

FOR RELEASE: January 27, 1994

CONTACT: John Barclay
(202) 208-3983

MMS ADDS ANCHORAGE MEETING ON PROPOSED OPA 90 RULE

AGENCY SEEKS TO GATHER MORE PUBLIC INPUT (#40006)

The Interior Department's Minerals Management Service (MMS) today announced that it has set Feb. 16, 1994, for a workshop in Anchorage, AK, to afford interested parties a chance to give their opinions on the agency's Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90).

That law requires that operators of offshore oil facilities prove they can be financially responsible for damages from oil spills up to \$150 million. Current law requires proof of financial responsibility for \$35 million. OPA 90 may also broaden the definition of "offshore facility," potentially bringing many under the new requirement who are not subject to the current one.

Other workshops have been held in New Orleans, Houston, San Francisco and Cleveland.

The Feb. 16 meeting is set from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Loussac Library, 3600 Denali St. in Anchorage. Comments are sought on several topics, including:

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

An earlier announcement from MMS had extended the comment period by 66 days, to Feb. 28. 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.

-MMS-

Subject: PR-1/27/94 OPA90 mtgs/Anchorage Mtg on OPA'90
Added(#30006)