DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands OCS Mineral Lease Sale

AGENCY: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Interior.

ACTION: Proposed Leasing Notice

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) proposes to publicly announce bids received for blocks offered in the proposed Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Pacific Mineral Lease Sale (Lease Sale PACM-2), in accordance with the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA), as amended, and its implementing regulations. The Proposed Leasing Notice (PLN) package for this proposed lease sale contains information essential to potential bidders, including Information to Lessees and Lease Stipulations.

DATES: BOEM proposes to hold Lease Sale PACM-2 on December 16, 2026, at a time to be specified in the Final Leasing Notice (FLN). All times referred to in this document and the FLN will be Pacific time, unless otherwise specified. Lease areas will be awarded through an ascending oral auction. For more information on bid submission and auction rules, see Section VII of this document, "Bidding Instructions."

ADDRESSES: Interested parties may download the PLN package, and associated maps, from BOEM's website at https://www.boem.gov/marine-minerals/commonwealth-northern-mariana-islands-cnmi-activities. Copies of the PLN and sale maps can also be obtained by contacting the BOEM Pacific Regional Office at this address:

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
760 Paseo Camarillo (CM 102)
Camarillo, CA 93010
(805) 384-6305

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Joshua Gange, Acting Supervisor for Leasing and Technical Review, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Pacific Region, 760 Paseo Camarillo, CA 93010, at Pacific.Region@boem.gov or (703) 787-1121.

AUTHORITY: This proposed sale would be held pursuant to the requirements of and is published pursuant to 43 U.S.C. §§ 1331 *et seq.* (Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, as amended) and 30 CFR part 581, subpart B–Leasing Procedures.

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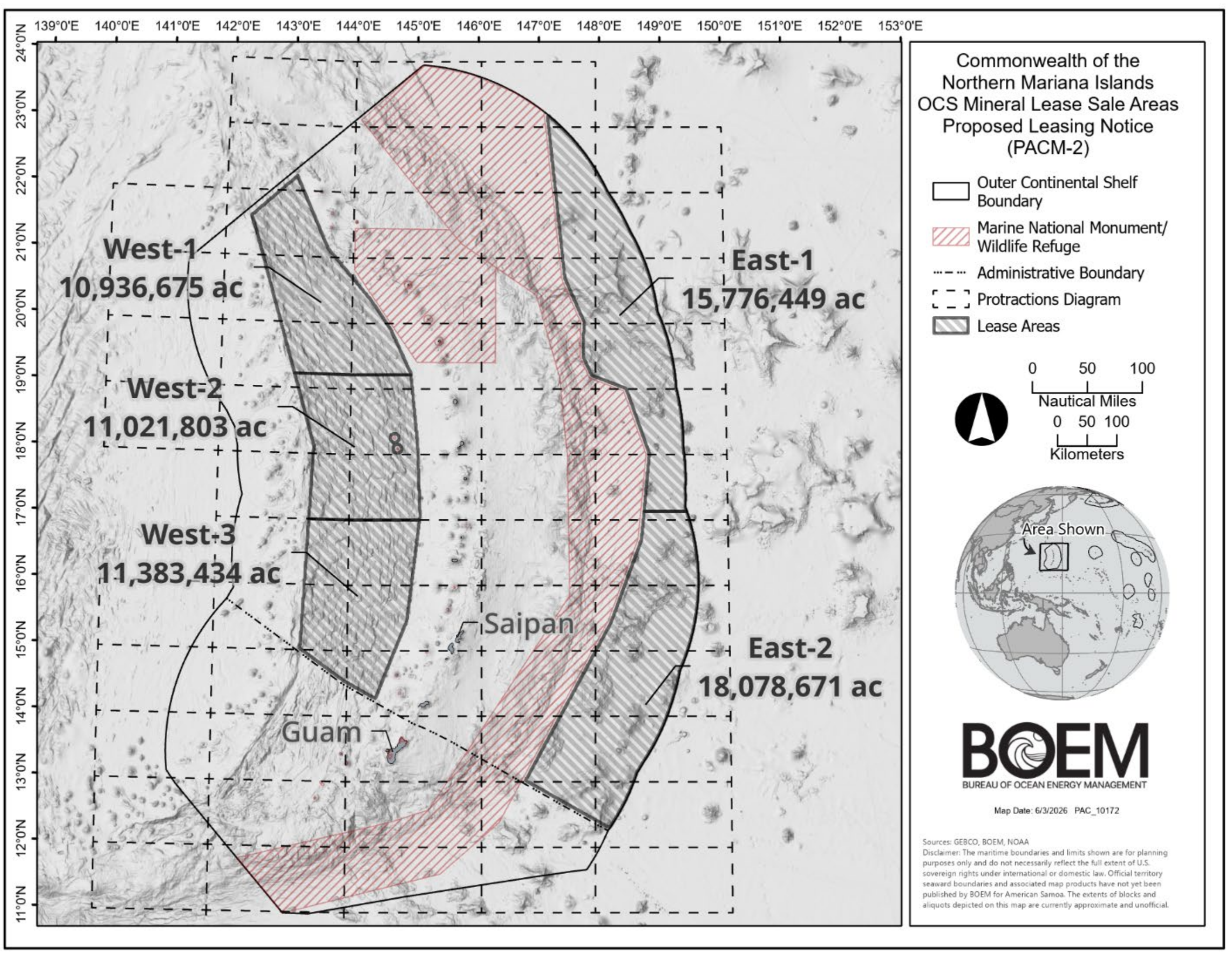
I. Lease Sale Area

