

Australia, East Timor pledge to end maritime dispute

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Offshore staff

SYDNEY, Australia – A joint statement released by the governments of **Australia**, Timor-Leste, and the Permanent Court of Arbitration’s Conciliation Commission indicated that the end to a longtime border dispute could be in sight. Australia and Timor-Leste have said they want to reach an agreement on their maritime border by September.

“The [Conciliation] Commission intends to do its utmost to help the parties reach an agreement that is both equitable and achievable,” the trilateral joint statement said.

Officials from the countries have been confidentially meeting in Singapore.

“Both Timor-Leste and Australia agreed that the meetings were productive, and reaffirmed their commitment to work in good faith towards an agreement on maritime boundaries by the end of the conciliation process in September 2017,” the statement said.

The sparring has shelved progress on the **Greater Sunrise gas and condensate fields**, located in the Timor Sea in both countries’ waters.

A Reuters report on the joint statement said that the current boundary “is aligned with Australia’s continental shelf, but East Timor has long argued the border should lie half way between it and Australia - placing much of the Greater Sunrise fields under its control.”

As the countries try to reach an agreement, the statement said that East Timor has dropped its claims – widely reported by the Sydney Morning Herald and many other outlets to be a spying case against Australia – for the greater good of reaching an agreement.

Operator **Woodside** says the fields hold gross contingent resources (2C) of 5.13 tcf of gas and 225.9 MMbbl of condensate. Discovered in 1975, the Sunrise and Troubadour fields are located 150 km (93.2 mi) southeast of Timor-Leste and 450 km (280 mi) northwest of Darwin.

Operator Woodside holds 33.44% working interest of the Greater Sunrise fields. Its partners are Conoco Phillips (30%), Shell (26.56%), and Osaka Gas (10%).

In its report, Reuters said that analysts had placed the value of the complex at \$40 billion.