

## New developments in seismic exploration and OCS future

On January 10, the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing to discuss seismic exploration on the Mid- and South Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). Companies are interested in exploring for hydrocarbon resources in the Mid- and South Atlantic OCS, and marine seismic surveying is a first step in deep-water resource exploration.

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management has been conducting a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) since 2009 in order to determine the impacts of seismic surveying on marine life in the Atlantic. Oil and gas companies want to expedite publication of the PEIS. The last seismic surveys were conducted in 1988, however new 3D/4D surveying technology can better map the subsurface, allowing for new discovery of potential oil/gas/mineral resources.

Proponents, led by Subcommittee Chairman Doug Lamborn (R-CO), endorsed the approval of seismic surveying and advocated for expedience in producing the PEIS final report. They reasoned that this initial seismic surveying would not harm marine life, and that the potential benefits that could result from drilling, such as jobs and independence from foreign energy sources, far outweigh potential environmental impacts.

Many Democrats were concerned about the impacts of seismic surveying on marine life and the environmental impacts of possible future drilling, mentioning that industry negligence caused the Deepwater Horizon Spill in 2010.

Source: House Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

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