



NOPSEMA | Australia's offshore
energy regulator

HAVE YOUR SAY **on environmental aspects of** **offshore energy activities**



The National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) is Australia's independent, expert regulator for health and safety, structural and well integrity and environmental management for offshore petroleum and greenhouse gas storage activities in Commonwealth waters.

By law, the public must have the opportunity to comment on documents associated with proposed offshore petroleum projects or exploration activities, such as seismic surveys and exploratory drilling, as part of the assessment process for environmental approval. A public comment period of at least four weeks is intended to allow the community to have its say on the potential environmental impacts of projects and activities and proposed management practices.

Public comment on areas released for offshore oil and gas exploration

Each year the Department of Industry, Science and Resources manages a public comment process for areas proposed to be released for offshore oil and gas exploration. As the independent regulator, NOPSEMA has no role in this process. For more information about the process visit industry.gov.au.

How to have your say on environmental approvals

When a public comment period is underway, offshore project proposals and exploration environment plans are published in full on NOPSEMA's website, along with a summary of key information, maps of the proposal and contact details for the duty holder. The recommended way to submit a comment is through NOPSEMA's online Consultation Hub, which is accessible via the homepage of NOPSEMA's website nopsema.gov.au.

Alternatively, you can send a submission through:

- Email: environment@nopsema.gov.au
- Post: NOPSEMA – Public comment submissions, GPO Box 2568, PERTH WA 6001
- Delivery: NOPSEMA – Public comment submissions, Level 10 Alluvion, 58 Mounts Bay Rd, PERTH WA 6000

Where can I find information about public comment processes already underway?

Public comment periods are on NOPSEMA's online Consultation Hub. This online platform shows all the offshore project proposals and exploration environment plans currently open for public comment, along with closing dates.

On NOPSEMA's website you can subscribe to receive email notifications when a new public comment period opens.

Subscriptions can be customised to a particular region or type of activity:

- Subscribe to Environmental management news at nopsema.gov.au/subscribe to be notified when offshore project proposals are published for comment
- Subscribe at info.nopsema.gov.au to be notified when environment plans for exploration activities are published for comment.

In addition, duty holders must publish a notice inviting comment on their offshore project proposal or exploration environment plan on their own websites and in national, state and regional newspapers.

How to make an effective comment

The public comment process provides an opportunity for community members to raise suggestions or concerns about the environmental management of a proposed project or activity. It is useful to frame your comments as objections or claims.

A comment must relate to the information contained in the offshore project proposal or exploration environment plan. For example, comments could relate to:

- the way the existing environment (including the socioeconomic and cultural environment) in the area of the proposed project or activity is described in the document
- the environmental impacts and risks of the proposed project or activity
- the proposed measures for managing the environmental impacts and risks
- the proposed methods for monitoring the environmental performance of the project or activity.

Information that may not be considered in NOPSEMA's decision making include:

- statements of fundamental objection to offshore petroleum industry
- comments that contain personal threats or profanities
- SPAM mail and petitions.

It is also important for commenters to double check their comments prior to submission. Comments submitted accidentally for a different activity will not be considered, nor can they be redirected to the correct activity or proponent. Edits cannot be made to comments once submitted.

Submissions must be made prior to the closing date of the public comment period. If comments are received after this time, NOPSEMA will not forward these comments to the duty holder, but will encourage the comments to be conveyed directly to the duty holder. Comments sent by post must be date stamped prior to the end of the public comment period.

What happens to my comment once it's submitted?

Once the public comment period has closed, all appropriate and correctly submitted comments are provided to the duty holder. If relevant issues are raised through public comment, duty holders must take these issues into account and address them in their offshore project proposal or exploration environment plan. After considering the information received from the public, the duty holder may change their offshore proponents proposal (OPP) or exploration environment plan before submitting it to NOPSEMA. The duty holder is not required to respond to each comment individually.

In addition to the response by the duty holder, NOPSEMA also reviews the information received during the public comment and determines whether it has been addressed in the documents submitted for assessment. If NOPSEMA finds a duty holder has not considered the public comments appropriately, it will ask the duty holder to address the matter during the assessment process.

Within 5 business days after receiving a seismic or exploratory drilling environment plan, NOPSEMA will publish the plan with any written statement responding to the public comments received from the duty holder.

Privacy notice and sensitive information

When submitting a comment, NOPSEMA requests that your name and contact details are provided. This allows NOPSEMA and/or the duty holder to get in touch if needed and increases the transparency and accountability of the comment process. Names and contact details of commenters **will not be published** by NOPSEMA or the duty holder.

While it is preferred you provide your name and contact details, if you wish to remain anonymous to the duty holder, you may email NOPSEMA directly at environment@nopsema.gov.au.

NOPSEMA's handling of personal information is described in NOPSEMA's privacy policy at nopsema.gov.au/privacy. If you have an enquiry about privacy, please contact NOPSEMA's Privacy contact officer on 08 6188 8700 or by email at privacy@nopsema.gov.au.

If you are a 'relevant person' for an activity

A titleholder is required by the regulations to carry out consultation with relevant persons during the preparation of an environment plan. For more information see nopsema.gov.au/community-resources



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Further information

Regulatory alerts and bulletins, a quarterly magazine, brochures and factsheets, and regulatory guidance including the Environment plan decision-making guideline are published at nopsema.gov.au

Key legislation

Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006

Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2009

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Contact details

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About NOPSEMA

The National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) is Australia's independent regulator for health and safety, structural (well) integrity and environmental management for all offshore oil and gas operations and greenhouse gas storage activities in Commonwealth waters, and in coastal waters where regulatory powers and functions have been conferred.

nopsema.gov.au

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