



MEMORANDUM

Letter from City Council to the Alaska Delegation re: Oil and Gas Lease Sale Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement Public Hearing and Comment Period.

Item Type: Action Memorandum
Prepared For: Mayor Lord and City Council
Date: October 13, 2025
From: Renee Krause, MMC, ADAC, City Clerk

Councilmember Aderhold has proposed the attached letter be submitted to the State of Alaska Congressional Representatives: Senator Lisa Murkowski, Senator Dan Sullivan and Representative Nick Begich.

Recommendation:

Approve the attached letter to Senator Murkowski, Senator Sullivan and Representative Begich.

Attachments:

Letter to Congressional Delegates
Alaska Beacon Article dated September 18, 2025
Federal Register Notice Published September 18, 2025



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Homer City Council

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

(p) 907-235-3130

(f) 907-235-3143

October XX, 2025

Senator Lisa Murkowski
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Dan Sullivan
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Nick Begich
153 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Murkowski, Senator Sullivan and Representative Begich:

The City of Homer respectfully asks for your assistance requesting a public hearing and comment period on the Outer Continental Shelf, Alaska Region, Cook Inlet Planning Area, Oil and Gas Lease Sale 258 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement prepared by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM).

On September 18, 2025, BOEM published document 2025-18095 (90 FR 45052) in the Federal Register related to Docket No.: 2020-0018 (Oil and Gas Lease Sale 258). The Federal Register action is an amended notice of intent stating that a notice of availability will not be issued for the draft supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) and that BOEM will publish the final SEIS by the end of 2025.

This means there will be no public comment period or hearing on the SEIS, as updated regulations have eliminated the requirement for public input. The City of Homer asks our Congressional Delegation to work with BOEM to hold a public hearing and solicit comment on the SEIS. While offshore oil and gas development within the boundaries of Lease Sale 258 in lower Cook Inlet would contribute to Alaska's economy and could help offset the decline in natural gas supplies in the region, preparation of an EIS for the lease sale demonstrates that the development could have significant impacts on the lives and livelihoods of the region's residents. It is imperative that the people of Homer and our neighbors across the region have the opportunity to make their voices heard. All too often, the impacts of otherwise important infrastructure projects can have deleterious consequences for

local economies and communities. It is our responsibility to ensure that Homer and its economy is unharmed by any adverse impacts of this lease sale.

The SEIS is being prepared in response to a court ruling that determined BOEM needed to address three deficiencies in the October 2022 Cook Inlet Lease Sale 258 final EIS (87 FR 65247): (1) failure to consider a reasonable range of alternatives, specifically with respect to alternatives that would offer for lease a reduced number of blocks and meaningfully reduce overall impacts; (2) failure to take the requisite “hard look” at the impact of vessel noise from Lease Sale 258 on Cook Inlet beluga whales; and (3) failure to consider the cumulative impacts on Cook Inlet beluga whales separately from other marine mammals.

The City of Homer believes that, while the Court determined the scope of the SEIS, stakeholders in the region of Lease Sale 258 should have the opportunity to attend a public hearing and comment on the adequacy of the analysis related to the three areas of deficiency as developed in the SEIS that BOEM prepares. Local and regional expertise and experience should not be overlooked in this process.

The City of Homer respectfully requests the opportunity for a public hearing and public comment. Cook Inlet Lease Sale 258 has the potential to impact the local economy and the marine environment upon which our regional economy relies. Regional stakeholders should have the opportunity to review and provide comments on the mandated SEIS before it is finalized. Thank you for your attention to this important matter and for advocating on behalf of our community.

Sincerely,

No public comment or hearings on environmental review of oil leasing in Alaska's Cook Inlet

The U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management is cutting out a public comment process, citing a Trump administration policy aimed at 'streamlining' development

BY: **YERETH ROSEN**-SEPTEMBER 18, 20256:00 PM



Cook Inlet waves roll onto the beach at Kenai on Aug. 14, 2018. The U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management is preparing a supplemental environmental impact statement to address legal deficiencies in a 2022 lease sale. (Photo by Yereth Rosen/Alaska Beacon)

Federal regulators will accept no public comments on a pending environmental study of oil leasing in Alaska's Cook Inlet, a U.S. Department of the Interior agency [announced](#) through a Federal Register notice published Thursday.

