

STUDY TITLE: Socioeconomic Outer Continental Shelf Issue Analysis of Stakeholders in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico

REPORT TITLE: Stakeholder Issues in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico, Volume I: Technical Report and Volume II: Bibliography

CONTRACT NUMBER: 14-35-0001-30793

SPONSORING OCS REGION: Gulf of Mexico

APPLICABLE PLANNING AREA: Eastern

FISCAL YEARS OF PROJECT FUNDING: 1996-1999

COMPLETION DATE OF REPORT: September 1999

CUMULATIVE PROJECT COST: \$196,924

PROJECT MANAGER: Dallas A. Blanchard

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KEY WORDS: stakeholder; environment; attitude; Eastern Gulf; focus group; annotated bibliography; Florida; Florida Panhandle; literature search

BACKGROUND: The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 stipulates that Federal agencies use and integrated, interdisciplinary approach in research involving assessment of environmental impacts. Therefore, the social sciences, in addition to the natural sciences, are taken into consideration by the Minerals Management Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior prior to granting approval of offshore oil and gas exploration and production projects.

In keeping with these requirements, The University of West Florida, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Sciences Interdisciplinary was contracted by the MMS to conduct a study of Stakeholders' attitudes toward offshore oil and gas production, "Socioeconomic Outer Continental Shelf Issue Analysis of Stakeholders in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico." The study area consisted of Florida coastal counties from Escambia, which borders Alabama, (and the adjacent Baldwin County, Alabama), to the Florida Keys, and the southernmost Gulf-bordering county of the state, Dade.

OBJECTIVES: (1) Identification of key informants and relevant stakeholder groups concerned about oil and gas activity in the EGOM; (2) Identification of the salient social

and economic issues related to offshore oil and gas activity held by stakeholder groups in the EGOM; (3) Determination of the underlying assumptions about the environment and aspects of human use of the environment which will serve as the basis for identification of the issues and the degree of concern expressed by citizens and stakeholders; and (4) Development of a document identifying the specific stakeholder groups in the EGOM, their interests, and the extent of their concerns about OCS oil and gas activity.

DESCRIPTION: The University of West Florida, Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Sciences Interdisciplinary was contracted by the MMS to conduct a study of Stakeholders' attitudes toward offshore oil and gas production, "Socioeconomic Outer Continental Shelf Issue Analysis of Stakeholders in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico." The study area consisted of Florida coastal counties from Escambia, which borders Alabama, (and the adjacent Baldwin County, Alabama), to the Florida Keys, and the southernmost Gulf-bordering county of the state, Dade.

The Purpose of the study was to "provide in a single document and identification of stakeholder groups in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico, the definitions of their interests and the degree of their concerns about OCS oil and gas activity." This required identification of stakeholders' social and economic issues.

A second requirement was to prepare an annotated bibliography of the relevant materials. That will be found in Volume II.

SIGNIFICANT CONCLUSIONS:

1. Coastal communities exhibit a wide variety in their extent of social organization. For example, on one extreme are communities with a wealth of social organizations devoted to diverse goals. Those organizations have a web of interlocking memberships. At the other extreme are communities with a dearth of organizations, and those organizations which do exist, exist largely in isolation from one another.
2. Attitudes vary by the type of tourism, if any, now being serviced and types desired for the future.
3. Attitudes vary by the proportion of permanent residents.
4. Attitudes vary by the political context.
5. Attitudes vary by type(s) of accommodations available to tourists.
6. Attitudes vary by historical experiences with the extractive history of offshore oil and gas activities.
7. Values and interests related to offshore activities of areas vary by socioeconomic base.
8. The greater the distance of existing leases from shore, the greater the acceptance of offshore activity.
9. The nearer to the coast of existing offshore activity, the more intense the resistance to it.
10. Key correlates of opposition to offshore activity are social class, age, and occupation.
11. The more diversified the economic base of a community the higher the probability that a chamber of commerce take no position on offshore development.

12. The greater a community's economic base is centered on retirees and tourism the more likely a chamber of commerce will oppose offshore development.

STUDY RESULTS:

1. Very few stakeholder organizations see themselves as beneficiaries of offshore activity. This perception is the strongest as organizational locations near the Central Region activity.
2. Eastern Region stakeholder organizations, both political and voluntary, equate any offshore activities as the same; i.e., they view offshore activities greater than 100 miles from shore as no different from state leases within nine miles of the shoreline.
3. Eastern Region stakeholder organizations are virtually unanimous in their opposition to any offshore development.

STUDY PRODUCTS: Blanchard, D. A. 1999. Stakeholders' Issues in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico. Volume I: Technical Report. A final report to the Minerals Management Service Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, New Orleans, Louisiana. Contract No. 14-35-0001-30793. 92 pp.

Webb, D. J. and L. Bates. 1999. Stakeholders' Issues in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico. Volume II: Annotated Bibliography. A final report for the U.S. Department of the Interior, Minerals Management Service Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, New Orleans, Louisiana. Contract No. 14-35-0001-30793. 250 pp.