

AES holds briefing on offshore energy in the United States

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The Advances in Earth Science coalition (AES), a consortium of professional geoscience societies and federal agencies, held a briefing on offshore energy in the United States. The speakers were Kristin Wood of Shell, Eric van Oort of the University of Texas at Austin, and James Bennett of the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM). The briefing was moderated by Buford Pollett of the University of Tulsa.

Wood showed that global energy demand is projected to increase by 30% over the next 30 years, and that despite a probable threefold increase in renewable energy production, oil and gas will still meet the bulk of this demand. In his introduction, Pollett noted that 17% of U.S. crude oil production comes from offshore drilling, mostly in the Gulf of Mexico, making offshore oil and gas a major part of the U.S. energy industry for the foreseeable future.

Focusing on concerns in the aftermath of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, van Oort detailed recent developments in drilling technology, well controls, training, containment, and safety. Notable attention was given to the new well control rule from the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, which will take effect on July 28, 2016.

Bennett summarized the progress of offshore wind energy in the United States. The first offshore wind farm in the United States will begin producing energy in late 2016 off the coast of Block Island, Rhode Island. BOEM has awarded 11 leases off the Atlantic coast, with upcoming additional leases off the coasts of Long Island and the Carolinas. Bennett explained that offshore wind energy off the Pacific Coast, where waters are deeper, will depend on advances in floating turbine technology.

To accompany this briefing, a live webinar will be hosted by the American Geosciences Institute on June 14, featuring presentations from Pollett, van Oort, and Bennett, plus a live Q&A session.

Sources: Government Publishing Office, American Geosciences Institute
