



Minerals Management Service

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News Release

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MMS invites public to comment on scope of Atlantic Geological & Geophysical Environmental Study

Public meetings are scheduled in Jacksonville, Fla. to solicit comments.

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Interior Department's Minerals Management Service (MMS), the agency charged with managing energy and minerals resources on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), is hosting two public scoping meetings in Jacksonville, Fla. to solicit comments on the scope of a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for Future Geological and Geophysical Exploration (G&G) on the Mid and South Atlantic OCS.

Both meetings will take place Wednesday, April 21, 2010, the first beginning at 1 p.m. and the second beginning at 7 p.m. The meetings will be held at the Jacksonville Marriott Hotel, 4760 Salisbury Road, Jacksonville, Fla. 32256.

The public meetings are part of a scoping process through which other Federal, State, and local governments as well as any interested parties have the opportunity to assist MMS in determining the significant issues and alternatives for analysis in the PEIS. Other meeting locations include Newark, NJ, Norfolk, Va., Wilmington, NC, Charleston, SC, Savannah, Ga., and Houston, Tex.

In January 2009, MMS issued a Notice of Intent to Prepare the PEIS. It included a 60 day comment period which closed on March 23, 2009. However, because the scoping meeting could not take place within those 60 days, the comment period has been reopened to allow the scoping meetings to take place.

The PEIS will evaluate environmental impacts of multiple G&G activities on the Atlantic OCS. These activities include, but are not limited to, seismic surveys, sidescan-sonar surveys, electromagnetic surveys, geological and geochemical sampling, and remote sensing. This PEIS will also review advances in G&G technology and improved knowledge of acoustic impacts on marine life. Findings from this PEIS will assist in determining whether significant impacts to Atlantic resources could occur as a result of G&G activities, and where needed, will aid in outlining mitigation and monitoring measures that will reduce or eliminate the potential for impacts to the environment.

MMS has the authority under the OCS Lands Act to issue prelease permits for the collection of G&G data. The PEIS is proposed for the Atlantic in light of multiple applications for permits received by MMS and the inclusion of the area in the scoping for the 2012-2017 Five-Year Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

—MMS—

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