

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PETROLEUM GEOLOGISTS

An International Geological Organization



David G. Rensink
President

March 30, 2011

Mr. J. F. Bennett
Chief, Branch of Environmental Assessment
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management,
Regulation, and Enforcement (BOEMRE)
381 Elden Street, MS 4042
Herndon, VA 20170

Re: Development of Programmatic EIS for the Proposed 2012-2017 OCS 5-Year Program

Dear Mr. Bennett,

I am writing on behalf of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG), the world's largest scientific and professional geological association, in support of expanding the scope of the programmatic environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed 2012-2017 Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) 5-Year Program.

The oil and natural gas resources available from the nation's OCS move people and products, power factories and homes. They fuel the commerce and economic growth to sustain our way of life. The question is not if we need these resources, but rather how to responsibly develop them.

AAPG strongly supports measures to improve the safety of offshore oil and natural gas exploration and production. Since the blowout of the Macondo well in the Gulf of Mexico, both government and industry have responded to further enhance existing practices and improve response and remediation plans and procedures. As the national oil spill commission concluded, "[D]rilling in deepwater does not have to be abandoned. It can be done safely."

But regardless of water depth, meeting the nation's energy needs requires oil and natural gas companies to drill. And maximizing the nation's base of proven oil and natural gas reserves from the OCS necessitates access and the time and opportunity to find and develop them.

As a result, AAPG urges the Bureau to reverse its plan to restrict the scope of the programmatic EIS – and the 2012-2017 leasing program – to the Central and Western Gulf of Mexico, Chukchi Sea, Beaufort Sea, and Cook Inlet. The Atlantic and Pacific OCS and Eastern Gulf of Mexico should also be included.

The oil and natural gas resources on the nation's OCS belong to the American people. Finding and developing these resources will generate jobs and energy security for decades to come. That process begins by expanding, not shrinking, the 2012-2017 OCS 5-Year Program. We must not delay.

Sincerely,

David G. Rensink
AAPG President