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NATIONAL OIL SPILL RESPONSE TEST FACILITY
COMPLETES TESTING ON REMOTE SENSOR (#40081)

The National Oil Spill Response Test Facility in New Jersey has completed testing on a promising new remote sensor, developed to estimate the thickness and condition of an oil slick, the U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) announced today.

"The MMS facility features an open-air tank where environmentally safe testing of oil spill response equipment and procedures can be conducted in the presence of oil," said MMS Acting Director Cynthia Quarterman. "The facility was recently used to evaluate a Frequency-Scanning Microwave Radiometer (FSR). Installed in an aircraft, it estimates oil slick thickness and state of weathering.

"Determining the thickest area of an oil slick is important for emergency response teams to better position equipment and recover more oil," Quarterman said. "Testing at the MMS facility involved controlled spills with five different types of oils -- including a Canadian crude oil that clumps in cold water. The FSR sensor was attached to the tank bridge and performed extremely well."

The FSR sensor is designed to be mounted on an aircraft, from which a laser scans the radiometric temperature of an oil slick over a wide frequency band. This unique approach to oil thickness sensing was developed and patented, under Coast Guard sponsorship, by Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Lincoln Laboratory. Final results from MMS' test facility are essential in determining feasibility and probable effectiveness.

The facility is managed by MMS, and operated and maintained by MAR Inc. under contract to MMS. For more information, call Joe Attard or Joe Mullin at (703) 787-1580. For more information about the FSR sensor, call Gary Hover, Coast Guard Research and Development Center, at (203) 441-2818.

MMS is the federal agency that manages and regulates the nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf, and collects and disburses revenues from offshore federal mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on

federal and Indian lands.

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