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HISTORICAL  
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*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*

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October 18, 2005

Donald Silawsky  
Department of Energy  
Office of Petroleum Reserves  
1000 Independence Avenue S.W.  
Washington, DC 20585-0301

Re: Project review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966  
Expansion of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (Big Hill and Stratton Ridge, Texas)  
(DOE)

Dear Mr. Silawsky:

Thank you for contacting us about the proposed expansion of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. This letter serves as comment on the proposed undertaking from the State Historic Preservation Officer, the Executive Director of the Texas Historical Commission.

The Big Hill facility has never been surveyed for cultural resources. Since the facility was not constructed until 1987, none of the buildings associated with its operation would be old enough to be considered historic properties. Although no archeological sites are recorded in the surrounding vicinity, the unique nature of the Big Hill landform may have attracted prehistoric populations. We believe that any previously undisturbed areas should be surveyed for archeological sites.

The Stratton Ridge location has not been surveyed for cultural resources, aside from a pipeline right-of-way that parallels the road about 100 m north of Oyster Creek. One prehistoric shell midden site is recorded on the south side of Oyster Creek immediately across from the project area. It is possible that additional sites are present along the northern bank of Oyster Creek within the proposed project area. This entire area should be surveyed.

We would be happy to work with the Department of Energy to develop a Programmatic Agreement that will satisfy your Section 106 responsibilities if either of these proposed expansion areas are selected for expansion. Thank you for your cooperation in this federal review process, and for your efforts to preserve the irreplaceable heritage of Texas. If we may be of further assistance, please call Bill Martin of our staff at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

for  
F. Lawrence Oaks, State Historic Preservation Officer

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