

**UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIRCUIT**

HEALTHY GULF, FRIENDS OF THE
EARTH, BAYOU CITY
WATERKEEPER, NATURAL
RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL,
OCEANA, SURFRIDER
FOUNDATION, TURTLE ISLAND
RESTORATION NETWORK, AND
SIERRA CLUB,

Petitioners,

v.

U.S DEPARTMENT OF THE
INTERIOR; DEBRA HAALAND, in her
official capacity as Secretary of the
Interior; BUREAU OF OCEAN
ENERGY MANAGEMENT; and LIZ
KLEIN, in her official capacity as
Director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy
Management,

Respondents.

Case No. 24-1024

PETITION FOR REVIEW

Pursuant to 43 U.S.C. § 1349(c), Rule 15 of the Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure, and D.C. Circuit Rule 15, notice is hereby given this the 12th day of February, 2024, that Petitioners Healthy Gulf, Friends of the Earth, Bayou City

Waterkeeper, Natural Resources Defense Council, Oceana, Surfrider Foundation, Sierra Club, and Turtle Island Restoration Network hereby petition the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit for review of the Record of Decision and related 2024–2029 National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program of Respondents U.S. Department of the Interior; Debra Haaland, in her official capacity as Secretary of the Interior; Bureau of Ocean Energy Management; and Liz Klein, in her official capacity as Director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management entered the 14th day of December, 2023.

Dated this 12th day of February, 2024.

/s/ Brettmy Hardy

Brettmy Hardy (D.C. Cir. 62534)

Danika Desai (*admission pending*)

EARTHJUSTICE

50 California St., Suite 500

San Francisco, CA 94111

415-217-2000 | Telephone

bhardy@earthjustice.org

ddesai@earthjustice.org

Christopher D. Eaton (D.C. Cir. 60490)

EARTHJUSTICE

810 Third Ave., Suite 610

Seattle, WA 98104

206-343-7340 | Telephone

ceaton@earthjustice.org

Attorneys for Healthy Gulf, Friends of the Earth, Bayou City Waterkeeper, Oceana, Surfrider Foundation, and Turtle Island Restoration Network

/s/ Deborah Ancel

Devorah Ancel (D.C. Cir. 56116)
SIERRA CLUB
2101 Webster Street, Suite 1300
Oakland, CA 94612
415-845-7847 | Telephone
devorah.ancel@sierraclub.org

Attorney for Sierra Club

/s/ Julia K. Forgie

Julia K. Forgie (D.C. Cir. 60627)
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE
COUNCIL
1314 Second Street
Santa Monica, CA 90401
310-434-2351 | Telephone
jforgie@nrdc.org

Melanie Calero
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE
COUNCIL
40 West 20th Street, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10011
212-727-2700 | Telephone
mcalero@nrdc.org

Tom Zimpleman (D.C. Cir. 60691)
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE
COUNCIL
1152 15th Street NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20005
202-289-6868 | Telephone
tzimpleman@nrdc.org

Irene Gutierrez
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE
COUNCIL

111 Sutter Street, 21st Floor
San Francisco, CA 94104
415-875-6100 | Telephone
igutierrez@nrdc.org

*Attorneys for Natural Resources Defense
Council*

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on the 12th day of February, 2024, a true and correct copy of the foregoing document was served via Certified Mail/Return Receipt

Requested on the following:

U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240
Tracking No.: 70210950000122304183

Debra A. Haaland, Secretary of the
Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240
Tracking No.: 70210950000122304190

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
1849 C St., NW
Washington, DC 20240
Tracking No.: 70210950000122304206

Liz Klein, Director of the Bureau of
Ocean Energy Management
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
1849 C St., NW
Washington, DC 20240
Tracking No.: 70210950000122304213

Merrick Garland, US Attorney
General
US Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001
Tracking No.: 70210950000122304220

DATED: February 12, 2024

s/ Brettmy Hardy
Brettmy Hardy

ATTACHMENT 1



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20240-0001

Memorandum

To: Secretary

Through: Steven H. Feldgus
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Land and Minerals Management

Steven H.
Feldgus

Digitally signed by Steven
H. Feldgus
Date: 2023.12.01
12:50:34 -05'00'

From: Elizabeth Klein ELIZABETH
Director KLEIN

Digitally signed by
ELIZABETH KLEIN
Date: 2023.12.01
10:37:38 -05'00'

Subject: Record of Decision and Approval of the 2024-2029 National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) requests your approval of the schedule of proposed lease sales described in the 2024-2029 National Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Proposed Final Program (PFP) (attachment 1) published on September 29, 2023, and hereby incorporated by reference.

