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

Conoco

THE CMS III FIELD

Pursuant to Regulation 5(8) of the above Regulations, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry gives notice that, being content that the requirements of the above Regulations have been satisfied, he has pursuant to Licences P.450, P.451, P.452 and P.691, granted a consent to Conoco (UK) Limited to the getting of petroleum and the construction of installations in relation to the development of the CMS III gas field. The consent for the CMS III field took effect from 19 June 2001.

The proposed project will involve the initial development of up to five gas fields: Errol, McAdam, H, Q and, possibly K, in the southern North Sea: with all the fields tied back to the existing Caister Murdoch System. Six wells may be drilled with each having a protected subsea wellhead. Well cleaning will be conducted but there will be no well testing. Three new pipelines will be installed to connect the fields to the existing CMS MC and MD complexes. In all a total of 45km of pipeline will be installed.

A number of modifications to CMS MC and MD may be required; these could include:

- Installation of two new risers and a new riser tower;
- Installation of an additional gas-driven turbine and compression train;
- Installation of an additional accommodation platform.

The Environmental Statement also includes an application for a permit under the Offshore Combustion Installations (Prevention, and Control of Pollution) Regulations 2001. This is being dealt with separately.

The proposed project involves the drilling of six wells, one of which will be on the North, shallow sandbanks (Dogger Bank) in approximately 20m of water. This is a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC). Following a review of all the information provided and the introduction of additional mitigation measures, we are satisfied that the drilling is not likely to adversely affect the integrity of this habitat.

Recommendation

Overall the environmental statement is satisfactory and adequately assesses the potential environmental impacts of the proposed development. Recommend that consent be given.