BOEM proposes to offer for bid in Lease Sale PACM-2 all available unleased acreage, as identified on the map entitled, "Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands OCS Mineral Lease Sale Areas, Proposed Leasing Notice (PACM-2)." Five individual lease areas have been identified:

Lease Area	Acres
CNMI East-1	15,776,449
CNMI East-2	18,078,671
CNMI West-1	10,936,675
CNMI West-2	11,021,803
CNMI West-3	11,383,434

The final list of lease areas for bid will be posted on BOEM's website at https://www.boem.gov/marine-minerals/commonwealth-northern-mariana-islands-cnmi-activities when BOEM publishes the FLN, if the final decision is to move forward with the sale.



BOEM's Official Protraction Diagrams (OPDs) and Supplemental Official OCS Block Diagrams for the proposed lease areas are available online at https://www.boem.gov/pacific-cadastral-data. All blocks are shown on the following OPDs:

Protraction Name	Protraction Number
Suruga Bank	ND54-06
Pathfinder Reef	NE54-12
Shōyō Seamount	NF54-06
Minami-kasuga Seamount	NF54-09
Stingray Shoal	NF54-12
Arakane Reef	ND54-03
Subetbia Seamount	NE54-03
Threadfin Butterflyfish	NE54-06
Singlebar Devil	NE54-09
Pigafetta Guyot	ND55-03
Victoria Guyot	ND55-05
KIOST Seamount	ND55-09
Asuncion Island	NE55-01
Vogt Guyot	NE55-03
Pagan Island	NE55-04
Alamagan Island	NE55-07
Anatahan Island	NE55-10
Del Cano Guyot	NE55-12
Magan Seamount	NF55-06
Hakugan Seamounts	NF55-09
Farallon de Pajaros	NF55-10
Fryer Guyot	NF55-12
Island of Saipan	ND55-01
Island of Rota	ND55-04
Layuliyar Araw Hill	NE55-02
Guam Scorpionfish	NF55-02
Silver Pearlfish	NF55-05
Harlequin Filefish	NF55-08
Island Trevally	NF55-11
Graceful Lizardfish	NE55-06
Thorny Seahorse	NE55-09
Ornate Jobfish	ND55-06
Many-Eyed Snake-Eel	ND55-08
Imposter Trevally	ND55-11
Flag-Tailed Grouper	ND55-12

II. Statutes and Regulations

Each lease is issued pursuant to OCSLA, 43 U.S.C. §§ 1331 *et seq.*, as amended, and is subject to the OCSLA's implementing regulations in 30 CFR part 581, and other applicable statutes and regulations in existence upon the effective date of the lease, as well as those applicable statutes enacted and regulations promulgated thereafter, except to the extent that the after-enacted statutes and regulations conflict with an express provision of the lease. Each lease is subject to amendments to statutes and regulations, including but not limited to OCSLA, that do not explicitly conflict with an express provision of the lease. The Lessee expressly bears the risk that such new or amended statutes and regulations (i.e., those that do not conflict with an express provision of the lease) may increase or decrease the Lessee's obligations under the lease.