Under section 18 of the OCS Lands Act, the Secretary of the Interior is responsible for preparing and maintaining, consistent with specified principles, a schedule of proposed OCS oil and gas lease sales determined to "best meet national energy needs for the five-year period following its approval or reapproval."

On September 29, 2023, the Secretary submitted the PFP to the President and Congress, as required by section 18(d)(2) of the OCS Lands Act. The National OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program (National OCS Program) for 2024-2029 (2024-2029 Program) may be approved 60 days after that date. Contemporaneous with the PFP submission, BOEM also published a final programmatic environmental impact statement (Final Programmatic EIS) (attachment 2), pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Final Programmatic EIS analyzes four alternatives for the 2024-2029 Program and the reasonably foreseeable environmental consequences of each alternative.

Alternative A, "No Action Alternative," analyzes no new lease sales, whereas Alternative D, "25 Planning Areas," analyzes sales in 25 of the 26 OCS planning areas. Alternative B, "6 Planning Areas," analyzes sales in Alaska (Chukchi Sea, Beaufort Sea, Cook Inlet) and the 3 Gulf of Mexico (GOM) planning areas. Alternative C, "9 Planning Areas," includes the Alternative B planning areas and analyzes additional sales in the Mid-Atlantic, South Atlantic, and Southern California Planning Areas. The PFP proposes three potential lease sales in the GOM Program Area, which includes the Western GOM Planning Area and portions of the Central and Eastern

GOM Planning Areas not currently withdrawn from mineral leasing. The environmental impacts that could result from the PFP's proposed lease sales are analyzed as Alternative B(a), which analyzes only the GOM Program Area.

As discussed in section 4.2 of the Programmatic EIS, BOEM identified Alternative A, "No Action Alternative," as the environmentally preferable alternative. However, Alternative A does not meet the purpose and need for the action as stated in the Final Programmatic EIS, because, on the record before us, it does not best meet national energy needs.

The selection of the 2024-2029 Program, as described in the PFP and the Final Programmatic EIS, is based on a balancing of national policy considerations, as outlined in Chapter 2 of the PFP and as explained throughout the PFP. These considerations are enumerated in section 18(a) of the OCS Lands Act.

BOEM also considered the application of programmatic mitigation measures in the Final Programmatic EIS. The Secretary decided, at the PFP stage, to employ programmatic mitigation to reduce impacts on topographic features and pinnacle trends. This programmatic mitigation will require all leases issued under the 2024-2029 Program in areas with sensitive seafloor features to employ mitigation measures to protect the features. BOEM and its predecessor agencies have required avoidance of sensitive bottom habitats in the GOM for decades through lease stipulations. These stipulations are designed to avoid or minimize harm from seafloor-disturbing activities to these sensitive and unique features. Applying these stipulations at the National OCS Program development stage is consistent with current practice and continues the effective protection of these biologically sensitive areas, should areas including these sensitive bottom habitats be offered in the three potential lease sales scheduled in the 2024-2029 Program.

Appendix F of the Final Programmatic EIS discusses additional mitigation measures that BOEM has historically applied at the lease sale stage to avoid or minimize environmental harm. Incorporating all the Appendix F mitigation measures at the National OCS Program stage of the planning process is impracticable because most measures are developed for and individually applied to specific circumstances associated with each lease sale offering and subsequent site-specific plan approvals. However, while most of these site- or resource-specific mitigation measures are not adopted at the 2024-2029 Program stage, they should be considered at later decision points, and if applied, monitored for compliance, as appropriate, during subsequent stages. Additional specific mitigation measures may also be developed and applied, as appropriate.

Lastly, the Final Programmatic EIS discusses BOEM's efforts to improve its environmental justice considerations through the development of best practices and methodologies. BOEM is committed to integrating these best practices and methodologies as they become available into its NEPA assessments and decision-making processes.

A summary of public comments on the Final Programmatic EIS is provided in the addendum below.

