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# **Update on Virginia Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration**

**Thursday, July 8, 2010**

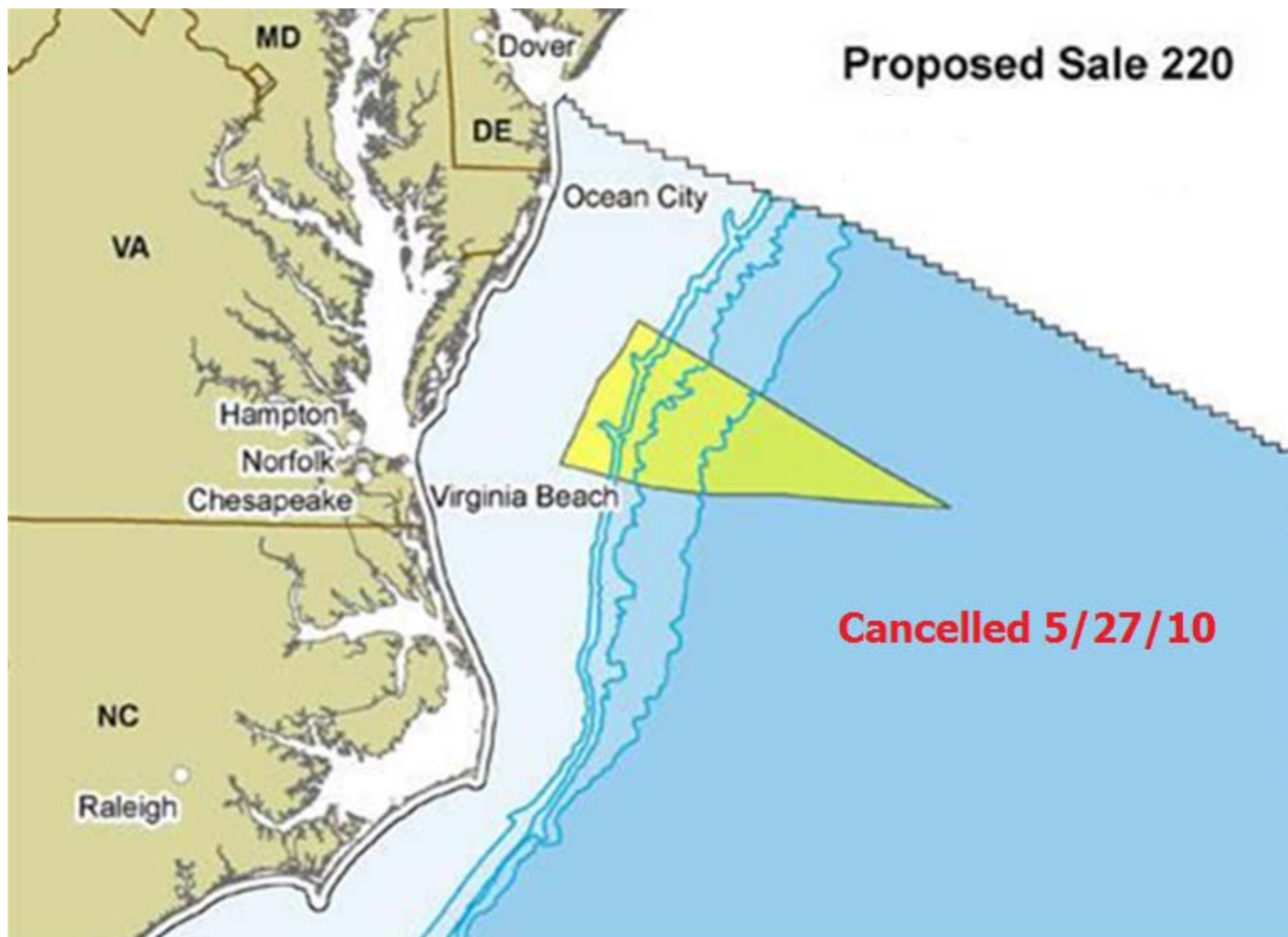
**Virginia Commission on Energy and Environment**

