UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

OCT 21 2013

The Honorable Lois Capps
U.S. House of Representatives
Santa Barbara District Office – Attention: Rachel Kondor
301 East Carrillo Street, Suite A
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Dear Congresswoman Capps:

Thank you for your letter of August 6, 2013 to Arvin Ganesan, Associate Administrator in U.S. EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations, in which you forwarded correspondence on behalf of nine California state legislators on the use of hydraulic fracturing in offshore oil and gas drilling operations. Your letter requested us to provide any information we could regarding this issue.

My staff had a conference call on August 14, 2013 with Rachel Kondor in your Santa Barbara District Office, and Aaron Shapiro and Kelsy Jacobsen in your DC Office, regarding offshore oil and gas platforms. During this call, my staff provided an overview of EPA's role in overseeing offshore drilling and well treatment and how EPA issues National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for offshore platforms, and responded to questions provided to EPA by Ms. Kondor in advance of the call. Following the call, my staff sent additional material, including a link to the EPA's Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO) online database for compliance history for these offshore platforms and a link to the EPA's existing and proposed general permit. I am also providing you a copy of our letter sent in response to the California state legislators on this issue.

We trust that this information is helpful and responsive to your request. If we can be of further assistance, please contact my Congressional Liaison, Brent Maier, at (415) 947-4256.

Sincerely,

Jared Blumenfeld

Enclosure: Copy of response letter sent to California Assemblymember Das Williams (identical responses sent to eight other legislators)

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The Honorable Das Williams
California Assemblymember, District 37
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0037

Dear Assemblymember Williams:

Thank you for your letter of August 6, 2013 expressing concern about recent news reports regarding well stimulation techniques (particularly hydraulic fracturing) used at offshore oil and gas platforms off the coast of Southern California. Your letter was addressed to the EPA and to the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM). I am responding on behalf of EPA and I understand that BSEE and BOEM will respond separately.

EPA's principal role in well drilling operations at offshore oil and gas platforms is regulation of wastewater discharges from the platforms through National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits issued under section 402 of the Clean Water Act. BSEE is responsible for development and enforcement of regulations pertaining to matters such as drilling methods and well treatment, including hydraulic fracturing procedures, at offshore platforms. BSEE regulations include stringent requirements for monitoring, reporting, and responding to leaks associated with drilling activity and operations of wells and offshore pipelines. BOEM addresses matters such as offshore energy leasing, and administers an environmental studies program.

Wastewater discharges from offshore oil and gas platforms off Southern California are currently authorized and regulated by a general NPDES permit issued by EPA in 2004; this permit can be found at: http://www.epa.gov/region9/water/npdes/permits.html . In December 2012, EPA proposed, and solicited public comments on, a new general permit to replace the existing 2004 permit. The proposed permit is available at: http://www.epa.gov/region9/water/npdes/pubnotices.html . EPA is in the process of reviewing and responding to comments.

We will continue to coordinate with BSEE, BOEM, and CCC in the oversight of wastewater discharges from offshore platforms and the review of data and information reported to EPA

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pursuant to EPA permits. If you have further questions, please have your staff contact my Congressional Liaison, Brent Maier at (415) 947-4256.

Sincerely,

Jared Blumenfeld

cc: Margaret Schneider, Deputy Director, BSEE
Walter Cruickshank, Deputy Director, BOEM
Bob Perciasepe, Deputy Administrator, EPA
Mary Shallenberger, Chair, CCC
Charles Lester, Executive Director, CCC