

Finally, some news about offshore oil drilling that contains no nasty surprises. The Obama administration [has announced](#) that it will delay public meetings on the plan for expanded offshore drilling it unveiled shortly before the Deepwater Horizon disaster. The planned “scoping” meetings, which had originally been announced for June or July in Alaska, the south Atlantic, and the Gulf Coast, were supposed to start the environmental review process for the 2012-2017 offshore leasing program. In the wake of the ongoing gusher in the Gulf and in the early stages of review of and legislative response to that disaster, it is surely too soon to project an outline of the 2012 program. It would have been astonishing if scoping had proceeded on schedule.

Interior Department officials [told the New York Times](#) that the offshore drilling plan announced this spring is still the administration’s policy, “though it is likely to be significantly changed in the aftermath of the gulf spill.” Today’s decision to delay scoping indefinitely suggests that there may be more change than continuity in the next version of the plan.