The proposed lease and fiscal terms, along with BOEM's ascending oral auction format, will assure that the United States receives fair market value (FMV) for each lease area offered. The auction winner will be provisionally awarded the lease (assuming the winner did not violate any rules), and final issuance of the executed lease will take place after the sale date as outlined in the section entitled, "Acceptance, Rejection, or Return of Bids."

III. Proposed Lease and Fiscal Terms

BOEM proposes to offer for lease two areas east of the CNMI and three areas west of the CNMI for development of all marine minerals or metals found in polymetallic nodules and ferromanganese crust deposits or marine sulfide deposits discovered within the leased area.

Any lease(s) that are issued will grant the Lessee(s) an opportunity to identify mineral deposits and seek approval to develop these deposit types and minerals, as well as any minerals produced incidental to and in direct association with production from these deposits. All other minerals will be reserved from the lease(s) to the Lessor, including but not limited to oil, gas, sulphur, and source materials for fissionable materials, as required by 30 CFR 581.8.

OCS Lease Form

BOEM will use Form BOEM-2004 (March 2026) to convey leases resulting from this sale. The lease form can be viewed on BOEM's website at https://www.boem.gov/about-boem/procurement-business-opportunities/boem-ocs-operation-forms. The lease form will be amended to include specific terms, conditions, and stipulations applicable to the individual lease. The proposed terms, conditions, and stipulations applicable to this sale are described below.

The following section outlines the lease and fiscal terms for the proposed Lease Sale PACM-2. BOEM will continue to evaluate these terms and may change them as necessary prior to issuance of the FLN.

Proposed Primary Term

The Primary Term will be 20 years.

Proposed Minimum Bonus Bid Amount

$3,000,000 for each lease area offered.

Proposed Rental Rates

Annual rental rates, per acre or fraction thereof, are set by lease area. The rental schedules differ because the expected development footprint differs between eastern areas and western areas.

The rental rates for the leases in the eastern areas are summarized in the following table:

Lease Year	Rent if 0 to <15 percent of Initial Lease Area is Retained	Rent if 15 to <50 percent of Initial Lease Area is Retained	Rent if 50+ Percent of Initial Lease Area is Retained
0-5 Years	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
6-10 Years	$0.30	$0.60	$1.20
11-15 Years	$1.25	$2.50	$5.00
16-20 Years	$2.50	$5.00	$10.00

The rental rates for the leases in the western areas are summarized in the following table:

Lease Year	Rent if 0 to <5 percent of Initial Lease Area is Retained	Rent if 5 to <25 percent of Initial Lease Area is Retained	Rent if 25+ Percent of Initial Lease Area is Retained
0-5 Years	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
6-10 Years	$0.30	$0.60	$1.20
11-15 Years	$1.25	$2.50	$5.00
16-20 Years	$2.50	$5.00	$10.00

Segregation does not change how much of the Initial Lease Area is considered retained. If a lease is subsequently segregated, acreage percentages of Initial Lease Area Retained will be recalculated based on the proportion of each new lease area to the initial lease area. For example, if a lease is segregated into two leases, one of which is 25% of the initial lease area and the other is 75% of the initial lease area, the 25% lease area would need to be relinquished down to <3.75% (15% * 25%) of the initial lease area in order to pay the rental rates in the first column. In order to pay the middle rates, that same 25% lease area would need to be relinquished down to 3.75 to < 12.5%. The 75% lease area would need to be relinquished to 11.25% (15% * 75%) of the initial lease area to pay the rates in the first column.

