
MMS Alaska OCS Region

News Release

For Immediate Release
August 15, 1997

Robin Lee Cacy
907-271-6070
1-800-764-2627

akwebmaster@mms.gov

MMS Approves ARCO Exploration Plan for Warthog Exploratory Well

The Minerals Management Service (MMS) has approved the exploration plan and associated Oil Spill Contingency Plan submitted by ARCO Alaska, Inc., for a prospect in the Beaufort Sea Sale 144 area dubbed "Warthog".

MMS approved the exploration plan after confirming that modifications which MMS requested were addressed. The modifications included confirmation that a tug remain on site during fueling operations and that no activity would occur on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).

In addition to meeting the MMS requirements for exploration, ARCO will operate under approved air and water quality permits issued by the Environmental Protection Agency, and permits from the National Marine Fisheries Service for marine mammals.

Stipulations established for Sale 144 required that ARCO coordinate its operation with various North Slope communities and agencies. Based on the coordination requirements, ARCO has entered into agreements with the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission and the Whaling Captain's Associations of Barrow, Nuiqsut, and Kaktovik to minimize any interference with bowhead whale subsistence activities.

ARCO proposes to drill an exploratory well during the 1997-1998 solid ice season using the Glomar Beaufort Sea 1 (CIDS), a concrete island drilling system. The well will be drilled from a surface location on a federal lease into an adjacent State lease.

A copy of the exploration plan and oil spill contingency plan may be checked out at the MMS Alaska Regional Office, Information Resource Center, Third Floor, 949 East 36th Avenue, in Anchorage. For more information about the exploration plan, call 907-271-6070, or toll-free at 1-800-764-2627.

MMS is the federal agency that manages the Nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral resources on the OCS, and collects, accounts for, and disburses about \$4 billion yearly in revenues from offshore federal mineral leases and onshore mineral leases on federal and Indian lands.

--MMS--