

Nightcap Multi-Client Marine Seismic Surveys Environment Plan

This document provides notification of NOPSEMA’s decision made under regulation 10 of the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2009 (Environment Regulations). In this instance, NOPSEMA is providing an opportunity to modify and resubmit the environment plan as it is not reasonably satisfied that the plans meets the acceptance criteria set out in the regulations.

Submission information

Titleholder¹:	Pathfinder Energy Pty Ltd
Environment plan:	Nightcap Multi-Client Marine Seismic Surveys Environment Plan (June 2016, Revision 1)
Petroleum title(s)/Application number(s):	WA-479-P, WA-487-P, WA-508-P, WA-509-P plus multiple adjacent title and open acreage areas.
Date submitted to NOPSEMA:	05/07/2016
Activities type(s)²:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seismic survey
Activity overview:	<p><i>Activity Description and Location</i></p> <p><i>As described on the NOPSEMA website.</i></p> <p>In the North-west Marine Region offshore from Western Australia (WA), the geophysical company Pathfinder Energy Pty Ltd (Pathfinder) proposes to acquire three-dimensional (3D) marine seismic surveys (MSS) within the Nightcap operational area. The Nightcap MSS operational area comprises approximately 30,720 square kilometres (km²), and 3D seismic acquisition is proposed in Exploration Permits WA-397-P, WA-447-P, WA-449-P, WA-466-P, WA-479-P, WA-487-P, WA-508-P, WA-509-P and adjacent open acreage areas including W16-4, W16-5, W16-6, W16-7 and W16-8.</p> <p>At the closest point, the operational area is located ~210 km west of Broome on the mainland coast. The southeast corner is located >190 km northwest of Eighty Mile Beach and >70 km south of Scott Reef. The survey area is in close proximity to the Mermaid Reef Commonwealth Marine Reserve (CMR) boundary (~4 km away). Located in WA State waters, the Rowley Shoals Marine Park is ~4 km to the west of the operational area. Water depths across the survey area range from ~80–1,300 m, with the deepest water depths situated in the northern half of the survey area. However, seismic activities will not occur in water shallower than 100 m.</p> <p>In terms of technical methods and procedures, the proposed MSS is a typical 3D survey similar to most others conducted in Australian marine waters. No unique or unusual equipment or operations are proposed.</p> <p><i>Operational Details</i></p> <p>The proposed surveys will be conducted using a purpose-built seismic survey</p>

vessel. During the proposed activities, the survey vessel will traverse a series of pre-determined sail lines within the operational area at a speed of ~8–9 km/hr. The operating pressure for the airgun array will be ~ 2,000 psi with a maximum volume of 4,100 in³. No vessels or seismic equipment shall enter the Mermaid Reef CMR or Rowley Shoals Marine Park at any time.

Timing

The individual surveys within Nightcap MSS EP may require approximately six months to complete. However, no survey activities will occur before 1 January 2017, and the duration of the entire EP will be ~24 months.

Decision:	Not reasonably satisfied
Decision date:	04/08/2016
Resubmission due date³:	03/09/2016
Decision made by:	Representative of NOPSEMA: Environment Manager - Seismic & Production Operations



Basis of decision

NOPSEMA has assessed the environment plan in accordance with its assessment policies and procedures. On completion of assessment, NOPSEMA has decided that it is not reasonably satisfied that the environment plan meets the criteria below as set out in regulation 10A of the Environment Regulations:

- (b) demonstrates that the environmental impacts and risks of the activity will be reduced to as low as reasonably practicable
- (c) demonstrates that the environmental impacts and risks of the activity will be of an acceptable level
- (d) provides for appropriate environmental performance outcomes, environmental performance standards and measurement criteria

Titleholder requirements

In accordance with regulation 10, the titleholder is required to modify and resubmit the environment plan. Upon resubmission of the plan, NOPSEMA will continue to assess the submission in accordance with its assessment policies and make a decision under regulation 10. After a titleholder has been provided with reasonable opportunity to modify and resubmit an environment plan, NOPSEMA will make a final decision on whether to accept or refuse to accept the environment plan.

How to get further information

If you have any further questions regarding the activity it is suggested you contact the titleholder's nominated liaison person for the activity.

If you would like to access any further information regarding this decision, or would like to contact NOPSEMA please email environment@nopsema.gov.au.

¹ A titleholder includes an applicant for a petroleum access authority, petroleum special prospecting authority, pipeline licence, greenhouse gas search authority or greenhouse gas special authority under sub-regulation 9(2).

² Activity type as listed in the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Regulatory Levies) Regulations 2004

³ NOPSEMA sets the proposed timeframe for resubmission; after which NOPSEMA may determine a reasonable opportunity has been given and NOPSEMA may refuse to accept the plan. Titleholders can request an extended timeframe.