



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

March 16, 2015

Mr. Gary D. Goeke
Chief, Environmental Assessment Section
Leasing and Environment (MS 5410)
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)
1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard
New Orleans, LA 70133-2394

Subject: EPA NEPA Review Comments on BOEM's DSEIS for "Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Lease Sales: 2016-2017 Central Planning Area Lease Sales 241, 247 and Eastern Planning Area Lease Sale 226" CEQ #20150022

Dear Mr. Goeke:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the subject Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) in accordance with our responsibilities under Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. It is our understanding that BOEM proposes lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico (GOM) Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) for lease blocks in the Central Planning Area and the Eastern Planning Area. The proposed action covers lease sales of blocks 241 and 247 in the Central Planning Area and lease sale block 226 in the Eastern Planning Area. EPA understands that these lease sales are considered Federal actions that trigger NEPA and that this DSEIS will update baseline conditions and potential environmental effects of oil and gas leasing, exploration, development, and production in the Central and Eastern Planning Areas since publication of the last NEPA documents addressing activities in these areas.¹

EPA has participated in several recent NEPA reviews for BOEM actions, including reviews of the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for the proposed 2012-2017 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program and the 2012-2017 WPA/CPA Multisale EISs. We have also provided comments on several lease sale EISs including the CPA 235/241/247 Supplemental EIS and the EPA 225/226 EIS which the subject EIS supplements.

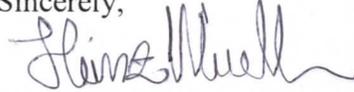
Based on our analysis of the above referenced proposed action, EPA rates this DSEIS as "**EC-2**" i.e., EPA has "**Environmental Concerns and Request Additional Information**" in the Final Supplemental EIS (FSEIS). The EPA's rating system criteria can be found online at:

¹ p. v of the DSEIS

<http://www.epa.gov/oecaerth/nepa/comments/ratings.html>. Our primary concerns associated with the proposed actions are related to potential impacts to air, coastal ecosystems, wetlands, mitigation, and level of detail provided in the document. Detailed comments are enclosed with this letter which more clearly identifies our concerns and comments. We request that the FSEIS include specific responses to our comments.

EPA appreciates the opportunity to review the DSEIS. Should BOEM have questions regarding our comments, please feel free to contact Dan Holliman of my staff at 404/562-9531 or holliman.daniel@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heinz Mueller", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Heinz J. Mueller
Chief, NEPA Program Office

Attachment: Detailed Comments