**Richmond, VA**

**Eileen Levandoski**

**Sierra Club, Virginia Chapter**

## Update on Virginia Offshore Drilling

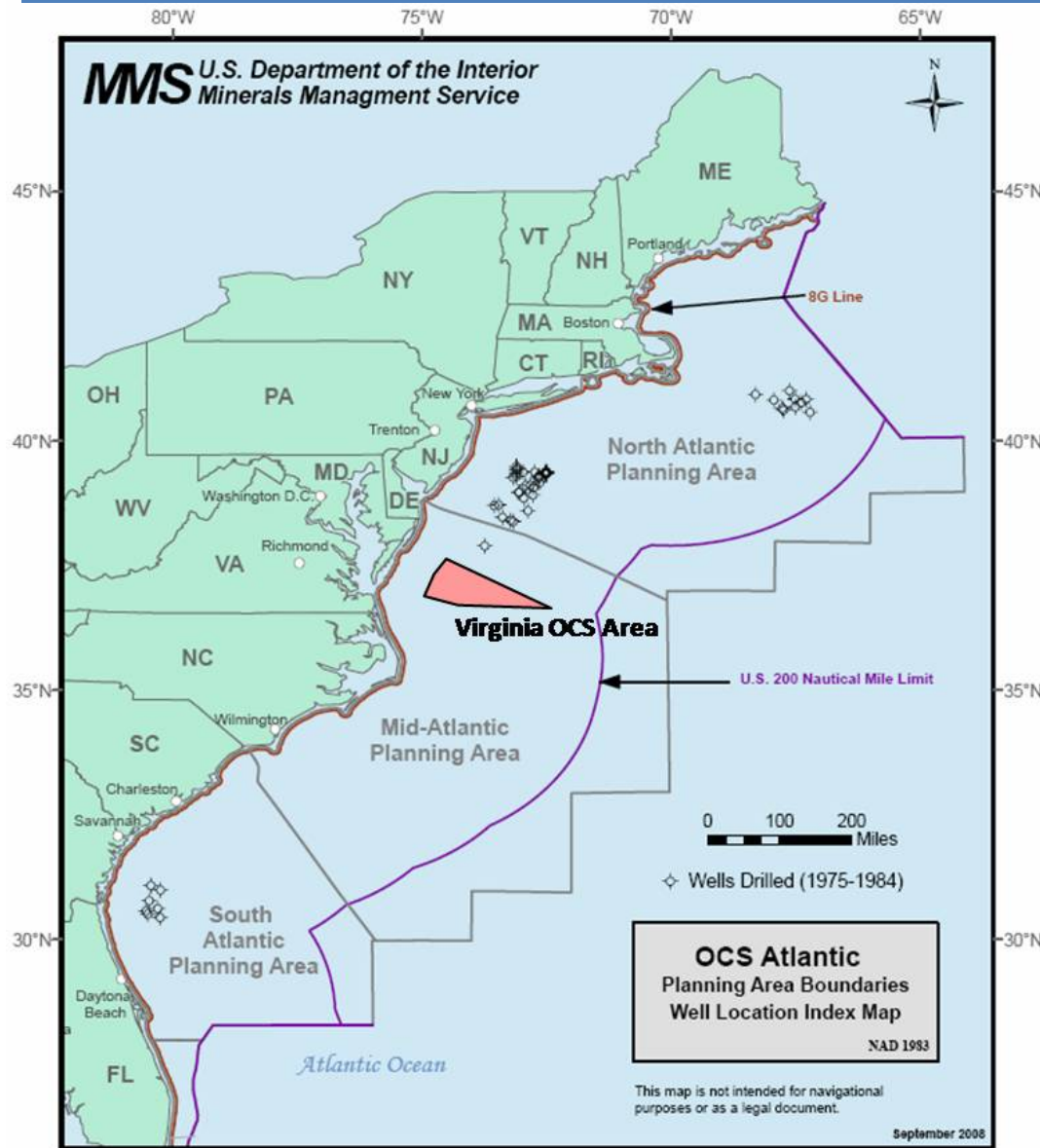


## For Thirty Years Protected



Large data gaps exist when it comes to endangered and protected species, fish and fisheries, the biology of the ocean floor, the ecosystems found in Virginia's offshore ocean canyons and coral reefs, as well as the physical and geological oceanography.

