

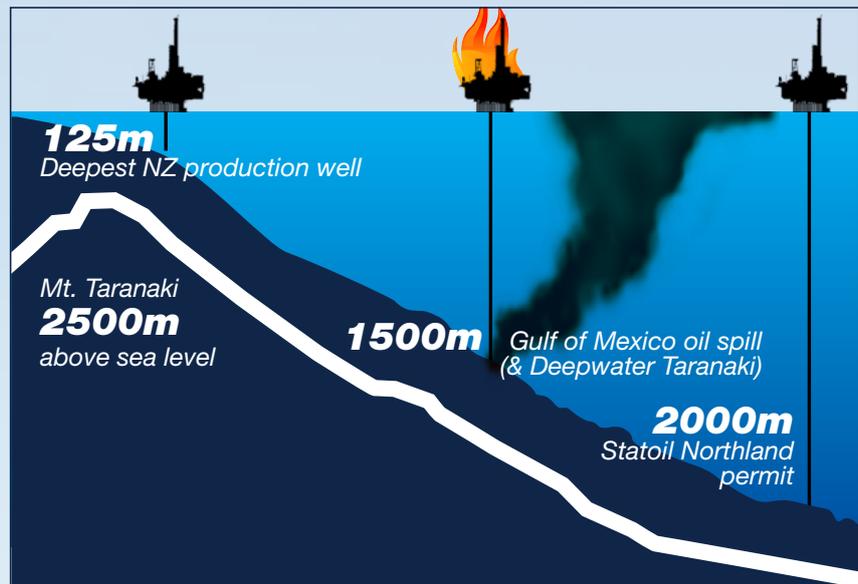
E nga Iwi o Te Taitokerau maranga mai!

The crude truth about deep-sea oil drilling in Aotearoa

In December 2013, Statoil, an oil giant from Norway, was given a 15-year exploration permit to search and drill for oil off the west coast of Northland, between Maunganui Bluff near Dargaville and Te Rere i nga Wairua/Cape Reinga in the north. This permit covers just under 10,000 square kilometres of seabed.

The first stage of the operation will begin this summer. Statoil intends using sonar explosions to penetrate the seabed and bounce back to see what is below. These seismic surveys have been strongly tied to fatal whale, dolphin and giant squid strandings and deaths at sea.

Then they'll analyse the information and apply to drill for oil in the most promising places. The drilling phase would target the seabed between 1,000 and 2,000 metres below the waves. The Gulf of Mexico spill happened by drilling in 1,500 metres of water.



“ When a failure happens at such depths, regaining control is a formidable engineering challenge - and the costs of failure, we now know, can be catastrophically high.”

Final Report to the President of the USA on Deepwater Horizon disaster.



What's the problem?

Global warming is the most catastrophic threat facing our communities and the root of the problem is burning fossil fuels. And it's going to get worse, much worse.

Invisible gases like carbon dioxide are released when oil and petrol are burnt. These gases build up in the atmosphere and create global warming. Global warming changes the climate and makes the weather more extreme – that means nastier flooding, cyclones, droughts, melting polar ice and sea level rise. It's the biggest threat that humanity has ever faced.



The last severe drought of 2010 brought Kaitiāia within two weeks of running out of water and last summer's drought had areas of Pouto Peninsula looking like a desert (above).



Recent floods and gale force winds across the North dumped over 500mm of rain fall on Puhupuhi in four days alone. They were the biggest floods in many decades. Flood waters damaged Tumatauenga Marae, Otiria and homes across the region. © Peter de Graaf/Northern Advocate

Global warming is going to continue to hit farming, fishing (via ocean acidification) and communities. We've got to take this seriously and take action.

Since cars were invented 128 years ago, most of the easily removed oil has already been used. Now companies like Statoil are going to the most extreme and dangerous places on Earth like the Arctic and the very deep sea off Northland to find more oil.

We have also seen the impacts of oil spills after the Gulf of Mexico disaster and the Rena hit a reef. This country is woefully under-prepared for a major oil spill.

For generations people have lived off the abundance of the sea. From whales and hapuka to toheroa and oi, these resources are taonga that must be protected.

Government regulations over deep sea oil drilling are completely inadequate and if things go wrong, the Government requires these companies only to pay a small amount towards cleaning up an oil spill. The cost to our livelihoods, economy and international reputation would be devastating and would amount to billions of dollars - not that money itself could fix the damage.

Meanwhile, politicians have been claiming that there will be thousands of jobs for the north in deep sea oil drilling. But we met with Dr Pal Haremo from Statoil who confirmed there will be no jobs for the north and any servicing would happen out of Taranaki.

There would also be no cheap petrol. The oil is not for our use but will be shipped overseas.



As kaitiaki we have the responsibility to protect our oceans, our kaimoana, our northern way of life. © Photo New Zealand

What's the Government up to?

Big changes have been made to laws recently to make oil exploration and drilling as easy as possible for multinational oil companies.

Simon Bridges, the Minister for Energy and Resources, has been going around the world (1) telling corporations that we have low royalties and taxes, free seabed information to give them and that the Government will actively support these companies.

The past few years has seen the Government offer the seabed off the west coast of Northland to international companies to come and look for oil. Every year more seabed around country is being opened for oil exploration.