There will be no public comment period and no public hearing on a draft supplemental environmental impact statement for a Cook Inlet lease sale that was held in 2022 but found to be legally flawed, said U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, which manages oil and gas development in federal offshore areas.

The rejection of public comments is in accordance with Trump administration [changes](#) to the National Environmental Policy Act, the 55-year-old law that guides federal decisions about activities that may have environmental impacts. The changes are aimed at speeding up environmental reviews and developing infrastructure projects.

BOEM is following the administration's updated NEPA regulations and a new department handbook on the law, which went into effect on July 3, said Elizabeth Pearce, a U.S. Department of the Interior senior public affairs specialist.

"This Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement is narrowly focused on addressing the court's concerns, without a separate public-comment round – streamlining what is typically a protracted, multi-year process down to a few months." Pearce said by email on Thursday.

Although no public comments will be accepted, the public will be able to read the new environmental impact statement when it is finished, Pearce added. "The completed Supplemental EIS will be posted online so Alaskans and other stakeholders can see exactly how we addressed the court's limited concerns," she said.

The Cook Inlet environmental study stems from a federal lease sale that was held on Dec. 30, 2022. It drew [only one bid](#).

Earlier in the year, the Biden administration had planned to cancel the sale because of lack of industry interest. But at the urging of former Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia, the Inflation Reduction Act that narrowly passed Congress that year included a mandate for the sale to take place. Hilcorp Inc., the dominant oil and gas operator in Cook Inlet, submitted the only bid.

In response to a lawsuit filed by environmental groups days before the lease sale was held, U.S. District Court Judge Sharon Gleason [ruled](#) in 2024 that the lease sale had been held without adequate study of impacts to endangered Cook Inlet beluga whales. Her ruling put the lease sale results on hold, and she ordered BOEM to conduct a new review addressing impacts to the belugas.

BOEM's announcement about the lack of public comment opportunities was blasted by environmental plaintiffs in the case.

"BOEM's decision to exclude the public from its supplemental environmental statement is unacceptable. Public participation is not a box to check — it is the heart of NEPA," Loren Barrett, co-executive director the water conservation non-profit Cook Inletkeeper, said in an emailed statement.

BOEM's earlier lapses concerning Cook Inlet belugas were "not minor oversights; they are serious errors that must be corrected with rigor and transparency and a proper review that allows the time for public input," Barrett added.

Kristen Monsell, oceans legal director for the Center for Biological Diversity, also cited risks to the endangered beluga population, which is estimated to number a [little over 300](#).

“This secrecy around exploiting public waters for fossil fuels is completely unacceptable. It would only take one oil spill to devastate Cook Inlet and its beluga whales, which is why the law requires transparency for these dangerous sales,” Monsell said in a statement. “The court found that federal officials failed to look at several important factors that could harm endangered belugas, including vessel noise. If the agency hides its analysis, we won’t know whether these critical issues have been addressed to better protect the belugas.”

Hilcorp currently holds [eight federal leases](#) in Cook Inlet, including the sole lease acquired in the disputed 2022 sale. The company relinquished seven other federal leases in Cook Inlet. The BOEM website does not list any Hilcorp plans for exploring its remaining leases in the inlet.

Original Article can be read: <https://alaskabeacon.com/2025/09/18/no-public-comment-or-hearings-on-environmental-review-of-oil-leasing-in-alaskas-cook-inlet/>

Questions?: Contact the Editor: info@alaskabeacon.com

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

[Docket No.: BOEM–2020–0018]

Outer Continental Shelf, Alaska Region, Cook Inlet Planning Area, Oil and Gas Lease Sale 258

AGENCY: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Interior.