## For Thirty Years Protected

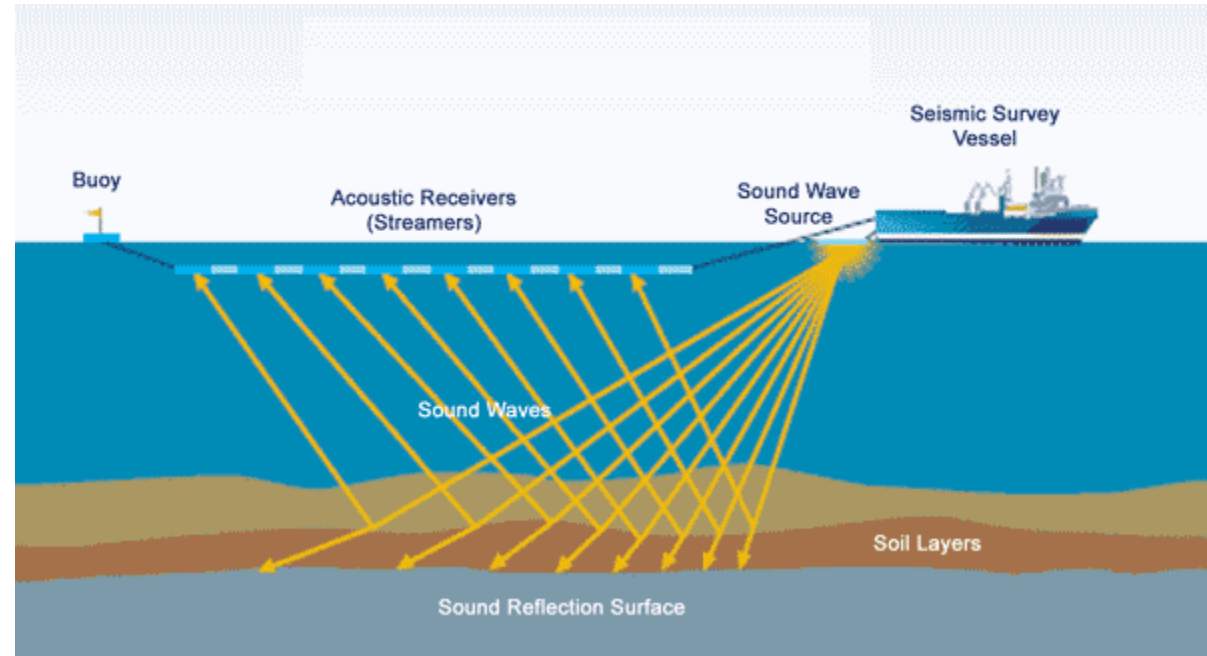


MMS and oil industry estimates of oil and gas reserves in the Virginia OCS Area are based on wells off the coast of Nova Scotia, **almost 1,000 miles away**.

51 test wells have been drilled much closer to Virginia, the closest less than 100 miles from the Virginia OCS area. 46 were dry, the other 5 only found small amounts that were determined to be “not economically recoverable” and **the wells were abandoned as non-commercial**.



