



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Office of Public Affairs**

NEWS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE:

March 5, 2003

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ROYALTY POLICY COMMITTEE TO MEET IN MARCH

The Minerals Management Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, has scheduled the next Royalty Policy Committee meeting of the Minerals Management Advisory Board for March 19 and 20, in New Orleans,

During the two-day meeting, MMS Director Johnnie Burton will lead a discussion on streamlining the appeals process. The Coal Subcommittee will update the RPC on its activities. MMS will present reports on financial management and compliance and asset management issues, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and Royalty in Kind issues. The RPC will also discuss valuing and reporting sodium and potassium production for royalty purposes and the effects of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission decisions that impact the calculation of transportation allowances.

The Secretary of the Interior established the RPC to provide advice on the Interior Department's management of federal and Indian minerals leases, revenues and other minerals-related policies. Committee membership includes representatives from states, Indian tribes and Indian allottee organizations, minerals industry associations, the public and other federal agencies.

The meeting will be held from 1-5 p.m. on March 19 and from 8:30 a.m. – noon on March 20 at the New Orleans Hyatt Regency, 500 Poydras Plaza.

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MMS is the federal agency in the U.S. Department of the Interior that manages the nation's oil, natural gas and other mineral resources on the outer continental shelf in federal offshore waters. The agency also collects, accounts for and disburses mineral revenues from federal and Indian leases. These revenues totaled more than \$6 billion in 2002 and more than \$127 billion since the agency was created in 1982.

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MMS Internet website address: <http://www.boem.gov>