

SUBJECT: ENFORCEMENT OF PIPELINE BURIAL AND STRUCTURE REMOVAL REGULATIONS FOR OFFSHORE WATERS OFF THE LOUISIANA COAST

WHEREAS, since 1936 the oil and gas industry has operated in the Gulf of Mexico waters off the Louisiana Coast and to date, there are some 3,600 production platforms and thousands of miles of pipelines constructed to produce and transport crude oil and natural gas from below the ocean floor to shore-based facilities and refineries across the nation to meet the energy demands of industry and consumers, and

WHEREAS, the process of drilling and transporting oil and gas from offshore sources is, by nature, a dangerous, complicated and expensive procedure, warranting strict safety and environmental guidelines that all producers must abide by, and

WHEREAS, deepwater production brings with it increased risks requiring specialized equipment and technology, allowing little or no room for error, and

WHEREAS, all aspects of exploration, production and transportation of oil and gas in federal waters (greater than three miles offshore) have been regulated by the former Mineral Management Service (MMS) under the Department of the Interior which is responsible for review and approval of permits and enforcement of all rules and regulations established by industry standard or regulatory agencies, and

WHEREAS, in its January 2011 final report, the Presidential Commission appointed to investigate the cause of the British Petroleum Macondo 252 incident revealed numerous human errors, miscalculations and lax procedural processes leading up to one of the worst environmental catastrophes in human history, and

WHEREAS, the 2011 federal investigation recommended numerous procedural changes to prevent future accidents or releases, such as increased regulatory oversight through more diligent inspection programs, the establishment of new criteria for deepwater exploration and production safety equipment, refined development of deepwater technology for subsea repair and containment strategies and industry responsibility to maintain adequate spill response equipment and resources for worse case scenarios, and

WHEREAS, recommendations from the federal investigation will significantly increase the roles and responsibilities of the current MMS agency; therefore, the Secretary of the Interior has implemented substantial reforms and restructuring of the MMS for transition into the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) now responsible for policing the safe and environmentally responsible development of energy and mineral resources in federal waters, and

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WHEREAS, history tells us, whether through human error or company negligence, accidents have occurred due to operational upsets or third party damage causing loss of life, serious injuries and environmental pollution which are all preventable if responsible operators would adhere to operating procedures and regulatory compliance, and

WHEREAS, despite current regulations and permits specifically written to address many aspects of oil and gas production, examples of noncompliance and lack of responsibility (among many) include exposed pipelines and appurtenances in shallow (less than 300 feet) water and marine debris from abandoned structures or “litter” accumulation on the sea floor from oil and gas operations, both of which have been known to cause accidents, injuries or spills when struck by marine vessels or snagged by fishing trawls.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation petitions the Director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to vigorously enforce current (or future) provisions of offshore pipeline operations and marine debris removal requirements as part of the new government reforms on energy management to assure safe and environmentally responsible oil and gas operations in offshore Louisiana waters.

Adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation in Convention Assembled, March 20, 2011 in Alexandria, Louisiana