Proposed Minimum Royalty Rate

The minimum royalty rate is locked in based on the lease year in which leasehold production (meaning production that occurs under the first approved Mining Plan) begins, as well as the share of the Initial Lease Area held when production begins, according to the following schedule:

The minimum royalty rates for the leases in the eastern areas are summarized in the following table:

Mining Plan Production Start Year	Lease retained is less than 15% of Initial Lease Area?	Minimum Royalty (per acre)
0–15 Years	Yes	$1.25
0–15 Years	No	$2.50
16–20 Years	Yes	$2.50
16–20 Years	No	$5.00

The minimum royalty rates for the leases in the western areas are summarized in the following table:

Mining Plan Production Start Year	Lease retained is less than 5% of Initial Lease Area?	Minimum Royalty (per acre)
0–15 Years	Yes	$1.25
0–15 Years	No	$2.50
16–20 Years	Yes	$2.50
16–20 Years	No	$5.00

Proposed Royalty Rate

Royalty on Delineation and Testing:
The Lessee must pay to the Lessor a royalty of five percent on all mineral production under any Delineation or Testing Plan that is processed to a marketable condition or sold.

Royalty rates for leases in the eastern areas are summarized below:

Initial Production Royalty Rate:
The Lessee must pay to the Lessor a royalty of two percent on the value of the mineral production, as described below, from the lease during the first five years of production under any approved Mining Plan. The five-year period commences on the first of the month in which minerals are first produced on the lease under an approved Mining Plan.

Subsequent Production Royalty Rate:
Beginning on the first day of the sixth (6th) year of mineral production under an approved Mining Plan and continuing thereafter for the remainder of the lease, the Lessee must pay to the Lessor a royalty of five percent on the value of the mineral production, as described below, from the lease.

Mining Plan Production Year	Royalty Rate
1-5	2%
6+	5%

Royalty rates for leases in the western areas are summarized below:

Initial Production Royalty Rate:
The Lessee must pay to the Lessor a royalty of five percent on the value of the mineral production, as described below, from the lease during the first five years of production under any approved Mining Plan. The five-year period commences on the first of the month in which minerals are first produced on the lease under an approved Mining Plan.

Subsequent Production Royalty Rate:
Beginning on the first day of the sixth (6th) year of production under an approved Mining Plan and continuing thereafter for the remainder of the lease, the Lessee must pay to the Lessor a royalty of seven percent on the value of the mineral production, as described below, from the lease.

Mining Plan Production Year	Royalty Rate
1-5	5%
6+	7%

Valuation for Royalty Purposes

In accordance with regulations at 30 CFR Part 1206, Subpart G–Other Solid Minerals, the following terms, conditions, and stipulations apply for royalty payments on the value of the mineral production from a lease.

Marketable Condition: Marketable condition means mineral production from the lease that is processed in a manner consistent with prevailing practices in the industry, as determined by the Director of the Office of Natural Resources Revenue, and otherwise in a condition that will be accepted by an arm's length purchaser under a sales contract typical for the commodity. Mineral production from the lease must meet the marketable condition requirement prior to being sold to be considered a bona fide transaction under 30 CFR Part 1206, Subpart G.

Allowances: A Lessee may claim the specific costs enumerated below as allowable deductions. Except as described below, no other deductions are allowable. However, under no circumstances may the mineral production from the lease, minus allowances, be valued for royalty purposes less than the monthly average value of the free on board (f.o.b.) bulk sales price realized at the customary point of shipment to market.

Transportation: A deduction will be allowed for the Lessee's costs equal to the difference between the bona fide sale of lease production in bulk for that sales month at the customary point of shipment to market and the sale price realized at a remote sales point.

Beneficiation Beyond Marketable Condition: A deduction will be allowed for the Lessee's costs equal to the difference between the bona fide sale of lease production in bulk for that sales month at the customary point of shipment to market and the sale price realized for lease material processed to a condition considered beyond marketable condition.

Royalty Relief

No royalty relief will be offered in this sale.

