



FOR RELEASE: April 1999

**Minerals Management Service
Has Prepared an Environmental Assessment for Proposed Federal Oil and Gas Lease
Sale 174 in the Western Gulf of Mexico**

Background

A single Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared for all four Western Gulf of Mexico Planning Area (WPA) sales scheduled in the current 5-Year Program (MMS 98-0008). Although the EIS addressed four proposed sale actions, only one sale decision would be made each year. The EIS served as a decision document for Sale 171, which was held on August 26, 1998. One Call for Information and Interest and Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS (NOI) was issued at the beginning of the multisale prelease process to explain the multisale approach. Additionally, only one Area Identification (Area ID) was prepared to cover the 4-year period. The Area ID described the sales' geographical area, the proposed actions, and alternatives for the four scheduled WPA sales.

Action

The Minerals Management Service (MMS) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for proposed WPA oil and gas Lease Sale 174. The sale included in this action is tentatively scheduled for August 1999. The EA Notice of Availability was published in the April 29, 1999, issue of the *Federal Register*.

In this EA, MMS has reexamined the potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives based on any new information regarding potential impacts and issues that was not available at the time the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Lease Sales 171, 174, 177, and 180 was prepared.

In summary, no new significant impacts were identified for proposed Lease Sale 174 that were not already assessed in the FEIS for Lease Sales 171, 174, 177, and 180. As a result, MMS determined that a supplemental EIS is not required and prepared a Finding of No New Significant Impact.

You may obtain single copies of the EA from the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, Attention: Public Information Office (MS 5034), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, Room 114, New Orleans, LA 70123-2394 or by calling 1-800-200-GULF.

Specific information on the EA may be obtained from Mr. George Hampton at (504) 736-2465. Specific information on the proposed lease sale may be obtained from Mr. Charles Hill at (504) 736-2795.

The MMS is the Federal Agency that manages the Nation's oil and gas and other mineral resources on the OCS and collects, accounts for, and last year disbursed about \$6 billion in revenues from Federal offshore mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on Federal and Indian lands.

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MMS's Website Address: www.mms.gov
24 Hour Fax-on-Demand Service: 202-219-1703