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BOEMRE to Provide Sand Resources for Shoreline Restoration at the NASA Wallops Flight Facility

WASHINGTON – The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) announced today that it has authorized the use of Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) sand resources for the Shoreline Restoration and Infrastructure Protection Program project at the NASA Wallops Flight Facility on Wallops Island off the mid-Atlantic coast.

BOEMRE signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with NASA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to dredge nearly 3.2 million cubic yards of OCS sand for construction of the project. The sand will replenish the entire 3.7 miles of the Wallops Flight Facility shoreline. The launch facility is owned by NASA and is also used by the U.S. Navy and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport. The facility includes launch pads for NASA and Department of Defense rockets, along with Spaceport pads for commercial satellite launches. For safety reasons, launch pads need to be located as close to the coast as possible, and the coastline must be maintained to prevent storm damage to the facilities.

“The bureau’s Marine Minerals Program provides OCS sand resources that help reduce the effects of erosion and enhance the integrity of our nation’s shoreline,” said BOEMRE Director Michael R. Bromwich. “This MOA is an example of the ways in which federal agencies are cooperating to restore and protect the infrastructure of critical U.S. government facilities.”

Through the MOA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Norfolk District) will dredge the sand from an area in federal waters approximately 12 miles from the project site. The project also includes extending an existing seawall by an additional 4,600 feet southward.

Planning for this project began in 2006, and BOEMRE (then the Minerals Management Service) cooperated with NASA in the *National Environmental Policy Act* review process. A draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) was completed in February 2010 and a final PEIS was completed in November 2010. NASA prepared a Record of Decision (ROD) in December 2010 and requested use of OCS sand resources. BOEMRE reviewed these documents and prepared its own ROD in support of the use of OCS sand in February 2011. The project is expected to begin in early September 2011.

For more information, go to: <http://www.boemre.gov/sandandgravel>.

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