IV. Lease Stipulations

Stipulations applied to leases issued in this sale are contained in the "Lease Stipulations" section of the PLN package and cover the topics enumerated below. BOEM will publish the FLN at least 30 days before the sale date and BOEM will post the final list of blocks available for bid and the applicable stipulations that apply to those blocks on its website at https://www.boem.gov/marine-minerals/commonwealth-northern-mariana-islands-cnmi-activities under the FLN tab.

1. Lease Preliminary Activities and Survey Notices
2. Endangered Species Act and Essential Fish Habitat Consultation Requirements
3. Fisheries Communication Plan
4. Protection of Birds
5. Marine Archaeology Requirements for Preliminary Activities
6. Unanticipated Discovery Requirements
7. Research Site Access
8. Preliminary Activities Reporting
9. Confidential Information
10. Community Investment and Economic Development
11. Local Content and Labor Utilization
12. Supply Chain Statement of Goals
13. Port Utilization and Infrastructure Investment
14. Coordination with the Department of War

V. Information to Lessees

The Information to Lessees (ITLs) provide detailed information on certain issues pertaining to this lease sale. The full text of the ITLs for this sale is contained in the "Information to Lessees" section of the PLN package and covers the topics enumerated below. A final list of applicable ITLs will be included in the FLN.

1. Navigation Safety
2. Geological and Geophysical Surveys
3. Marine Archaeological Survey Requirements for Delineation, Testing, and Mining Plans
4. Environmental Monitoring
5. Mining Discharge Analysis
6. Data and Metadata Standards
7. Low-Impact Collector Technology Rationale

8. Community Engagement Plan
9. Dock Space
10. Notice of Assignment to the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CIFUS)
11. Domestic Mineral Processing and Supply Chain
12. Engagement
13. Local Emergency Preparedness and Maritime Safety Support
14. Submarine Cable Protection

VI. Maps

The proposed Sale Area Map can be viewed on BOEM's website at https://www.boem.gov/marine-minerals/commonwealth-northern-mariana-islands-cnmi-activities, including a more detailed map of the lease blocks and aliquots. The sale area is shown on the map entitled, "Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Lease Areas, OCS Mineral Lease Sale, Proposed Leasing Notice."

VII. Bidding Instructions

The PLN package includes instructions and the required format for the items listed below. Bidders should refer to the subheading entitled, "Acceptance, Rejection, or Return of Bids" under Section IX below, regarding a bidder's failure to comply with the requirements of the FLN, including failure to follow the instructions and format and timely submit the information required in the FLN.

Authorized Individuals and Bidder Authentication

An entity that is eligible to participate in the auction may identify up to five (5) individuals who will be authorized to bid on behalf of the company, including their names, business telephone numbers, and email addresses. Bidders are advised that BOEM considers the Bidder's Financial Form (BFF) to be a legally binding obligation on the part of the bidder(s) to comply with all applicable regulations, including, but not limited to, the regulation requiring payment of bid deposit.

Affiliated Entities

On the BFF, eligible bidders must list any other entities with whom they are affiliated. For the purpose of identifying affiliated entities, a bidding entity is any individual, firm, corporation, association, partnership, consortium, or joint venture (when established as a separate entity) that is participating in the same auction. Affiliated entities are not permitted to compete against each other in the auction. Where two or more affiliated entities have qualified to bid in the auction, the affiliated entities must decide prior to the auction which one (if any) will participate in the auction. If two or more affiliated entities attempt to participate in the auction, BOEM will disqualify those bidders from the auction.

BOEM considers two entities to be affiliated if (a) one entity (or its parent or subsidiary) has or retains a right, title, or interest in the other entity (or its parent or subsidiary), including the ability to control or direct actions with respect to such entity, either directly or indirectly, individually or through any other party; or (b) the entities are both direct or indirect subsidiaries of the same parent company. Entities are also affiliated if ownership or common ownership of more than 50 percent of the voting securities, or instruments of ownership or other forms of ownership, of another person constitutes control (person means any individual, firm, corporation, association, partnership, consortium, or joint venture (when established as a separate entity)). BOEM will consider each of the following factors to determine if there is control under the circumstances of a particular case:

- The extent to which there are common officers or directors.
- With respect to the voting securities, or instruments of ownership or other forms of ownership: The percentage of ownership or common ownership, the relative percentage of ownership or common ownership compared to the percentage(s) of ownership by other persons, if a person is the greatest single owner, or if there is an opposing voting bloc of greater ownership.
- Operation of a common lease, plant, pipeline, or other facility.
- The extent of other owners' participation in operations and day-to-day management of a lease, plant, or other facility.
- Other evidence of power to exercise control over or common control with another person.

