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## **Consents given under the Petroleum Act 1998 and Reviews under the Assessment of Environmental Effects Regulations 1999**

### **BBL Company (v.o.f)**

#### **Balgzand to Bacton Pipeline - Gas Interconnector**

Pursuant to Regulation 5(8) of the above Regulations, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry gives notice that he is content that the requirements of the above Regulations have been satisfied in respect of the above project. Pursuant to Licence PL2225, PL2225a & PL2225b, consent has been granted to BBL Company (v.o.f) for the construction of specific installations, in relation to the Balgzand to Bacton Gas Interconnector Pipeline, in accordance with the environmental statement, received on the 19 May 2004 and additional information provided by the Note of Reply Version 6 dated 15 May 2006 and clarification provided by email on the 9 June 2006 and the Overview Chart of the BBL Route and Surveys undertaken provided on 16 June 2006. The consent for the Pipeline Works Authorisation took effect from 8 March 2006 (Nearshore Section), 31 May 2006 (Offshore Section A.- offshore section from 3.5km out KP226.5 to KP186) and 20 June 2006 (Offshore Section B - offshore section from West of Hearty Knoll KP186 to the Median Line KP108.1). Approval of the Offshore Section B completes the permitting of the BBL Project.

#### **Background**

On the 19 May 2004 an Environmental Statement was submitted for the Balgzand to Bacton Pipeline (BBL), which covered the entire project and was designed to satisfy the requirements of both Dutch & UK regulators. The BBL project consists of laying a 36" concrete coated pipeline of approximately 235 Km length from a compressor station near Balgzand in Holland across the north Sea, arriving at Bacton Gas Terminal in North Norfolk, UK. Additional survey work undertaken by BBL in September 2005, confirmed the presence of Sabellaria spinulosa, a potential Annex 1 Habitat under the Habitats Directive. It was therefore agreed to consent the pipeline in discrete sections the "Near-shore" Section from low water mark out to 3.5Km, the Offshore

Section A from 3.5km out to KP186 and Offshore Section B from KP186 to the Median Line, to enable additional survey work to be undertaken to confirm the extent and quality of the Sabellaria spinulosa. A further side-scan sonar survey was undertaken in March 2006 and ground truthed using a drop down camera. This survey confirmed the presence of Sabellaria in two areas B & D and BBL have subsequently decided to re-route the pipeline to avoid Area B where the Sabellaria is denser, but the pipeline will still cross a section of Area D where the accumulations of Sabellaria are more patchy. Having considered the additional survey data and photographic evidence provided by BBL, JNCC have confirmed that they do not believe the Sabellaria present constitutes representative examples of a biogenic reef structure and that the areas were not sites they were likely to put forward for designation as an Annex 1 Habitat(s). Queries were also raised in relation to the "Near shore Section" with regard to the hydrotest waters for commissioning purposes, water quality issues, loss/displacement of fisheries. Following further consultation on these issues, we are content these issues have been satisfactorily addressed.

### **Recommendation**

The Environmental Statement, supported by the additional information provided on the 15 May 2006, 09 June & 16 June 2006, is satisfactory and adequately assesses the potential environmental impacts of the proposed development. The Secretary of State is satisfied that the project will not result in a significant impact on the receiving environment, including any sites protected under the Habitats Regulations and has granted consent for the final section of the project - "Offshore Section B". This approval completes the assessment and determination process for the Bacton to Balgzand Pipeline (BBL) Project.

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