

Det Kongelige Olje – og Energidepartement
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att: Espen Myhra

Stavanger, 26. Mars 2014

Your ref: 13/1391

Our ref: JP

Explora Petroleum AS comments to the 23rd Round hearing process

We refer to the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy's letter of 14th February concerning the hearing process for potential blocks to be included in the 23rd Licence Round. Explora Petroleum has the following comments.


Explora Petroleum believes that it is in the best interests of Norway to maintain a high level of activity in the exploration of the continental shelf. The long lead times from the start of opening of new areas, and award of licences, to eventual development of discoveries in these areas, means that it is critical to maintain the practise established by the Norwegian authorities for regular access to opportunities, through both the APA process in mature areas, and the numbered licence rounds in less well explored parts of the NCS. Predictability and transparency in this process are important for the future of the oil and gas industry in Norway, as well as for other interested parties that are involved in the open consultation process that is well established.

Regarding the 23rd Round specifically, we are pleased that the Barents Sea South East area has been opened following a comprehensive analysis of environmental and other issues, and that a significant number of blocks are now included in this unexplored area. Explora Petroleum is participating in the Statoil operated "group shoot" to acquire 3D seismic.

In the previously opened parts of the Barents Sea further west, a number of interesting discoveries have been made in the last five years, including confirmation of new plays. The industry is planning a high level of exploration drilling activity in 2014 and 2015 in these areas. Explora Petroleum will participate in a Statoil-operated well in PL 230 in the Nordkapp Basin. We would like to have seen a larger number of the nominated blocks in the previously opened areas included in this hearing process. We suggest that the ministry considers a second round of hearing in early 2015, following the 2014 drilling campaign, such that additional blocks could be included in the actual announcement of the 23rd Round, which we expect will now most likely be in 2015.

We note that the ministry has stated that some of the blocks nominated for the 23rd Round can be considered for inclusion in the APA process. Explora supports the annual review of the area covered by APA and the continuous evaluation of which areas can be included.

Yours sincerely
for Explora Petroleum AS



John Rae Pickard
CEO