

MINUTE ITEM

12.

2/23/84  
W 6005  
Willard

CONSIDERATION OF GENERAL  
GEOLOGICAL AND GEOPHYSICAL  
INFORMATION COLLECTION PERMITS

During consideration of Calendar Item 12, attached, Lieutenant Governor Leo T. McCarthy, Acting Chairman, pointed out to the audience that the calendar item is divided into three parts; PART A - Geophysical Survey Permit; PART B - Geological Survey Permit; and PART C - Geophysical Turning Permit.

Without objection, the resolutions of PARTS B and C were adopted as presented by a vote of 3-0. PART A was then taken up.

The following people appeared in support of the issuance of the geophysical survey permit:

Mark Savit, Cotten, Day and Doyle, Counsel on behalf of Western Geophysical Company

Tom Wright, Staff Geologist, Chevron, on behalf of Western Oil and Gas Association

Betty Jean Kirwan, Counsel, McCutchen, Black, Verleger & Shea, representing Western Oil and Gas Association

Neal Wylie, President, representing Grant Geophysical Corporation

Larry Bowles, Manager, Governmental Affairs, representing Geophysical Service, Inc.

Douglas D. Barman, Consulting Exploration Geophysicist, representing Texaco Inc.

L. Bruce Bowen, Alaska Pacific Exploration Division, representing Exxon Company USA

Paul Kreutzer, representing Mesa<sup>2</sup>

Carroll Hoyt, President, representing Nekton Incorporated, San Diego

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Randy Ashley, Vice President, Pelagos Corporation  
Carroll Hill, Vice President, Richill Marine, Inc.

Hans Schroeder, Porto Bodega Fishermen's Marina, Bodega Bay.

The following people appeared in support of the issuance of the geophysical survey permit, but did not speak:

Richard Slater, Vice President, Geocubic

Greg Gow, Marine Operations Manager, Norpac International, Inc.

Harold Meadow, Vice President, McClelland Engineers, Inc.

Alastair Carrel, Marine Supervisor, Digicon Geophysical Corp.

The following people appeared in opposition to the issuance of the geophysical survey permit:

Zeke Grader, Executive Director, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Association

Doug Knapp, Director, Fisheries Protection Institute

Susan LeFever, representing Greenpeace

Bert Schwarzschild, Executive Director, Whale Center

Upon conclusion of lengthy testimony, the following resolutions were adopted, as amended to PART A - Geophysical Survey Permit, by a vote of 3-0:

IT WAS RECOMMENDED THAT THE COMMISSION:

1. EXTEND EXISTING GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY PERMITS, WITH MODIFICATIONS SPECIFIED, THROUGH MAY 31, 1984; AND
2. DIRECT THE STAFF TO COMPLETE ITS ENVIRONMENTAL AND TECHNICAL REVIEW OF THE GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY PERMIT PROGRAM.

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INFORMATION COLLECTION PERMITS

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APPLICANT:

Attached as Exhibits "A", "B", and "C" and incorporated by reference are lists of applicants for Geological and Geophysical Survey Permits as well as permits authorizing turning in state waters while gathering information on Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) lands.

BACKGROUND:

On February 25, 1982, the State Lands Commission adopted new regulations for the administration of geological and geophysical survey permits on State-owned tide and submerged lands. Previous regulations required permits only when explosives were used in geophysical surveys and rotary drilling techniques were used in obtaining geological samples.

A - 2, 9, 17, 19, 20, 28, 29, 35, 36, 44, 49, 50, 51  
57, 58, 69, 70, 74, 75

S - 2, 5, 8, 14, 17, 18, 19, 22, 27, 28, 31, 38, 39, 40

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On August 26, 1982, the Commission adopted a form of permit and authorized issuance of General Permits to conduct Geological/Geophysical Surveys to 27 applicants for a period of 18 months commencing September 1, 1982 and ending February 29, 1984. The permit terms and conditions included provisions which were in response to the concerns of both the fishing industry and those conducting geophysical operations. In particular, a detailed notification of proposed operations to specified government agencies, fishing industry, and other marine users was included as a permit requirement.

During the 18-month period of the permit program, there were several occasions when the public expressed concern regarding the conduct of geophysical operations in State waters. The staff worked with the concerned parties to investigate the questions raised, modified ongoing studies and initiated new studies.

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For continuation of the program, staff of the Commission prepared an Initial Study (SCH#84020113). During the first week of February, 1984, the Initial Study was sent to 17 State agencies, 8 federal agencies, the coastal counties, all existing geophysical permittees, and 11 public-interest groups. The staff requested comments from responsible agencies by February 20, 1984.