Bidder's Financial Form

Each bidder must submit a BFF to participate in the auction. A bidder's BFF must be received no later than November 18, 2026, unless otherwise stated in the FLN. Bidders are hereby notified that, on the day of the sale, an authorized representative must recertify the BFF, affirming that all information submitted on the BFF is accurate and remains valid in accordance with the requirements of 30 CFR 581.20. A copy of the form is available at https://www.boem.gov/marine-minerals/commonwealth-northern-mariana-islands-cnmi-activities. In its BFF, each bidder must designate the email address that it will use to create an account in https://www.pay.gov. The BFF is required to be executed by an authorized representative listed in the bidder's qualification documents on file with BOEM. The BFF must contain the following information:

- Each bidder's BOEM qualification number. Bidders participating in an OCS critical mineral lease sale must first be found to be qualified by BOEM. Bidders who have not yet been found to be qualified to participate in the Lease Sale and wish to participate in PACM-2 should submit the required qualification documentation to BOEM as early as possible to ensure there is sufficient time to process the documentation to receive a BOEM qualification number. Please submit your documentation to establish your company's legal qualifications pursuant to 30 CFR 581.4 and 30 CFR 581.20 to pacific.region@boem.gov.
- A statement acknowledging that the bidder(s) understands that all oral bids legally bind the bidder(s) to comply with all applicable regulations, including, but not limited to, the requirement to pay the balance of the bonus bid amount for any lease area bid upon.
- Contact information, including names, addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses for the principal point of contact, payment and refund coordination, and up to five (5) individuals authorized to bid.
- Identification of any affiliated entities, as defined above and confirmed in the FLN for

this lease sale.

- Recertification of the information provided in the BFF on the day of the sale. Prior to the offering of any oral bids at the lease sale, an authorized representative must confirm that the *information provided by the company in the BFF remains accurate and the company's eligibility to participate in the lease sale is unchanged.* Any updates or changes must be declared at this time. Bidders who do not complete the required recertification will not be permitted to submit an oral bid.

For this sale, BOEM will only accept bidders' BFFs by mail. Instructions for submission can be found on the BFF. The BFF must be executed on paper with a wet signature by an authorized representative identified in the bidder's qualification documentation as authorized to bind the company.

VIII. The Lease Sale

Auction Format

Location: BOEM proposes to hold Lease Sale PACM-2 on December 16, 2026, at a time to be specified in the FLN, in or near Camarillo, California. The venue will not be open to the public. Only qualified bidders and their designated representatives will be admitted to the venue. The oral ascending clock auction will be live streamed on BOEM's website at https://www.boem.gov for public viewing.

Time Zone: All times referenced in this document are Pacific Time, unless otherwise specified.

Purpose: The oral auction is solely for taking oral bids from qualified bidders until only one bidder remains on each lease area. BOEM will announce a provisional winner for each lease area at the conclusion of the auction. The United States reserves the right to reject any and all bids, as detailed in Section IX of this document under the subheading entitled, "Acceptance, Rejection, or Return of Bids" below.

Auction Seminar

BOEM will hold a virtual auction seminar for qualified bidders prior to the lease sale, and the details will be specified in the FLN.

- The seminar will not be open to the public.
- During the session, BOEM will describe the auction process, explain rules and procedures, and provide an opportunity for qualified bidders to ask questions.

Auction Details

The auction will be conducted pursuant to OCSLA and its implementing regulations at 30 CFR part 581.

