



IADC ARGUES AGAINST LEASE SUSPENSIONS

The US Minerals Management Service held a workshop in New Orleans on 23 January to allow three Gulf of Mexico operators to make their case for "suspension of operations" when technology to exploit offshore leases is allegedly not available. IADC representatives attending the workshop concluded there's no justification for expanding the criteria for suspensions of operations, and that MMS has sufficient authority to grant relief as needed. In its formal comment to the docket, IADC observed that the same so-called technological barriers found in the GOM deepwater frontier have been surmounted elsewhere in the world. IADC argues that operators who won't fulfill their lease commitments by the end of their lease terms must return the OCS acreage to MMS inventory for re-offer.

IADC BRIEF SUPPORTS NOBLE APPEAL

IADC has filed a reply amicus curiae brief in the Texas Supreme Court supporting **Noble Drilling's** appeal of an adverse decision in the Texas First Court of Appeals. The case involves the application of the Jones Act to an offshore worker's alleged personal injury while engaged in "slinging" operations. IADC counsel reiterated that the worker was operating within a safe environment, following widely accepted industry practices. The Texas Supreme Court is expected to rule soon on whether it will take the case.

BAHAMAS RATIFIES MARITIME CONVENTIONS

The Bahamas has deposited its instruments of accession to the International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-Fouling Systems on Ships, 2001, and to the International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage, 2001. These will enter into force for the Bahamas on 17 September 2008 and 21 November 2008, respectively. Both Conventions will require shipowners to take specific actions to attain compliance with new regulatory requirements.

NOPSA REVIEWS HELICOPTER OPERATIONS

The "Review of Offshore Helicopter Operations in Australia," a Hart Aviation report commissioned by Australia's NOPSA, is " cursory and lacking in relevant information" regarding the industry's ongoing standards development, said IADC in a letter to NOPSA. The letter reminded NOPSA that the report fails to mention the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO) and its standards for international civil aviation. Additionally, IADC pointed to the report's sweeping and inaccurate generalization about the adequacy of helideck markings in the Gulf of Mexico. IADC noted that MODU helidecks in the GOM are regulated by the US Coast Guard, which applies standards either in the Code of Federal Regulations or the IMO's MODU Code. A new edition of the latter is under development, specifically to harmonize its provisions with CAP 437.

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