To date, the staff has received written agency comments from: 1) Department of Boating and Waterways; 2) the Minerals Management Service; 3) National Marine Fisheries Service; and 4) the U.S. Coast Guard. All comments received indicated that the program as proposed is appropriate.

In addition, staff received comments on February 22, 1984, from: 1) The Friends of the Sea Otter; 2) the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermens Associations, Inc., 3) the League For Coastal Protection; and 4) a private attorney representing fishermen local to the Santa Barbara area. Staff is

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considering these comment a. is attempting to incorporate as many of the concerns as possible into the proposed program.

PROPOSED PROGRAM:

Previous geological and geophysical surveys have been permitted under a single form of permit. As a result of the operational experience gained during the previous permit period, staff recommends issuing three types of permits -- a Geophysical Survey Permit, a Geological Survey Permit and a Geophysical Turning Permit.

PART A:

GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY PERMIT

Geophysical surveys authorized under such permits are of two general types: (1) deep seismic; and 2) high resolution. The primary purpose of deep seismic surveys is to identify the structure and composition of potential hydrocarbon bearing rocks. High resolution surveys are designed to identify geological and geotechnical conditions

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(hazards) that could impact the design, construction, placement and safe operation of drilling and production facilities, offshore terminals, submarine pipelines and other petroleum and marine related offshore structures. Such surveys are also conducted to identify cultural and historical resources.

Geophysical surveys are conducted by survey vessels which range in size from 100 feet to 300 feet in length with most of the vessels being about 200 feet long. The following energy source methods are employed for geophysical surveys under the present permit program: 1) air guns; 2) sparker; 3) water guns; 4) mini-sleeve systems; 5) steam injection; 6) electro-mechanical; and 7) piezo-electric equipment.

The proposed program would be amended to: 1) add a provision requested by the National Marine Fisheries Service to prohibit start up of geophysical operations when whales are within 2 kilometers of a geophysical boat; 2)

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increase the basic notice period to commercial fishermen and other offshore users from 5 days to 15 days; 3) require the scouting of areas geophysical surveys are going to be conducted under specific circumstances; 4) standardize various notices, reports and information required under the permit; 5) add the Liaison Office in Santa Barbara to the notification list; 6) specify that the permits can be modified or revoked on 30 days' notice in response to information collected from ongoing studies.

Staff is currently in the process of gathering data, meeting with concerned agencies and the public regarding the environmental and technical review of the Geophysical Survey Permit Program. Upon completion of their review, staff proposes to present this matter to the Commission for further consideration.

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IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE COMMISSION:

1. DIRECT THE STAFF TO COMPLETE ITS ENVIRONMENTAL AND TECHNICAL REVIEW OF THE GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY PERMIT PROGRAM; AND
2. REPORT BACK TO THE COMMISSION THE RESULTS OF THEIR REVIEW IN APRIL, 1984.

PART B: GEOLOGICAL SURVEY PERMIT

The geologic surveys authorized under the terms of the permit are for the purpose of obtaining shallow samples of the seafloor for geotechnical information. The data obtained is used in the design of offshore structures (pipelines, marine terminals, platforms, etc.) and in the technical and environmental analyses of offshore oil and gas operations.

The shallow samples are obtained using nonrotary techniques (dart, jet, percussion, grab) from an anchored self-contained vessel.

The vessel is typically no larger (50 to 150

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feet in length, 6 foot draft) than fishing boats used in the Santa Barbara Channel.

Pursuant to the Commission's delegation of authority and the State CEQA Guidelines (14 Cal. Adm. Code 15061), the staff has determined that this activity is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as a categorically exempt project. The project is exempt under Class 6, the collection of data for information purposes where minimal or no disturbance of State land is involved, 2 Cal. Adm. Code 2905 (Class 6).

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE COMMISSION:

1. FIND THAT AN ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT IS NOT REQUIRED FOR THIS ACTIVITY AS IT HAS BEEN EXEMPTED FROM THE REQUIREMENTS OF CEQA AS A CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION, CLASS 6 (PRC 21084; CAL. ADM. CODE 15100, ET. SEQ.);
  
2. APPROVE THE FORM OF GENERAL PERMIT TO CONDUCT GEOLOGICAL SURVEYS SUBSTANTIALLY AS ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSION; AND

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3. AUTHORIZE ISSUANCE OF NON-EXCLUSIVE GENERAL PERMITS TO CONDUCT GEOLOGICAL SURVEYS TO THOSE APPLICANTS LISTED ON EXHIBIT "A" ATTACHED AND BY REFERENCE MADE A PART HEREOF.

