

1                                   **6 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHORT-TERM USES**  
2                                   **OF MAN’S ENVIRONMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE**  
3                                   **AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY**  
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6           The short-term uses of man’s environment in relation to the 2012-2017 Outer Continental  
7 Shelf (OCS) Leasing Program are the offshore and onshore activities needed to develop oil and  
8 gas resources to meet the energy needs of the United States. The Bureau of Ocean Energy  
9 Management (BOEM) makes every attempt to minimize the environmental effects from these  
10 uses. By adopting mitigating measures for OCS operations, BOEM attempts to minimize long-  
11 term impacts and maintain or enhance the long-term productivity of areas in which oil and gas  
12 have been exploited. With proper removal of offshore oil and gas facilities, or their disposal in  
13 areas designed to enhance recreational fishing, offshore areas will continue to maintain fish  
14 resources and provide habitat for marine mammals, birds, and reptiles long after oil and gas  
15 operations have ceased. The onshore effects of the OCS program and the proposed action will  
16 contribute to the continuing alteration of nearby coastal areas from natural environments to  
17 urbanized and industrialized environments.  
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19           Short-term use of the environment in the vicinity of OCS activities includes the  
20 exploration and development of OCS oil and gas resources during the period of activity needed  
21 for the completion of the proposed action. The overall life of the proposed action is estimated to  
22 be about 40-50 years, with about 10-15 years of oil and gas exploration and delineation activity  
23 and about 30-35 years of resource development and production activity. Many of the effects  
24 discussed in Chapter 4 are the result of short-term uses and are greatest during the exploration,  
25 development, and early production phases. These effects may be reduced by mitigation  
26 measures required by BOEM.  
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28           Extraction and consumption of offshore oil and natural gas would be a long-term  
29 depletion of nonrenewable resources. Economic, political, and social benefits would accrue  
30 from the availability of these natural resources. Most benefits would be short-term and would  
31 delay the increase in the dependency of the United States on oil imports. The production of  
32 offshore oil and natural gas from the proposed action would provide short-term energy sources  
33 and perhaps additional time for the development of long-term alternative energy sources or  
34 substitutes for these nonrenewable resources.  
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36           Onshore facility construction (e.g., pipelines, processing facilities, service bases, etc.)  
37 causes definite short- and long-term changes, with localized long-term effects on coastal habitats  
38 along onshore pipeline corridors. Some biological resources, such as nesting birds, may have  
39 difficulty repopulating altered habitats and could be permanently displaced from the local  
40 construction area. Short-term biological productivity would be reduced or lost in the immediate  
41 onshore areas where construction takes place; however, the long-term productivity in some of  
42 these areas could be mitigated with habitat reclamation.  
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44           After the completion of oil and gas production, the marine environment is generally  
45 expected to remain at or return to its normal long-term productivity levels. To date, there has

1 been no discernible decrease in productivity in U.S. offshore areas where oil and gas have been  
2 produced for many years (MMS 2002, 2007).

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4 In the Alaska region, habitat disturbance could cause local impacts to subsistence  
5 resources, which could threaten subsistence as a way of life. Road construction resulting from  
6 the proposed action would improve accessibility to primitive areas in the region. The wilderness  
7 values of the coast and along pipeline routes and associated access roads would decrease with  
8 increased human activity in these areas, particularly in areas that do not already have extensive  
9 oil and gas activities. Land use changes would be noticeable at onshore facility sites and along  
10 pipeline routes. Short-term changes include a shift in land use from subsistence-based activities  
11 to industrial activities during the life of the proposed action. Areas adjacent to onshore facilities  
12 and pipeline corridors would probably be subject to hunting regulations. Land use in some  
13 localized areas would change from conservation to resource development. Long-term effects on  
14 land use may result if the infrastructure or facilities continued to be used after the lifetime of the  
15 proposed action.

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17 Increased population, minor gains in revenues, and the consequences of oil spills all  
18 contain the potential for disrupting coastal communities in the short term. In Alaska, an added  
19 incentive to shift from a subsistence-based economy to a cash-based economy, a reduction in  
20 subsistence resources, a decrease in subsistence activities, and other changes brought about by  
21 the proposed action could be factors in long-term consequences for Native social and cultural  
22 systems.

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24 Archaeological and historic finds discovered during development would enhance long-  
25 term knowledge. Overall, finds may help to locate other sites, but destruction of artifacts or  
26 damage to sites would represent long-term losses.

## 27 28 29 **REFERENCES**

30  
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36 *Environmental Impact Statement, Volume I*, OCS EIS/EA, MMS 2007-003, April.