## This is Offshore Drilling



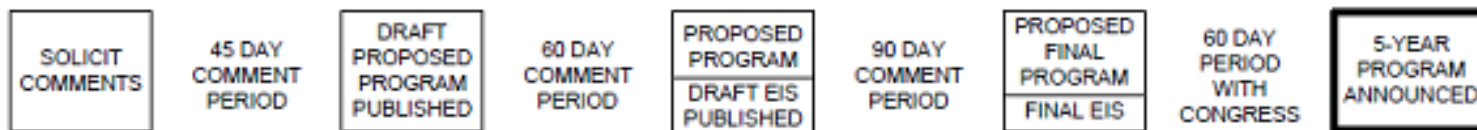
Seismic study involves multiple companies using huge arrays of high-intensity airguns to repeatedly comb and overlap over hundreds of thousands of acres of ocean, blasting into the water every few seconds for months on end.

These seismic air guns have been proven to have very detrimental impacts on marine mammals (including endangered whales like the Right whale) and fish. Strandings of whales on beaches and reduce commercial fish catches are one of the more obvious results of seismic exploration.

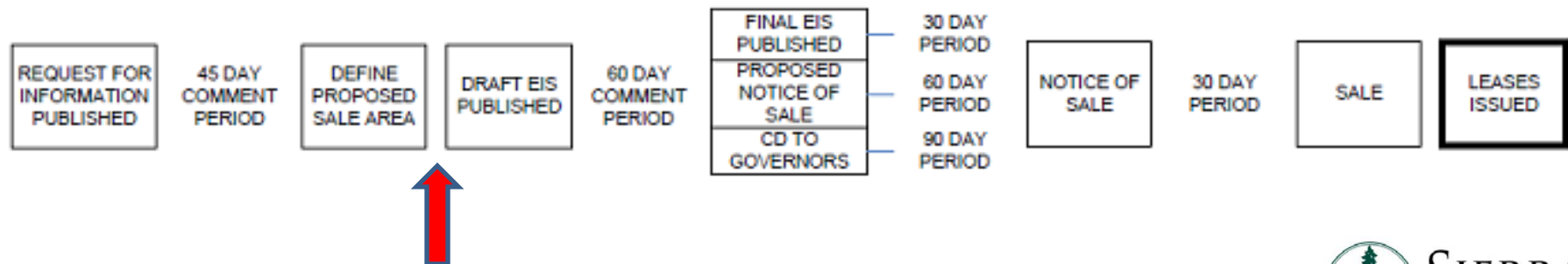
## This is Offshore Drilling

# The OCS Leasing Process

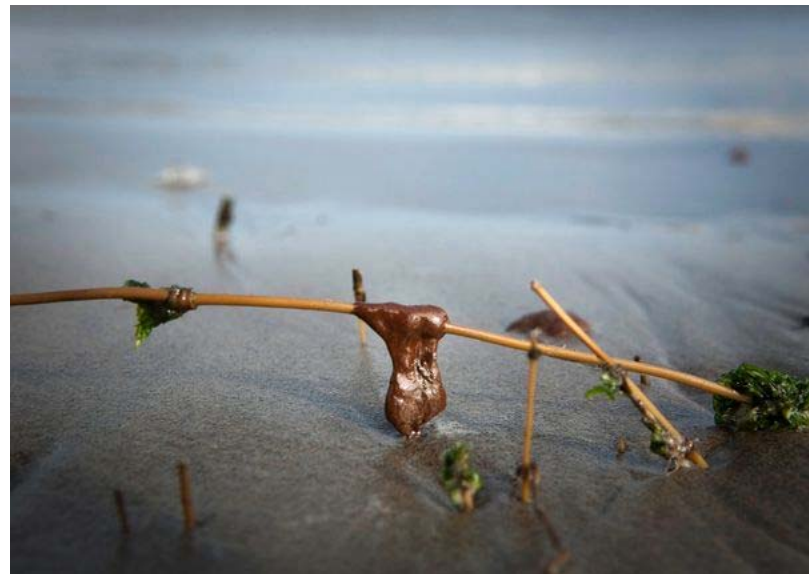
## DEVELOP 5-YEAR PROGRAM



## PLANNING FOR SPECIFIC SALE



## This is Offshore Drilling





## This is Offshore Drilling



In July 2008, human error caused a disastrous spill of 450,000 gallons of heavy fuel oil, which closed over 100 miles of the Mississippi River, caused billions in economic activity to be lost, stranding over 200 vessels.