PART C: GEOPHYSICAL TURNING PERMIT

Geophysical surveys are conducted by survey vessels towing marine hydrophone cables up to 3,200 meters (10,499 feet) in length at a depth ranging from 15-40 feet below the surface. The vessel together with the towed equipment must be navigated along a planned course (trackline) and upon completion of one line, a large turning area is required before commencement of the next line. Therefore circumstances occur where the survey (data collection area) is primarily located on OCS lands under the jurisdiction of the Minerals Management Service (MMS), but turning operations are located within State waters. The purpose of these permits is to maintain State control of notification procedures which affect fishermen in State waters. Under these permits, operators would be prohibited from operating acoustic pulse generators (air guns, water guns, etc.) in State

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waters.

Pursuant to the Commission's delegation of authority and the State CEQA Guidelines (14 Cal. Adm. Code 15061), the staff has determined that this activity is exempt from the requirements of the CEQA under the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE COMMISSION:

1. FIND THAT THE ACTIVITY IS EXEMPT FROM THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PURSUANT TO 14 CAL. ADM. CODE 15061 BECAUSE THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY THAT THE ACTIVITY MAY HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT. (14 CAL. ADM. CODE 1506 (b)(3).
  
2. APPROVE THE FORM OF GENERAL PERMIT TO TURN TO STATE WATERS WHILE CONDUCTING GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS ON OUTER CONTINENTAL (OCS) LANDS SUBSTANTIALLY AS ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSION; AND

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3. AUTHORIZE ISSUANCE OF NON-EXCLUSIVE GENERAL PERMITS TO CONDUCT GEOPHYSICAL TURNING OPERATIONS TO THOSE APPLICANTS LISTED ON EXHIBIT "C" ATTACHED AND BY REFERENCE MADE A PART HEREOF.

Statutory and Other References:

1. P.R.C.: Sections 6801 and 6826
2. 2 Cal. Adm. Code 2100

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EXHIBIT "A"

APPLICANTS FOR GENERAL PERMIT TO CONDUCT GEOLOGICAL SURVEYS

ARCO Exploration Co.  
Cities Service Co.  
CGG American Services, Inc.  
CONOCO, Inc.  
Dames & Moore  
Exxon Co., U.S.A.  
Geocubic, Inc.  
Harding-Lawson Assoc.  
Intersea Research Corp.  
McClelland Engineers  
MESA<sup>2</sup> Inc.  
Mobil Corporation  
Nekton Inc.  
Pelagos  
Phillips Petroleum  
Shell Oil Company  
Tenneco Oil Exploration and Production  
Tetra Tech., Inc.  
Texaco, Inc.  
Union Oil and Gas  
Woodward-Clyde Consultants  
Marine Tech Service

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EXHIBIT "B"

APPLICANTS FOR GENERAL PERMIT TO CONDUCT GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS

ARCO Exploration Co.  
Cities Service Co.  
CGG American Services, Inc.  
Comap Geosurveys, Inc.  
CONOCO, Inc.  
Dames & Moore  
Digicon Geophysical  
Exxon Co., U.S.A.  
Geocubic, Inc.  
Geophysical Services, Inc.  
Harding-Lawson Assoc.  
Intersea Research Corp.  
McClelland Engineers  
MESA<sup>2</sup> Inc.  
Mobil Corporation  
Nekton Inc.  
Pelagos  
Phillips Petroleum  
Shell Oil Company  
Tenneco Oil Exploration and Production  
Tetra Tech., Inc.  
Texaco, Inc.  
Union Oil and Gas  
Western Geophysical Co.

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Marine Tech Service

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EXHIBIT "C"

APPLICANTS FOR GENERAL PERMIT TO CONDUCT GEOPHYSICAL TURNING  
OPERATIONS

ARCO Exploration Co.  
Cities Service Co.  
CGG American Services, Inc.  
Comap Geosurveys, Inc.  
CONOCO, Inc.  
Dames & Moore  
Digicon Geophysical  
Exxon Co., U.S.A.  
Geocubic, Inc.  
Geophysical Services, Inc.  
Harding-Lawson Assoc.  
Intersea Research Corp.  
McClelland Engineers  
MESA<sup>2</sup> Inc.  
Mobil Corporation  
Nekton Inc.  
Pelagos  
Phillips Petroleum  
Shell Oil Company  
Tenneco Oil Exploration and Production  
Tetra Tech., Inc.  
Texaco, Inc.  
Union Oil Company  
Western Geophysical Co.

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Marine Tech Service

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