



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Alaska District

Public Notice of Application for Permit

Regulatory Division (1145)
CEPOA-RD
Post Office Box 6898
JBER, Alaska 99506-0898

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| PUBLIC NOTICE DATE: | December 11, 2012 |
| EXPIRATION DATE: | December 26, 2012 |
| REFERENCE NUMBER: | POA-1979-234-M4 |
| WATERWAY: | Beaufort Sea |

Interested parties are hereby notified that a Department of the Army permit application has been received for work in waters of the United States as described below and shown on the project drawings available online under POA-1979-234-M4 at <http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/PublicNotices.aspx>.

Comments on the described work, with the reference number, should reach this office no later than the expiration date of this Public Notice to become part of the record and be considered in the decision. Please contact **Mary Romero** at telephone (907) 753-2773, toll free from within Alaska at (800) 478-2712, by fax at (907) 753-5567, or by email at mary.r.romero@usace.army.mil if further information is desired concerning this notice.

APPLICANT: Ms. Janet Sheldon, Permitting Advisor, HSE - Alaska, BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc. (BPXA); (907) 564-4325; Post Office Box 196612, Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6612.

LOCATION: The project site is located within Section 35, T. 11 N., R. 13 E., Umiat Meridian; USGS Quad Map Beechey Point B-3; Latitude 70.264923° N., Longitude 148.754749° W.; Prudhoe Bay, Alaska.

PURPOSE: The applicant's stated purpose is to construct a pad expansion to accommodate larger drill rigs and provide appropriate safety for movement of equipment.

PROPOSED WORK: BPXA is proposing to place up to 8,000 cubic yards of gravel into 0.7 acre of Palustrine wetlands for the expansion of A Pad. All work would be performed in accordance with the plan (sheets 1-6), dated November 30, 2012. Drawings for this Public Notice can be viewed online under POA-1979-234-M4 at <http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/PublicNotices.aspx>.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The original permit POA-1979-234 (then known as 071-OYD-4-790234) was issued on August 24, 1979, to, " place 97,000 cubic yards of material to construct a

180' x 850' drill pad, a 180' x 590' drill pad, a 225' x 390' manifold pad, a 310' x 310' flare pit, a 20' x 300' access road, a 24' x 500' access road, a 24' x 125' access road and a 30' x 1,050' sump dike."

The first modification, POA-1979-234-M1 (originally known as M-790234), was authorized on August 19, 1987, to, "place an additional 5,816 cubic yards of gravel fill material in .72 acres of wetlands to allow sufficient operating room around and in the vicinity of the drilling operations for rig access under the reduced well spacing program."

The second modification, POA-1979-234-M2 (POA-1979-234-N), was authorized on August 1, 2005 to, "place clean gravel fill material into waters of the U.S., i.e., wetlands, for two stages of work: a) construct a 340-foot long dike with 2,000 cy gravel fill material to enclose the area of subsiding pipe supports to allow for dewatering the area and assessing the soil and pipe support problems (shown in enclosed Figures 1-3), and b) construct a 3 foot thick or deeper gravel pad (up to 330' x 70') beneath the production pipelines and supports to stabilize the pipe supports and provide access.

POA-1979-234-M3 (known as POA-1979-235-O), was authorized on December 21, 2005, to modify Special condition 3 of POA- 1979-234 -N to read:

3. The permittee shall pick up gravel from A Pad facilities from a footprint equal to or larger than the area of new fill ("a" and "b" above) placed in wetlands, within 1 year of the new fill placement. The gravel removal area shall be excavated to approximately tundra elevation and treated as necessary to achieve at least 10% total live vegetative cover, with at least 1% cover by indigenous species, by the fifth year after gravel removal. The permittee shall, by March 31, 2006, submit a plan for approval by the Regulatory Branch describing the location for gravel removal and rehabilitation efforts.