In June 2008, a rupture in an underwater Shell Oil pipeline caused a 58,800-gallon spill in the Gulf of Mexico off the shores of South Padre Island, Texas. Crude oil washed ashore and affected about one mile of beach near the mouth of the Rio Grande River, causing beach closings and expensive clean-up - all during the height of tourist season.





## This is Offshore Drilling



### **Ixtoc I Platform**

In June **1979** a blowout spills 30,000 barrels of oil into the Gulf of Mexico



### **Petrobras Enchova Central Platform**

On April 24, **1988** the well suffered a gas blowout causing a fire on the platform. The fire burned for 31 days, resulting in destruction of the platform. The platform was later declared a total loss.



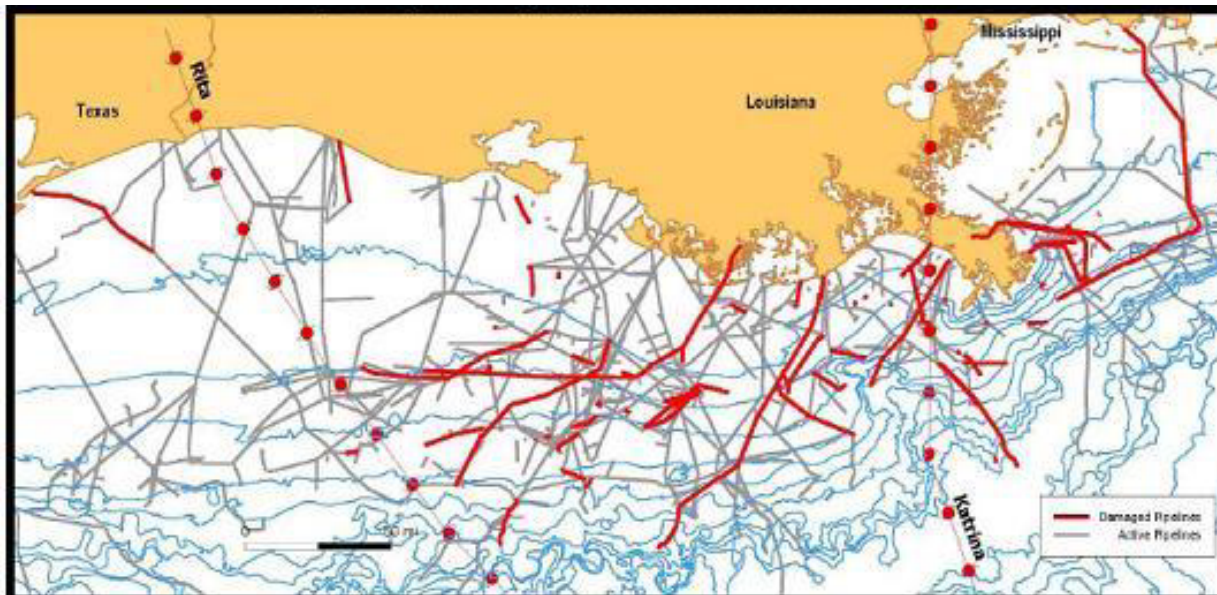
### **Piper Alpha Platform**

Destroyed with 167 killed, North Sea, **1988**

## This is Offshore Drilling



The U.S. Coast Guard reported that during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita roughly 9 million gallons of oil were spilled from 6 major spills and 5 medium spills, and not counting the oil released from over 5,000 minor spills.



MMS reported that as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, 113 platforms were destroyed and 457 pipelines were damaged.



