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

Conoco

BLOCK 49/21-H

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 P39, granted a consent to Conoco (U.K.) Limited to the getting of petroleum and the drilling of an exploration well in Block 49/21-H (hereafter referred to as "the project") subject to Conoco (U.K.) Limited conducting operations in respect of the project in accordance with the relevant environmental statement. The consent for the well was given on 18/08/00.

Background

Conoco (U.K.) Limited proposes drilling an exploration well in block 49/21-H, 52 km north-east of the coastline of east Norfolk. The Conoco proposal is to drill a vertical well to a depth of approximately 2348 metres, using a KCl/NaCl/polymer water based mud system, with drilling cuttings (865 tonnes) and associated mud discharge to sea. Well testing will occur if commercially attractive gas reserves are found, and is planned to take up to 10 days, although only a maximum of 72 hours would be flowing hydrocarbons. Reservoir hydrocarbons are expected to be gaseous in nature, therefore the only significant spillage risks are from condensate drop-out during well testing and fuel transfer at the rig. In line with the OPPRC regulations, the 49/21-H well will have a supplemental Oil Spill Contingency Plan for use offshore, interfaced with the CUKL Southern North Sea Oil Spill Contingency Plan, Onshore response. No significant impacts have been identified from the proposed activity and it is unlikely to affect any possible future SAC that may be identified in the area.

Recommendation

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