APPLICANT PROPOSED MITIGATION: The applicant proposes the following mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, and compensate for impacts to waters of the United States from activities involving discharges of dredged or fill material.

a. Avoidance: Because BPXA already has a pad they are working around the existing infrastructure instead of constructing a new pad, thereby avoiding a greater impact to wetlands.

b. Minimization: The applicant has reduced the size of the expansion to the minimal area needed to accommodate new equipment and still maintain the safety required to operate.

c. Compensatory Mitigation: The applicant has proposed to pay an in-lieu-fee if compensatory mitigation is required.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: A permit for the described work will not be issued until a certification or waiver of certification, as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (Public Law 95-217), has been received from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: The latest published version of the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS) has been consulted for the presence or absence of historic properties, including those listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. There are no listed or eligible properties in the

vicinity of the worksite. Consultation of the AHRS constitutes the extent of cultural resource investigations by the District Commander at this time, and he is otherwise unaware of the presence of such resources. This application is being coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Any comments SHPO may have concerning presently unknown archeological or historic data that may be lost or destroyed by work under the requested permit will be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: The project area is within the known or historic range of the Polar Bear (*Ursus maritimus*), Steller's eider (*Polysticta stelleri*), Spectacled eider (*Somateria fischeri*), and Candidate for Listing species Yellow-billed loon (*Gavia adamsii*).

We have determined the described activity would have no effect on any listed or proposed threatened or endangered species, and would have no effect on any designated or proposed critical habitat, under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 844) because this is a minor expansion on an existing pad and the species do not utilize this area. Therefore, no consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service is required. However, any comments they may have concerning endangered or threatened wildlife or plants or their critical habitat will be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996, requires all Federal agencies to consult with the NMFS on all actions, or proposed actions, permitted, funded, or undertaken by the agency, that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). No EFH species are known to use the project area.

TRIBAL CONSULTATION: The Alaska District fully supports tribal self-governance and government-to-government relations between Federally recognized Tribes and the Federal government. Tribes with protected rights or resources that could be significantly affected by a proposed Federal action (e.g., a permit decision) have the right to consult with the Alaska District on a government-to-government basis. Views of each Tribe regarding protected rights and resources will be accorded due consideration in this process. This Public Notice serves as notification to the Tribes within the area potentially affected by the proposed work and invites their participation in the Federal decision-making process regarding the protected Tribal right or resource. Consultation may be initiated by the affected Tribe upon written request to the District Commander during the public comment period.

PUBLIC HEARING: Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, reasons for holding a public hearing.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity and its intended use on the public interest. Evaluation of the probable impacts, which the proposed activity may have on the public interest, requires a careful weighing of all the factors that become relevant in each particular case. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. The outcome of the general balancing process would determine whether to authorize a proposal, and if so, the

conditions under which it will be allowed to occur. The decision should reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal, must be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. For activities involving 404 discharges, a permit will be denied if the discharge that would be authorized by such permit would not comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's 404(b)(1) guidelines. Subject to the preceding sentence and any other applicable guidelines or criteria (see Sections 320.2 and 320.3), a permit will be granted unless the District Commander determines that it would be contrary to the public interest.

The Corps of Engineers 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 the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

AUTHORITY: This permit will be issued or denied under the following authority:

(X) Discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the United States - Section 404 Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). Therefore, our public interest review will consider the guidelines set forth under Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act (40 CFR 230).

A Notice of Application for State Water Quality Certification is enclosed with this Public Notice and project drawings are available online under POA-1979-234-M4 at <http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/PublicNotices.aspx>.

District Commander
U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers

Enclosures

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
DIVISION OF WATER
401 Certification Program
Non-Point Source Water Pollution Control Program

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
WQM/401 CERTIFICATION
555 CORDOVA STREET
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501-2617
PHONE: (907) 269-7564/FAX: (907) 334-2415

NOTICE OF APPLICATION
FOR
STATE WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION

Any applicant for a federal license or permit to conduct an activity that might result in a discharge into navigable waters, in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (PL95-217), also must apply for and obtain certification from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation that the discharge will comply with the Clean Water Act, the Alaska Water Quality Standards, and other applicable State laws. By agreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Environmental Conservation, application for a Department of the Army permit to discharge dredged or fill material into navigable waters under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act also may serve as application for State Water Quality Certification.

Notice is hereby given that the application for a Department of the Army Permit described in the Corps of Engineers' Public Notice No. POA-1979-234-M4, Beaufort Sea, serves as application for State Water Quality Certification from the Department of Environmental Conservation.

After reviewing the application, the Department may certify there is reasonable assurance the activity, and any discharge that might result, will comply with the Clean Water Act, the Alaska Water Quality Standards, and other applicable State laws. The Department also may deny or waive certification.

Any person desiring to comment on the project, with respect to Water Quality Certification, may submit written comments to the address above by the expiration date of the Corps of Engineer's Public Notice.