- The auction will be conducted as an in-person, oral ascending clock auction, with each lease area auctioned sequentially.
- BOEM is proposing to allow each qualified bidder to bid for and potentially acquire multiple lease areas. If an entity wishes to win multiple lease areas, it must submit a separate bid deposit for each lease area for which it intends to win. A bidder that submits

fewer bid deposits than the total number of lease areas offered, and does not win the first or subsequent areas may continue bidding until it has won up to the number of lease areas for which it has submitted bid deposits. Once a bidder has won as many lease areas as bid deposits submitted, it may no longer bid on the remaining lease area(s).

- All auction rules and procedures will be published in the FLN and explained during the pre-auction seminar.
- BOEM will verify receipt of bid deposits prior to participation in the auction.
- Up to five individuals may attend the auction on behalf of a bidding entity.
- The BFF must identify the individuals authorized to bid.
- An authorized representative of the bidder must be present at the time of the lease sale to recertify the BFF.
- The authorized representative and persons authorized to bid must provide proof of identity matching the BFF.

IX. Bidding Rules

The FLN will identify the lease areas to be auctioned and their sequencing. The auction will proceed sequentially, one lease area at a time. The provisional winner of the first lease area will be permitted to bid for the second lease area and so forth, provided they submit the appropriate initial bonus bid deposit(s) in accordance with the instructions in the section entitled, "Bonus Bid Deposit." Once a bidder's eligibility is exhausted by winning as many lease areas as bid deposits submitted, it may no longer bid on the remaining lease area(s).

For each lease area, the auction will be conducted in a series of rounds with incrementally higher prices. In each round, all bidders will have the opportunity to signal participation within the specified time period. If a bidder fails to signal its participation at a given price, that will indicate that the bidder has withdrawn from the bidding for that lease area. BOEM will verify participation or withdrawal with each bidder prior to closing the round and, once confirmed, either participation or withdrawal will be final. The auction will continue until only one bidder signals participation at a given price. That bidder becomes the provisional winner of the lease area.

When a bidder withdraws from the auction by failing to signal participation at the next highest price, they will be asked to submit an exit bid, which is the highest price they are willing to pay for the lease area. The exit bid must be no lower than the round's price at which they last signaled participation and must be below the price of the next round. If a bidder fails to submit an exit bid, the last price at which they signaled participation will be used as their exit bid. Exit bids are used in the event that no bidders signal participation in a given round, a tie occurs, or the provisional winner does not meet the lease execution requirements or otherwise fails to comply with applicable regulations. In these cases, BOEM reserves the right to offer the lease area to the bidder submitting the next highest bid offer as determined by BOEM.

BOEM will set a time limit for signaling participation within each round. This time limit is set to expedite the sale procedure, but extensions may be granted upon request. A recess may be declared at any time the situation warrants, at the sole discretion of the Regional Director or his or her designee.

The provisional winner of each lease area will pay the final bid deposit in accordance with the instructions in the section entitled, “Bonus Bid Deposit.” If the provisional winner does not submit the final bid deposit as outlined in the section entitled, “Bonus Bid Deposit,” BOEM, in its discretion, may retain the initial bid deposit and offer the area to the next highest bidder. Similarly, if the provisional winner does not follow through with the remainder of the bid as outlined in the section entitled, “Lease Award,” BOEM, in its discretion, may retain the bid deposit and offer the area to the next highest bidder. A provisional winner will be disqualified if it is subsequently found to have violated auction rules, OCSLA, BOEM regulations, or otherwise engaged in conduct detrimental to the integrity of the competitive auction.

Authorized Signatures

All signatories executing documents on behalf of the bidder(s) must execute the same in conformance with the BOEM qualification records. BOEM considers any actions taken by an authorized bidder during the oral ascending clock auction process as a legally binding obligation on the part of the bidder(s) to comply with all applicable regulations, including fulfilling the bonus bid requirement for all high bids.

