

(B) Sidetrack**(i) In general**

The term “sidetrack” means a well resulting from drilling an additional hole to a new objective bottom-hole location by leaving a previously drilled hole.

(ii) Inclusion

The term “sidetrack” includes—

- (I) drilling a well from a platform slot reclaimed from a previously drilled well;
- (II) re-entering and deepening a previously drilled well; and
- (III) a bypass from a sidetrack, including drilling around material blocking a hole or drilling to straighten a crooked hole.

(b) Royalty incentive regulations for deep gas wells

Not later than 180 days after August 8, 2005, in addition to any other regulations that may provide royalty incentives for natural gas produced from deep wells on oil and gas leases issued pursuant to the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.), the Secretary shall issue regulations granting royalty relief suspension volumes with respect to production of natural gas from deep wells on leases issued in waters more than 200 meters but less than 400 meters deep located in the Gulf of Mexico wholly west of 87 degrees, 30 minutes west longitude. The suspension volumes for deep wells within 200 to 400 meters of water depth shall be calculated using the same methodology used to calculate the suspension volumes for deep wells in the shallower waters of the Gulf of Mexico, and in no case shall the suspension volumes for deep wells within 200 to 400 meters of water depth be lower than those for deep wells in shallower waters. Regulations issued under this subsection shall be retroactive to the date that the notice of proposed rulemaking is published in the Federal Register.

(c) Limitations

The Secretary may place limitations on the royalty relief granted under this section based on market price. The royalty relief granted under this section shall not apply to a lease for which deep water royalty relief is available.

(Pub. L. 109–58, title III, §344, Aug. 8, 2005, 119 Stat. 702.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, referred to in subsecs. (a)(1) and (b), is act Aug. 7, 1953, ch. 345, 67 Stat. 462, which is classified generally to subchapter III (§1331 et seq.) of chapter 29 of Title 43, Public Lands. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1301 of Title 43 and Tables.

§ 15905. Royalty relief for deep water production**(a) In general**

Subject to subsections (b) and (c), for each tract located in water depths of greater than 400 meters in the Western and Central Planning Area of the Gulf of Mexico (including the por-

tion of the Eastern Planning Area of the Gulf of Mexico encompassing whole lease blocks lying west of 87 degrees, 30 minutes West longitude), any oil or gas lease sale under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.) occurring during the 5-year period beginning on August 8, 2005, shall use the bidding system authorized under section 8(a)(1)(H) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1337(a)(1)(H)).

(b) Suspension of royalties

The suspension of royalties under subsection (a) shall be established at a volume of not less than—

- (1) 5,000,000 barrels of oil equivalent for each lease in water depths of 400 to 800 meters;
- (2) 9,000,000 barrels of oil equivalent for each lease in water depths of 800 to 1,600 meters;
- (3) 12,000,000 barrels of oil equivalent for each lease in water depths of 1,600 to 2,000 meters; and
- (4) 16,000,000 barrels of oil equivalent for each lease in water depths greater than 2,000 meters.

(c) Limitation

The Secretary may place limitations on royalty relief granted under this section based on market price.

(Pub. L. 109–58, title III, §345, Aug. 8, 2005, 119 Stat. 703.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, referred to in subsec. (a), is act Aug. 7, 1953, ch. 345, 67 Stat. 462, which is classified generally to subchapter III (§1331 et seq.) of chapter 29 of Title 43, Public Lands. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1301 of Title 43 and Tables.

§ 15906. North Slope Science Initiative**(a) Establishment****(1) In general**

The Secretary of the Interior shall establish a long-term initiative to be known as the “North Slope Science Initiative” (referred to in this section as the “Initiative”).

(2) Purpose

The purpose of the Initiative shall be to implement efforts to coordinate collection of scientific data that will provide a better understanding of the terrestrial, aquatic, and marine ecosystems of the North Slope of Alaska.

