



U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region



FOR RELEASE:

June 10, 1999

Barney Congdon
(504) 736-2595

Debra Winbush
(504) 736-2597

Caryl Fagot
(504) 736-2590

MMS Holds EIS Scoping Meetings to Receive Input on FPSO Issues

In April 1999, the Minerals Management Service (MMS) awarded a contract to Ecology and Environment, Inc., with offices in Tallahassee and Pensacola, Florida, to prepare the environmental impact statement (EIS) to examine the use of floating production, storage, and offloading (FPSO) systems in the deepwater areas in the Central and Western Planning Areas of the Gulf of Mexico (GOM) Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).

To provide an early and open process for determining the scope of the EIS and for identifying the significant issues, alternatives, and potential mitigating measures to be addressed in the EIS, the MMS will hold formal scoping meetings in the affected States. The meetings will be held from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. at the following locations:

June 21, 1999

Natural Resources Ctr. - Room 1003
Texas A&M - Corpus Christi
6300 Ocean Drive
Corpus Christi, TX

June 22, 1999 Radisson Hotel and Conference Center

Hobby Airport Houston
9100 Gulf Freeway
Houston, TX

June 23, 1999

The Beaumont Hilton
2355 I-10 South
Beaumont, TX

June 24, 1999

Players Island Hotel
507 North Lake Shore Drive
Lake Charles, LA

June 28, 1999

Radisson Inn New Orleans Airport
2150 Veterans Boulevard
Kenner, LA

FPSO's may be used to develop marginally economic or remote fields in deepwater. Produced oil would be stored in the hull of the FPSO (a large tanker vessel) and periodically offloaded to shuttle tankers for transport to ports in Texas and Louisiana. On the basis of the EIS, the MMS will decide whether FPSO systems will be acceptable for use on the Gulf Of Mexico OCS, but the decision will not constitute approval for the use of any particular FPSO at any specific site. Individual plans proposing use of an FPSO will be subject to MMS's established project-specific and site-specific evaluation and decision process. It is anticipated that completion of the EIS will take 18 months. A Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS was published in the *Federal Register* June 10, 1999.

In addition to distributing this special information packet to an extensive list of interested parties, the MMS will also advertise the upcoming scoping meetings in local newspapers. The MMS looks forward to meeting with the public to receive their valuable input to the EIS process. Any questions regarding the upcoming scoping meetings should be directed to Ms. Deborah Cranswick at (504) 736-2744.

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.