should be initiated
- Comments to improve OWM
 - Stakeholder vs. peer review
 - Meeting should be longer for more discussion



A sunset over the ocean with the sun low on the horizon, casting a golden glow across the sky and a shimmering reflection on the water. The sky transitions from a pale yellow near the sun to a soft orange and then a light blue at the top. The water is dark blue with small ripples, and the sun's reflection creates a bright, shimmering path across the surface.

Thank You for Participating

in the
2010 Open Water Meeting