

FOR RELEASE: December 20, 1993 CONTACT: John Barclay
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MMS EXTENDS COMMENT PERIOD ON PROPOSED OPA 90 RULE;
ADDS CLEVELAND MEETING TO GATHER MORE PUBLIC INPUT
(#30061)

The Interior Department's Minerals Management Service (MMS) today announced that it will extend the period for public comment on its Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) on the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA) until Feb. 28, 1994.

MMS officials also set Jan. 11, 1994, as the date of a workshop in Cleveland, OH, to afford interested parties a chance to give their opinions on the OPA rulemaking to agency officials face-to-face.

Similar meetings have already been held in New Orleans, Houston and San Francisco, and another is tentatively set for Anchorage, though no date has yet been selected. Officials are considering one or more workshops in additional locations.

The Jan. 11 meeting is scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Cleveland's Marriott Society Center, 127 Public Square. Comments are sought on several topics, including:

- Ø Types and locations of "offshore facilities" subject to OPA financial responsibility requirements;
- Ø Methods available to prove OPA financial responsibility;
- Ø The interaction of States or Territories and the Federal Government in enforcing OPA financial responsibility;
- Ø Protection for the responsible parties, guarantors and other financial participants; and
- Ø Effects of OPA financial responsibility requirements on local and national economic conditions.

Today's announcements in the Federal Register extended the comment period by 66 days. The period had been set to end Dec. 24, but MMS Director Tom Fry said heavy interest and the large volume of comments already received dictated a need for additional time. "This administration is committed to paying attention to the needs and opinions of our stakeholders," Fry said. "We'll actively seek those opinions, and incorporate them into our rulemaking wherever we can to the extent they are consistent with the law and with our responsibility to protect the environment.

"That's why we're going the extra mile to make sure everyone who will be affected has a chance to let us know his or her reaction," he said.

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