(b) Objectives

To ensure that the Initiative is conducted through a comprehensive science strategy and implementation plan, the Initiative shall, at a minimum—

- (1) identify and prioritize information needs for inventory, monitoring, and research activities to address the individual and cumulative effects of past, ongoing, and anticipated development activities and environmental change on the North Slope;
- (2) develop an understanding of information needs for regulatory and land management agencies, local governments, and the public;

(3) focus on prioritization of pressing natural resource management and ecosystem information needs, coordination, and cooperation among agencies and organizations;

(4) coordinate ongoing and future inventory, monitoring, and research activities to minimize duplication of effort, share financial resources and expertise, and assure the collection of quality information;

(5) identify priority needs not addressed by agency science programs in effect on August 8, 2005, and develop a funding strategy to meet those needs;

(6) provide a consistent approach to high caliber science, including inventory, monitoring, and research;

(7) maintain and improve public and agency access to—

(A) accumulated and ongoing research; and

(B) contemporary and traditional local knowledge; and

(8) ensure through appropriate peer review that the science conducted by participating agencies and organizations is of the highest technical quality.

(c) Membership

(1) In general

To ensure comprehensive collection of scientific data, in carrying out the Initiative, the Secretary shall consult and coordinate with Federal, State, and local agencies that have responsibilities for land and resource management across the North Slope.

(2) Cooperative agreements

The Secretary shall enter into cooperative agreements with the State of Alaska, the North Slope Borough, the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, and other Federal agencies as appropriate to coordinate efforts, share resources, and fund projects under this section.

(d) Science technical advisory panel

(1) In general

The Initiative shall include a panel to provide advice on proposed inventory, monitoring, and research functions.

(2) Membership

The panel described in paragraph (1) shall consist of a representative group of not more than 15 scientists and technical experts from diverse professions and interests, including the oil and gas industry, subsistence users, Native Alaskan entities, conservation organizations, wildlife management organizations, and academia, as determined by the Secretary.

(e) Reports

Not later than 3 years after August 8, 2005, and each year thereafter, the Secretary shall publish a report that describes the studies and findings of the Initiative.

(f) Authorization of appropriations

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this section.

(Pub. L. 109-58, title III, §348, Aug. 8, 2005, 119 Stat. 708.)

§ 15907. Orphaned well site plugging, remediation, and restoration

(a) Definitions

In this section:

(1) Federal land

The term “Federal land” means land administered by a land management agency within—

(A) the Department of Agriculture; or

(B) the Department of the Interior.

(2) Idled well

The term “idled well” means a well—

(A) that has been nonoperational for not fewer than 4 years; and

(B) for which there is no anticipated beneficial future use.

(3) Indian Tribe

The term “Indian Tribe” has the meaning given the term in section 5304 of title 25.

(4) Operator

The term “operator”, with respect to an oil or gas operation, means any entity, including a lessee or operating rights owner, that has provided to a relevant authority a written statement that the entity is responsible for the oil or gas operation, or any portion of the operation.

(5) Orphaned well

The term “orphaned well”—

(A) with respect to Federal land or Tribal land, means a well—

(i)¹(I) that is not used for an authorized purpose, such as production, injection, or monitoring; and

(II)(aa) for which no operator can be located;

(bb) the operator of which is unable—

(AA) to plug the well; and

(BB) to remediate and reclaim the well site; or

(cc) that is within the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska; and

(B) with respect to State or private land—

(i) has the meaning given the term by the applicable State; or

(ii) if that State uses different terminology, has the meaning given another term used by the State to describe a well eligible for plugging, remediation, and reclamation by the State.

(6) Tribal land

The term “Tribal land” means any land or interest in land owned by an Indian Tribe, the title to which is—

(A) held in trust by the United States; or

(B) subject to a restriction against alienation under Federal law.

(b) Federal program

(1) Establishment

Not later than 60 days after November 15, 2021, the Secretary shall establish a program to plug, remediate, and reclaim orphaned wells located on Federal land.

¹ So in original. No cl. (ii) has been enacted.