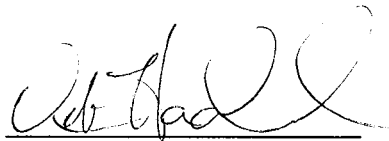
At the conclusion of the 60-day period that commenced on September 29, 2023, BOEM recommends that you approve the 2024-2029 Program as set forth in the PFP. BOEM also recommends that the 2024-2029 Program become effective starting July 1, 2024, and continue through June 30, 2029.

Secretarial Decision

Approval of this memorandum constitutes the decision to proceed as described in the PFP. The PFP covers the 5-year period starting on July 1, 2024, and continuing through June 30, 2029, and schedules three potential oil and gas lease sales in the GOM Program Area. The three GOM sales are scheduled to occur over the 5 years of the 2024-2029 Program, with one sale each in 2025, 2027, and 2029. The Secretary retains discretion at the lease sale stage to determine whether, when, and under what terms a lease sale should be held and the precise acreage to be offered.

Approved:  _____

Disapproved: _____



Secretary of the Interior

Date: December 14, 2023

Attachments

Addendum: Discussion of Public Comments on the Final Programmatic EIS

BOEM received a comment letter from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) after publication of the Final Programmatic EIS. EPA's comment letter provided recommendations related to greenhouse gas emissions and environmental justice analyses. BOEM will examine and consider EPA's recommendations in future analyses.

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CORPORATE DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Pursuant to Federal Rules of Appellate Proc. 26.1 and D.C. Cir. R. 26.1, the
Petitioners respectfully submit the following corporate disclosure statement:

Healthy Gulf, Friends of the Earth, Bayou City Waterkeeper, Oceana, Surfrider

Foundation, and Turtle Island Restoration Network have no parent corporation, nor does any person or corporate entity own ten percent or more of the association.

Dated this 12th day of February, 2024.

/s/ Brettmy Hardy

Brettmy Hardy (D.C. Cir. 62534)

Danika Desai (*admission pending*)

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50 California St., Suite 500

San Francisco, CA 94111

415-217-2000 | Telephone

bhardy@earthjustice.org

ddesai@earthjustice.org

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EARTHJUSTICE

810 Third Ave., Suite 610

Seattle, WA 98104

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CORPORATE DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Pursuant to Federal Rule of Appellate Procedure 26.1 and D.C. Circuit Rule
26.1, Petitioner Natural Resources Defense Council makes the following
disclosures:

Natural Resources Defense Council is a national non-profit organization, organized under the laws of the State of New York, dedicated to improving the quality of the human environment and protecting the nation's endangered natural resources. Natural Resources Defense Council does not have any parent corporations, and no publicly held corporation has a ten percent or greater ownership interest in it.

Dated this 12th day of February, 2024.

/s/ Julia K. Forgie

Julia K. Forgie (D.C. Cir. 60627)
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE
COUNCIL
1314 Second Street
Santa Monica, CA 90401
310-434-2351 | Telephone
jforgie@nrdc.org

Melanie Calero
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE
COUNCIL
40 West 20th Street, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10011
212-727-2700 | Telephone
mcalero@nrdc.org

Tom Zimpleman (D.C. Cir. 60691)
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE
COUNCIL
1152 15th Street NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20005
202-289-6868 | Telephone
tzimpleman@nrdc.org

Irene Gutierrez
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE
COUNCIL

111 Sutter Street, 21st Floor
San Francisco, CA 94104
415-875-6100 | Telephone
igutierrez@nrdc.org

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CORPORATE DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Pursuant to Federal Rule of Appellate Procedure 26.1 and D.C. Circuit Rule 26.1, Petitioner Sierra Club makes the following disclosures:

Sierra Club is a national non-profit organization, organized under the laws of the State of California. The Sierra Club's mission is to explore, enjoy, and protect

the wild places of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives. Sierra Club does not have any parent corporations, and no publicly held corporation has a ten percent or greater ownership interest in it.

Dated this 12th day of February, 2024.

/s/ Deborah Ancel

Deborah Ancel (D.C. Cir. 56116)

SIERRA CLUB

2101 Webster Street, Suite 1300

Oakland, CA 94612

415-845-7847 | Telephone

deborah.ancel@sierraclub.org

Attorney for Sierra Club