

8. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHORT-TERM USES AND LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

Short-term refers to the total duration of onshore and offshore construction of the proposed SPOT Project. Long-term refers to an infinite period following decommissioning of the proposed Project. Short-term operational activities may result in persistent impacts over a longer period. Construction and the eventual removal of new structures would cause minor impacts in the short-term, which would be limited to the immediate vicinity of the activity; impacts of decommissioning may last longer because of minor elements that would be left in place. Short-term use may have long-term impacts on biologically sensitive offshore areas or archaeological resources. Upon completion of Project construction, the marine environment would generally be expected to remain at or return to its normal long-term productivity levels.

The proposed Project would be located in the GoM approximately 27.2 to 30.8 nautical miles off the coast of Brazoria County, Texas. This area is one of the most important energy producing areas in the United States. Approximately 17 percent of total U.S. crude oil production comes from the GoM and 45 percent of the total refining capacity in the United States is located along the Gulf Coast. Approximately 5 percent of offshore natural gas production occurs in the GoM, and 51 percent of the total natural gas processing capacity is located along the Gulf Coast (EIA 2019e). The area surrounding the proposed SPOT Project supports the oil and gas industry, marine commerce and shipping, commercial and recreational fishing, area ports, and other uses. Project construction is likely to have little impact on long-term productivity of the OCS, because this area already experiences heavy use and vessel traffic, and construction-related activity would constitute a short-term, incremental increase in existing activity.

Project operation would result in long-term impacts within Galveston Area lease blocks A-59 and 463, and would result in an incremental increase in ocean use and marine traffic between Freeport, Texas and the lease blocks. No available data or studies indicate that use of the Project area would cause long-term losses in productivity in the oil and gas, marine commerce and shipping, commercial and recreational fishing, or other related industries, although such losses are possible. Similarly, Project construction and operation would not generate long-term productivity or environmental gains. Benefits of the proposed Project are expected to be principally those associated with an increase in supplies of crude oil for export.

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