



Public Notice

U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers	Permit Application No: _____	SWG-2018-00732
	Date Issued: _____	27 December 2018
	Comments _____	
Galveston District	Due: _____	29 January 2019

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, GALVESTON DISTRICT
AND
TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

PURPOSE OF PUBLIC NOTICE: To inform you of a proposal for work in which you might be interested. It is also to solicit your comments and information to better enable us to make a reasonable decision on factors affecting the public interest. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is not the entity proposing or performing the proposed work, nor has the Corps taken a position, in favor or against the proposed work.

AUTHORITY: This application will be reviewed pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

APPLICANT: Hilcorp Energy Company
1111 Travis Street
Houston, Texas 77208-5924
POC: Cory Johnson
Telephone: (713) 289-2691

AGENT: Providence Engineering and Environmental
1201 Main Street
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802-4658
POC: Regina Staten
Telephone: (225) 766-7400

LOCATION: The project site is located in Trinity Bay in State Tract 62. The project can be located on the U.S.G.S. quadrangle map titled: Smith Point, Texas.

LATITUDE & LONGITUDE (NAD 83):

Latitude: 29.601302° North; **Longitude:** 94.753714° West

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant proposes to drill the Beluga Prospect using a drilling barge rig, drafting 6.5 feet. If the well is successful, a 7-foot x 16-foot well protection structure, and an 8-inch-diameter flowline will be installed to serve the well. The access route and drilling rig were selected to avoid impacts to the water bottom. The drilling barge rig will be accessed at high tide to allow for a minimum of 2 feet of clearance

between the keel and the water bottom to avoid impacts to oyster resources. Support vessels will temporarily be moored adjacent to the drilling rig and will be removed upon completion of the drilling activities. Per a 12 September 2018 pre-application meeting, the well location and flowline have been shifted out of the oyster area of concern. To avoid impacts to vegetated jurisdictional wetlands, the flowline will be horizontally directionally drilled (HDD) from an existing facility approximately 4,500 feet then jetted for approximately 10,604 feet to the well location. The flowline will have a minimum of 3 feet of cover and will be installed using a 1-foot wide trench. An oyster assessment has been scheduled and will be provided to interested parties upon completion. The purpose of the project is exploration and verification of hydrocarbon reserves potentially indicated on 3D seismic surveys.

AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION: The applicant has stated that they have avoided and minimized the environmental impacts by utilizing a shallow draft drilling rig, limiting access to the drill site to high tide times, utilizing known deep water channels, horizontal directional drilling portions of the proposed flowline and avoiding direct impacts to oyster reefs.

MITIGATION: This project as it is proposed should not cause a permanent loss of any special aquatic site. Therefore no compensatory mitigation has been proposed.

CURRENT SITE CONDITIONS: The project site is located in the eastern portion of Trinity Bay. This area has been known to contain commercially viable oyster reefs. The project has also been subject to 3D seismic surveys within the last several years.

NOTES: This public notice is being issued based on information furnished by the applicant. This project information has not been verified by the Corps. The applicant's plans are enclosed in 9 sheets.

A preliminary review of this application indicates that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required. Since permit assessment is a continuing process, this preliminary determination of EIS requirement will be changed if data or information brought forth in the coordination process is of a significant nature.

Our evaluation will also follow the guidelines published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to Section 404 (b)(1) of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

OTHER AGENCY AUTHORIZATIONS: The applicant has stated that the project is consistent with the Texas Coastal Management Program (CMP) goals and policies and will be conducted in a manner consistent with said Program. The Texas Railroad Commission will determine if the project is consistent with the goals and policies of the CMP and will review this application under Section 401 of the CWA to determine if the work would comply with State water quality standards.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES: The staff archaeologist has reviewed the latest published version of the National Register of Historic Places, lists of properties determined eligible, and other sources of information. The following is current knowledge of the presence or absence of historic properties and the effects of the undertaking upon these properties: The state tracts proposed for work under this permit are not included in the Texas Historical Commission's list of Sensitive state tracts. Additionally, the scope and magnitude of the project is so minimal that a marine archeological investigation is not needed.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES: Preliminary indications are that no known threatened and/or endangered species or their critical habitat will be affected by the proposed work.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: This notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Our initial determination is that the proposed action would not have a substantial adverse impact on Essential Fish Habitat or federally managed fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

PUBLIC INTEREST REVIEW FACTORS: This application will be reviewed in accordance with 33 CFR 320-332, the Regulatory Programs of the Corps of Engineers, and other pertinent laws, regulations and executive orders. The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal, will be considered: among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

SOLICITATION OF COMMENTS: The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public, Federal, State, and local agencies and officials, Indian tribes, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

This public notice is being distributed to all known interested persons in order to assist in developing facts upon which a decision by the Corps of Engineers may be based. For accuracy and completeness of the record, all data in support of or in opposition to the proposed work should be submitted in writing setting forth sufficient detail to furnish a clear understanding of the reasons for support or opposition.

PUBLIC HEARING: The purpose of a public hearing is to solicit additional information to assist in the evaluation of the proposed project. Prior to the close of the comment period, any person may make a written request for a public hearing, setting forth the particular reasons for the request. The District Engineer will determine if the reasons identified for holding a public hearing are sufficient to warrant that a public hearing be held. If a public hearing is warranted, all known interested persons will be notified of the time, date, and location.

CLOSE OF COMMENT PERIOD: All comments pertaining to this Public Notice must reach this office on or before **29 January 2019**. Extensions of the comment period may be granted for valid reasons provided a written request is received by the limiting date. **If no comments are received by that date, it will be considered that there are no objections.** Comments and requests for additional information should reference our file number, **SWG-2018-00732**, and should be submitted to:

Evaluation Branch, North Unit
Regulatory Division, CESWG-RD-E
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 1229
Galveston, Texas 77553-1229
409-766-3869 Phone
409-766-6301 Fax
swg_public_notice@usace.army.mil

DISTRICT ENGINEER
GALVESTON DISTRICT
CORPS OF ENGINEERS