ACTION: Amended notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) will follow the new Department of Interior (DOI) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations in preparing the supplemental environmental impact statement (EIS) for Lease Sale 258. BOEM will comply with these revised DOI NEPA regulations, procedures, and handbook for the remainder of the supplemental EIS process. As such, a notice of availability (NOA) for the draft supplemental EIS will not be issued for public comment, nor will public hearings be held. This supplemental EIS will provide new analysis in response to a remand by the U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska (Court). BOEM currently plans to complete and publish the final supplemental EIS by the end of 2025.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For information on the Cook Inlet Lease Sale 258 supplemental EIS or BOEM's policies associated with this notice, please contact Mr. Casey Rowe, Supervisor, Environmental Analysis Section, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Alaska OCS Region, 3801 Centerpoint Drive, Suite 500, Anchorage, Alaska 99503–5820, telephone (907) 312–3788, email casey.rowe@boem.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In its April 4, 2025, notice of intent (NOI), Docket No. BOEM–2020–0018 (90 FR 14866), BOEM announced its intent to prepare a supplemental EIS (Unique Identification Number DOI–BOEM–AK–2025–0001–EIS) for Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Lease Sale 258 in the Cook Inlet Planning Area, Alaska. BOEM amends its April 4, 2025, NOI to notify the public that, since the initial NOI was issued, the Council of Environmental Quality rescinded its NEPA implementing regulations effective April 11, 2025, 90 FR 10610 (Feb. 25, 2025). On July 3, 2025, DOI issued an interim final rule partially rescinding its NEPA implementing regulations and announcing that the remainder of its NEPA procedures will be maintained in a handbook separate from the Code of Federal Regulations,

90 FR 29498 (July 3, 2025). DOI's handbook of NEPA procedures is available at <https://www.doi.gov/oepc/national-environmental-policy-act-nepa>.

BOEM was required to hold Cook Inlet Lease Sale 258 (Lease Sale 258) by the end of December 2022, as directed in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (Pub. L. 117–169, enacted Aug. 16, 2022). On October 28, 2022, the NOA of the Cook Inlet Lease Sale 258 final EIS was published in the **Federal Register** (87 FR 65247). Subsequently, on November 22, 2022, the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management signed the record of decision (ROD), and BOEM published the NOA in the **Federal Register** on November 29, 2022 (87 FR 73322). On December 30, 2022, BOEM held Lease Sale 258, receiving one bid on one block, resulting in the issuance of one lease.

On December 21, 2022, plaintiffs Cook Inletkeeper, et al., filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska under the Administrative Procedure Act alleging several violations of NEPA. On July 16, 2024, the Court ruled partially in favor of the plaintiffs and remanded without vacatur the Lease Sale 258 final EIS and ROD to BOEM to prepare a supplemental EIS to address three deficiencies identified by the Court. The three deficiencies identified by the Court are summarized as follows: (1) failure to consider a reasonable range of alternatives, specifically with respect to alternatives that would offer for lease a reduced number of blocks and meaningfully reduce overall impacts; (2) failure to take the requisite “hard look” at the impact of vessel noise from Lease Sale 258 on Cook Inlet beluga whales; and (3) failure to consider the cumulative impacts on Cook Inlet beluga whales separately from other marine mammals.

As a result of the Court's decision, BOEM announced its intent to prepare a supplemental EIS for Lease Sale 258 in its NOI published on April 4, 2025. The supplemental EIS will provide additional analyses to address the deficiencies identified by the Court. At the completion of the supplemental EIS process, the Secretary of the Interior or his designee will issue a modified ROD.

Consistent with section 3.6 of the DOI NEPA handbook and DOI's NEPA implementing regulations at 43 CFR part 46, DOI has determined that scoping and circulation of a draft supplemental EIS for public comment is not required, as the Court has determined the scope of the supplemental EIS.

Authority: This amended NOI is published pursuant to Department of the Interior regulations (43 CFR part 46)

implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*).

Matthew Giacona,

Acting Director, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.

[FR Doc. 2025–18095 Filed 9–17–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4340–98–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement

[Docket ID BSEE–2025–0200; OMB Control Number 1014–0001; EEEE500000 256E1700D2 ET1SF0000.EAQ000]

Agency Information Collection Activities; Oil and Gas Well-Workover Operations

AGENCY: Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of information collection; request for comment.

DATES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before November 17, 2025.

ADDRESSES: Send your comments on this information collection request (ICR) by either of the following methods listed below:

- Electronically go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the Search box, enter BSEE–2025–0200 then click search. Follow the instructions to submit public comments and view all related materials. We will post all comments.

- Email Kelly.Odom@bsee.gov, fax (703) 787–1775, or mail or hand-carry comments to the Department of the Interior; Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement; Regulations and Standards Branch; ATTN: Kelly Odom; 45600 Woodland Road, Sterling, VA 20166. Please reference Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Control Number 1014–0001 in the subject line of your comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kelly Odom by email at Kelly.Odom@bsee.gov or by telephone at (703) 787–1775. Individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services.