## This is Offshore Drilling

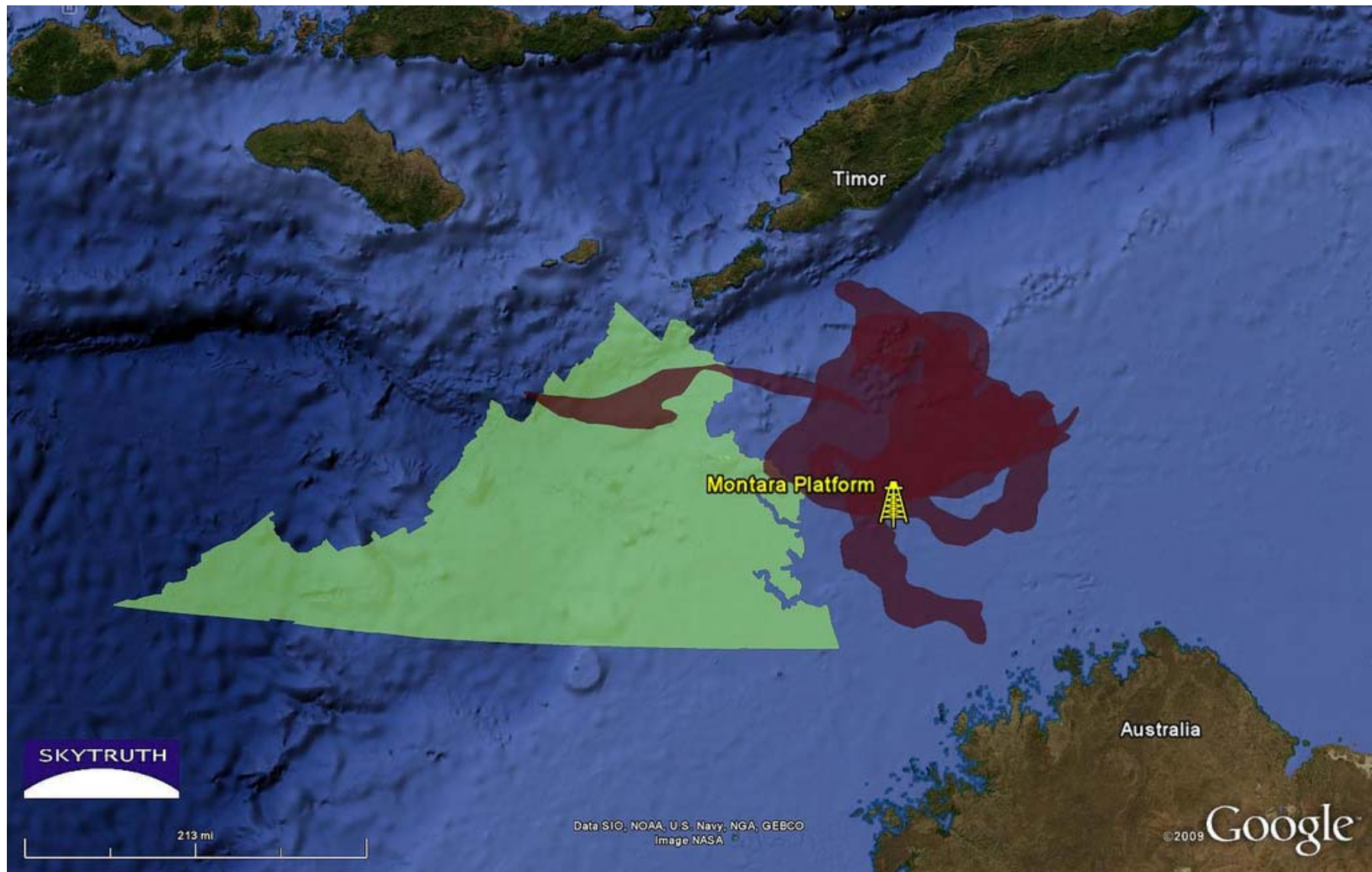


The Montara was built in 2007 and utilized every state-of-the-art new technology allowing the oil industry to sell drilling as “environmentally safe.”





## This is Offshore Drilling



## This is Offshore Drilling



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