Bonus Bid Deposit

A bonus bid deposit of 20% of the total bid amount is required. Each bid deposit will be payable in two parts:

1. Each qualified bidder must submit an initial bonus bid deposit to the Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) equal to 20 percent of the minimum bid owed for each lease area it wishes to win. For example, if a bidder is interested in winning only one lease area, it would pay a bid deposit of $600,000 (20% * $3,000,000). If a bidder seeks the ability to win multiple lease areas, it must submit as many initial bid deposits as the number of lease areas it intends to win. The initial bonus bid deposit(s) must be received by December 2, 2026, and will be electronically deposited into an interest-bearing account in the U.S. Treasury.
2. After the oral auction, the provisional winning bidder for each lease area must pay a final bonus bid deposit (essentially a true-up) of 20 percent of their high bid due by 2 p.m. the first business day after the auction. The payment will be adjusted to reflect the initial bonus bid deposit(s) already paid. If a bidder is the provisional winning bidder for multiple lease areas, it must submit the remaining balance of the 20-percent bid bonus bid deposit for each lease area it has provisionally won.

BOEM requires bidders to use EFT procedures for bonus bid deposit payments for this sale, following the detailed instructions contained on the ONRR Payment Information webpage at https://www.onrr.gov/paying. Receipt of a bonus bid deposit does not constitute, and will not be construed as, acceptance of any bid on behalf of the United States. Non-winning bidders will have their initial bonus bid deposit(s) refunded.

Withdrawal of Blocks

The United States reserves the right to withdraw any block from this lease sale before issuance of a written acceptance of a bid for the block.

Acceptance, Rejection, or Return of Bids

The United States reserves the right to reject any and all bids, regardless of the amount offered. Furthermore, no bid will be accepted, and no lease for any block will be awarded to any bidder, unless:

1. The bidder has complied with all applicable statutes, regulations and requirements of the FLN, including those set forth in the documents contained in the FLN package; and
2. The bid is the highest valid bid and meets or exceeds BOEM's minimum bid in the FLN.

Any bid submitted that does not conform to the requirements of the FLN, OCSLA, or other applicable statute or regulation will be rejected and returned to the bidder. The United States Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission will review the results of the lease sale for any antitrust issues prior to the acceptance of bids and issuance of leases.

Lease Award

BOEM is proposing to use Form BOEM-2004 (March 2026) to convey leases resulting from this sale. The lease form can be viewed on BOEM's website at https://www.boem.gov/about-boem/procurement-business-opportunities/boem-ocs-operation-forms. The lease form will be amended to include specific terms, conditions, and stipulations applicable to the individual lease. Each bidder that is awarded a lease is required to complete the following within 10 business days of receiving it from BOEM:

1. Execute all copies of the lease (Form BOEM-2004 [March 2026], as amended); and
2. Pay by EFT the balance of the bonus bid amount for each lease issued in accordance with the requirements of the FLN and 30 CFR 1218.155 and 581.26.

ONRR requests that bidders use only one transaction for payment of the balance of the bonus bid amount. Once ONRR receives such payment, the bidder who has been awarded the lease may not request a refund of the balance of the bonus bid payment.

Unlawful Combination or Intimidation

BOEM warns bidders against violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1860, which prohibits unlawful combination or intimidation of bidders.

X. Delay of Sale

The BOEM Pacific Regional Director has the discretion to change any date, time, and/or location specified in the FLN if the Regional Director deems that an emergent event could interfere with a fair and orderly lease sale. Such events could include, but are not limited to, natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes, fires or floods), wars, riots, acts of terrorism, fires, strikes, civil disorder, or other events of a similar nature. In case of such events, bidders should call (805) 384-6305 or access the BOEM website at https://www.boem.gov/marine-minerals/commonwealth-northern-mariana-islands-cnmi-activities, for information regarding any changes.

XI. Upcoming Milestones

After the Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has had the opportunity to comment on the proposed lease sale, as required by 30 CFR 581.16, the Assistant

Secretary for Land and Minerals Management will decide whether or how to proceed with this sale. Following the Assistant Secretary's decision, BOEM will publish the FLN in the *Federal Register* at least 30 days before the date of the lease sale. The FLN package will be available on BOEM's website at https://www.boem.gov/marine-minerals/commonwealth-northern-mariana-islands-cnmi-activities.

The Department of the Interior reserves the right to revise the areas offered for bidding and associated terms and conditions described in this PLN.