1: <http://www.simonbridges.co.nz/index.php?archives/490-Energy-Minister-to-visit-Norway,-US-and-Canada.html>



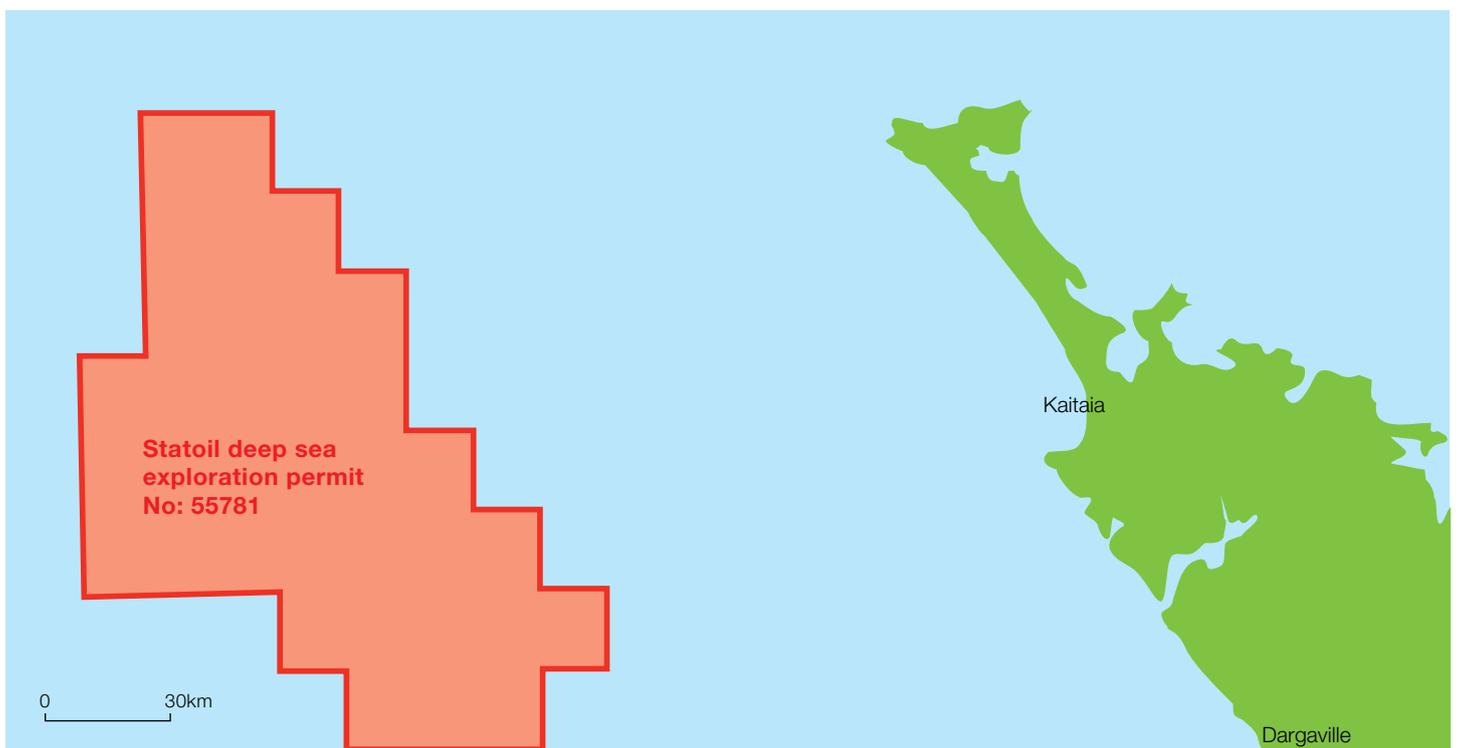
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Who is Statoil?

The Norwegian Government set up an oil company in the 1970s to find oil beneath the seas around Norway. The money it made was put in a pension fund for the Norwegian people. The company became Statoil and now the pension fund is now worth around a trillion dollars.

Statoil began drilling for oil close to shore and moved into deeper and deeper waters as oil ran out. Now Statoil operates in 35 countries. If the corporation found oil here, Statoil would take 95% of profits and we are expected to live with 100% of the risk.

Statoil likes to think of itself as 'responsible' and 'clean' but the company is involved in the controversial mining of tar sands of Alberta, Canada and is moving to drill for oil in the Arctic.



There is always the risk of an oil spill with deep sea oil drilling but the certainty of fuelling global warming when the oil is burnt.

So this summer we are stepping up the opposition to deep sea oil drilling in the North and a number of regional community mobilisation groups are forming on the western coastline of Taitokerau. You can make contact with them by going to the Protect Te Reinga group on facebook or emailing: protect.te.reinga@gmail.com

The objective of these groups is to:

- 1) raise awareness about the issues
- 2) develop a network of community mobilisation groups across the region
- 3) bring pressure to bear on the government and Statoil by direct action
- 4) establish this region's profile as being hostile to deep sea oil drilling

What you can do immediately is:

- make contact with the regional network
- organise a public meeting in your area and invite us to present the case against deep sea oil drilling
- adopt a formal position against the drilling in regard to any organisation you belong to and communicate this to the government
- produce signs and nail them to your fence, house, Marae, letterbox, gate, trees etc
- declare your area "Deep sea oil drilling free"
- tune into the morning show on Radio Te Hiku o Te Ika for regular updates on the issue
- participate in the programme of events that will be coming this summer
- check out the Greenpeace website for other information and events

2014 Timeline of events

November

Non-Violent Direct Action training

August - Sept- Oct

Statoil's 'community consultation'.
We will be community mobilising.

December

Statoil starts seismic surveying

© Greenpeace / Daniel Beltrá

We begin taking action

For more information email: protect.te.reinga@gmail.com

Keep the seas of Aotearoa oil free!