

# **Decision Record**

**Environmental Assessment: DOI-BLM-AKF01000-2016-001-EA**

**Caelus Energy Alaska Smith Bay, LLC**

**FF097064**

**Prepared by**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**  
**Bureau of Land Management**  
**Arctic Field Office**  
**Fairbanks, Alaska**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an environmental analysis (DOI-BLM-AK-F01000-2016-0001-EA) to evaluate the effects of implementation of Caelus Energy Alaska Smith Bay, LLC (CEASB) proposed plan of operations for a Right-of-Way in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A). CEASB is proposing to cross lands managed by the BLM to reach their State of Alaska offshore oil and gas lease (Tulimaniq drill sites CT-1 and CT-2) and drill up to two oil and gas wells during the winter of 2015-2016. The exploratory well sites are located in southern Smith Bay near the Ikpikpuk River Delta. The proposed camp for the program would be located at Lake M0654 (Township 16 North, Range 9 West, Umiat Meridian). Mobilization of equipment and materials would occur by snow roads on both federal and state lands during winter tundra operating conditions. For a complete legal description of the project see Appendix A of the Environmental Analysis (EA).

## **MAJOR LAWS PERTINENT TO DECISION**

Major laws pertinent to the decision to accept the environmental assessment are: the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, the Sustainable Fisheries Act, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, and the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act.

## **SELECTED ALTERNATIVE**

The proposed action as presented to the BLM is the selected alternative. The proposed action meets the purpose and need of the EA; the No Action Alternative was not selected because it would not meet the purpose and need. The No Action Alternative would prevent the applicant from economically conducting exploration activity on their State of Alaska oil and gas lease.

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)**

Based upon a review of the EA and the supporting documents, the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required. See FONSI for more information.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

The proposed action was announced on the BLM Arctic Field Office website NEPA register (October 1, 2015). BLM received one comment letter from the Wilderness Society and the Conservation Lands Foundation. Sections 1.5.1 thru 1.5.9 address the concerns raised in the letter. The commenters suggested that information pertaining to blowout prevention should be included within the EA. Based on this comment, Section 2.1.7 Blowout Prevention was added to the EA. Blowout prevention information is detailed in the CEASB Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan (ODPCP). The State of Alaska is the regulatory authority over ODPCP (AS. 46.04.030).

For this project, the applicant attended and presented the proposed action at the Subsistence Advisory Panel meeting in Barrow, Alaska on September 11, 2015. Caelus held stakeholder meetings in Barrow, Nuiqsut, and Atqasuk. Flyers with aircraft identifying information have also been distributed. KBRW (Barrow Alaska Radio Station) radio announcements are planned and a Tulimaniq Information Line has been established: 907-343-2108. Public involvement during the development of the EA also included discussions and coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Air Force.

## **RATIONALE FOR DECISION**

The decision to allow the proposed action does not result in any undue or unnecessary environmental degradation of the public lands. The proposed action is in conformance with the objectives outlined in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision signed February 2013. This EA is tiered to this document and the documents are incorporated by reference. All practicable alternatives and measures to reduce or eliminate impacts to wetlands and floodplains in the project area, done in compliance with Executive Orders 11990 and 11988, have been taken. The action, as proposed, is not in conflict with other resources in the area and in conformance with current policy of the Arctic Field Office, BLM.

## **DECISION**

I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment including the explanation and resolution of any environmental impacts. I have determined that the proposed action with mitigation measures described therein will not have any significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on the human environment and that an EIS is not required. I have determined that the proposed project is in conformance with the approved IAP. It is my decision to authorize the ROW for the proposed activity.

The environmental protection measures afforded by the NPR-A IAP/EIS, the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976 and the additional mitigation of the EA and FONSI are to be included in all authorizations.

The applicant submitted a Waste Management Plan as required by the EIS/ROD and A-2 Best Management Practice. The plan is hereby accepted.

The applicant submitted an Orientation Program Plan for Oil and Gas Related Activities as required by the EIS/ROD I-1 Best Management Practice. The plan is hereby accepted.

The applicant submitted a Weed Plan as required by the EIS/ROD and M-2 Best Management Practice. The plan is hereby accepted.

The applicant requested a deviation to BMP A-5. The deviation is approved.

## APPEAL PROVISIONS

This decision shall take effect immediately upon the date it is signed by the authorized officer, December 9, 2015 and shall remain in effect while any appeal is pending unless the Interior Board of Land Appeals issues a stay (43 CFR 2801.10(b)). Any appeal of this decision must follow the procedures set forth in 43 CFR Part 4. Within 30 days of the decision, a notice of appeal must be filed in the office of the authorized officer at Arctic Field Office, 1150 University Avenue, Fairbanks Alaska 99709. If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, U.S. Department of the Interior, 801 North Quincy St., Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22203 within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed with the authorized officer. If you wish to file a petition for stay pursuant to 43 CFR Part 4.21(b), the petition for stay should accompany your notice of appeal and shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards: (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied, (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits, (3) The likelihood of irreparable harm to the appellant or resources if the stay is not granted, and (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay. If a petition for stay is submitted with the notice of appeal, a copy of the notice of appeal and petition for stay must be served on each party named in the decision from which the appeal is taken, and with the IBLA at the same time it is filed with the authorized officer. A copy of the notice of appeal, any statement of reasons and all pertinent documents must be served on each adverse party named in the decision from which the appeal is taken and on the Office of the Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior, 4230 University Drive Suite 300, Anchorage, AK 99508, not later than 15 days after filing the document with the authorized officer and/or IBLA.

  
Stacie McIntosh  
Arctic Field Manager

Date December 10, 2015