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

### PanCanadian

#### BLOCK 19/10, 20/1 & 20/6

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 Licence P928 & P986, granted a consent to PanCanadian Petroleum (U.K.) to the getting of petroleum and the drilling of exploration wells in Block 19/10, 20/1 & 20/6 (hereafter referred to as "the project") subject to PanCanadian Petroleum (U.K.) conducting operations in respect of the project in accordance with the relevant environmental statement. The consent for wells in 19/10 was given on 19/11/01 and 13/12/01, in 20/6 was given on 10/10/01, and in 20/1 was given on 21/12/01.

#### Background

PanCanadian Petroleum (U.K.) Ltd (PCPUK) is planning to drill up to seven appraisal wells in the Buzzard area of operation (including Blocks 19/5, 19/10, 20/1 and 20/6) in the central North Sea, some 46 kilometres northeast of Rattray Head. The actual number drilled will be dependent on the success of finding hydrocarbons in each well. The top well sections will be drilled with a WBM, but an OBM may be used in the lowest well sections. If OBM is used the cuttings will be shipped to shore for treatment and disposal.

#### Environmental Sensitivities and Impacts

Issues of potential environmental interaction identified and addressed in the Environmental Statement included:

- fishing and shipping from the physical presence of the rig and vessels;
- air quality from atmospheric emissions;
- sediments, seabed fauna, fish spawning from discharges and physical disruption;
- water quality from aqueous discharges;
- marine mammals disturbance by underwater noise from drilling operations;
- land use for waste disposal;
- seabirds and protected coastal areas from any accidental spills.

The environmental statement concludes that residual impacts are mainly of negligible significance, with cuttings discharge rated minor. However, two issues of potential concern identified were:

- the possible presence of herring spawning grounds in the area of drilling, and
- the oil spill risk to offshore seabirds between July - September.

PCPUK has undertaken an environmental programme including benthic sampling and identification of any grounds suitable for herring spawning. Survey findings indicates the absence of such grounds. In the environmental statement, PCPUK indicates that to reduce risk to seabirds, if drilling proceeds into the July-September period when large offshore seabird populations are present, no well test flaring will be undertaken.

The implications of the Offshore Petroleum Activities (Conservation of Habitats) Regulations 2001 have been considered and in particular no impacts have been identified that may affect any potential future SAC that may be identified.

#### Recommendation

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

