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

BG plc

BLOCK 204/21

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, she has, pursuant to Licence P1027, granted a consent to BG plc to the getting of petroleum and the drilling of an exploration well in Block 204/21 (hereafter referred to as "the project") subject to BG plc conducting operations in respect of the project in accordance with the relevant environmental statement. The consent for the well was given on 10 August 2004 and shall remain in force for a period of two years.

Background

BG plc proposes drilling an exploration well in block 204/21-A. The drilling location lies close to the UK/Faroes median line and west of the Schiehallion and Foinaven oil and gas fields, in water depths around 830m. The expected hydrocarbon is oil. The well is planned to be drilled in July 2004 and is expected to last approximately 35 or 45 days, depending on whether the well is successful. All formation evaluation will be conducted via logging while drilling or after the sections have been drilled. There are no plans to test the well. The well will be drilled using seawater with high viscosity bentonite sweeps and WBM, with 1337 tonnes of cuttings and 1494 tonnes of WBM drilling muds to be discharged. The well will be plugged and abandoned at the end of the drilling programme.

Sensitivities

The environmental statement identifies a range of potential environmental hazards and outlines proposed mitigation measures, including:

- Solid waste disposal
- Discharge of drill cuttings and muds and well

abandonment

- Atmospheric emissions
- Hydrocarbon spills
- Noise and disturbance to marine mammals from the presence of vessels and drilling activity
- Chemical use
- Cumulative and transboundary impacts

Recommendation

Overall the environmental statement is satisfactory and adequately assesses the potential environmental impacts of the proposed operation. It is recommended that consent is given to the project.

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