

# United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Texas Chenier Plain Refuge Complex  
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December 14, 2005

Mr. Donald Silawsky Office of  
Petroleum Reserves (FE-47) 1000  
Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20585-0301

Dear Mr. Silawsky:

Thank you for your letter of November 21, 2005 announcing the reopening of the Scoping Comment Period and New Site Proposal for the Proposed Expansion of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, and requesting comments and identification of issues to be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement for this project.

The brine line associated with the Big Hill SPR site in Jefferson County, Texas crosses the McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge, a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). Potential environmental issues with work in this pipeline corridor include impacts to jurisdictional wetlands and other refuge habitats, and to certain Service trust resources including several migratory bird species. If the project requires any work not covered by the existing legal Right-of-Way for the brine line, additional R-O-W permitting by the Service may be required. Finally, all new uses on NWRS lands and waters must be reviewed for compatibility with refuge establishment purposes and the NWRS mission prior to being permitted.

Thank you again or this opportunity to comment. Please contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Andy Loranger  
Project Leader

cc: Aaron Archibeque, USFWS, Albuquerque, NM  
Carlos Mendoza, USFWS, Clear Lake Ecological Services FO, Houston, TX