

Community Engagement Guidelines

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Introduction

The Community Engagement Guidelines are recommendations designed to promote the safe and responsible development of the nation's oil and natural gas resources by engaging and respecting the communities where these operations occur. The oil and gas industry can bring prosperity, economic development and enhancements to an area and assist in securing our national energy interests. In order to promote oil and gas development that results in a positive experience for communities, recommended development activities should be aligned with community concerns and priorities grounded in responsible practices and lessons learned from former experiences.

The industry's commitment to being a good neighbor throughout the full project life cycle requires ongoing dialogue with local communities and other key stakeholders. Stakeholders, for use of the Community Engagement Guidelines, are defined as:

*Any person, group or entity that has interest or concern in an organization and its activities is considered a stakeholder. Stakeholders can affect or be affected by the organization's actions, objectives and policies*¹.

NOTE A more comprehensive definition of stakeholders can be found in A.2.

From entry through exploration and operation to eventual exiting, fostering broad stakeholder involvement through every phase of project development has become good industry practice. Operators should explain their activities, in a reasonable timeframe, to community stakeholders and then identify, understand, listen and respond to legitimate issues and concerns. Identifying and engaging the right stakeholders at the right time in an appropriate way allows for two-way communication to occur. Involving stakeholders in managing the potential impact on their community helps establish trust and build mutually beneficial relationships. While a balanced resolution between industry and stakeholders is ideal, some issues can present unique challenges.

¹ Adapted from International Finance Corporation, World Bank Group, *Stakeholder Engagement: A Good Practice Handbook for Companies Doing Business in Emerging Markets*, first printing 2007.

Community Engagement Guidelines

1 Scope

1.1 General

These guidelines outline what local communities and other key stakeholders can expect from operators. Oil and gas operators acknowledge the challenges associated with industry activities, which can include challenges important to a community. Principles of integrity, transparency and consideration for community concerns underpin responsible operations. Conscientious operators are committed to helping communities achieve positive and long-lasting benefits.

Both local stakeholders and operators can use this guidance. It is designed to acknowledge challenges and impacts that occur during the industry's presence in a given region. It provides flexible and adaptable strategies, recognizing that application will vary from operator to operator and community to community. Many operators already apply similar guidelines or processes within their operations. These suggested guidelines are typical and reasonable and generally apply under normal operating circumstances. The use of these guidelines is at each individual operator's discretion.

Operators recognize that stakeholders within the community can have different interests, issues and levels of concern. Some of these interests can be in direct conflict with one another. Working together with stakeholders to seek mutually agreeable solutions is an important aspect of community engagement. Operators can have different approaches to addressing the concerns and issues.

These guidelines are intended primarily to support onshore oil and gas projects in the United States for shale developments; however, they can be adapted to any oil and gas projects in the United States.

1.2 Conditions of Applicability

This document provides non-technical guidance only, and practices included herein cannot be applicable in all regions and/or circumstances. This document does not constitute legal advice regarding compliance with legal or contractual requirements or risk mitigation. It is not intended to be all-inclusive. The operator is responsible for determining compliance with applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

2 Considerations for Community Engagement Activities

2.1 General

Communities expect oil and gas companies to be aware and appropriately responsible for the potential direct impacts of their operations. Likewise, companies recognize that it is mutually beneficial to build good relations with local communities. The Community Engagement Guidelines provide oil and gas companies and community members with a set of recommended principles and considerations as a baseline to direct their engagement through each phase of a project.

While drafting these guidelines, oil and gas companies structured their conversations around the behaviors, principles and values expected of industry leaders. During the process, questions were posed and answered and considerations developed and agreed upon regarding the five phases of oil and gas project's, or its life cycle. The five phases are defined in Section 3 and include the following:

- entry;
- exploration;
- development;