Overview

BP Canada Energy Group ULC (“BP”) is proposing to conduct exploration drilling activities within the areas of offshore exploration licences (ELs) that BP operates in the Orphan Basin, approximately 343 to 496 kilometres northeast of St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador. The Newfoundland Orphan Basin Exploration Drilling Program may involve drilling up to 20 exploration wells between 2021 and 2026. Specific wellsite locations are not yet known but any drilling operations will be conducted within the defined boundaries of ELs 1145, 1146, 1148, and/or 1149.

Project Timeline and Status

In September 2018, BP submitted an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (now the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada) for review by regulatory agencies, Indigenous peoples, and public stakeholders. The EIS, which described the proposed drilling program activities and potential environmental and social impacts, as well as associated mitigation proposed to reduce or eliminate adverse impacts, was posted on the Agency’s registry for public review and comment here: https://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/exploration/80147?culture=en-CA.
In February and July 2019, the Agency issued Information Requests (IRs) to BP based on regulatory, public and Indigenous review comments received on the EIS. BP prepared responses to these requests, all of which are available on the Agency’s registry.

On August 28, 2019, the new Impact Assessment Act came into force. However, the environmental assessment process for BP’s Orphan Basin Exploration Drilling Program will continue under the former Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012. The Agency recently released their own Environmental Assessment (EA) Report which has been posted on the registry in draft form for public review (along with proposed conditions should the project ultimately be approved to proceed). Following a public review and comment period, the Agency will prepare a final EA Report for submission to the Minister of Environment who will issue a Decision Statement, and if applicable, Conditions of Approval.

In addition to completing the environmental assessment process, prior to commencing any exploration drilling operations, additional authorizations from the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NLOPB) and other regulatory agencies are required. Additional Project documentation addressing safety, environmental protection, emergency response, and local benefits is submitted to the C-NLOPB as part of an application for an Operations Authorization to permit exploration drilling.

BP will continue to engage with Indigenous groups and interested stakeholders during project planning and implementation. For more information refer to https://www.bp.com/en_ca/canada/home/who-we-are/offshore/newfoundland-and-labrador.html or contact us at NLinfo@bp.com.

Staff Updates

Greg Rheaume

Greg is the Global Wells Planning Project Manager, Atlantic Canada. He joined BP in 1991 and has worked in many areas spanning Deepwater and Onshore that have encompassed exploration, development, production and major projects. Greg will be responsible for overall integration and well delivery for exploration well activities in offshore Newfoundland.

How to Contact Us

We believe communication is key to building and maintaining relationships with the communities within which we operate. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact us.

BP Canada Energy Group ULC
www.bp.com/Canada
NLinfo@bp.com

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