

# MMS Alaska OCS Region

# News Release

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## **MMS Announces Multiple Sale Process for Alaska's Beaufort Sea**

The Minerals Management Service today issued a Call for Information and Nominations and Notice Of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for three Beaufort Sea oil and gas lease sales proposed under the draft 5-Year Program, 2002-2007. It is the first time the agency has issued a multi-sale Call for the Beaufort Sea although a similar process was used in the Central and Western Gulf of Mexico for all sales in the 1997-2002 5-Year Program

"The multi-sale EIS will eliminate the need to prepare a new EIS for each proposed sale on issues which rarely change" said MMS Alaska Regional Director John Goll. "If they do change, then the approach will make it easier for the public and us to key on those new issues and their effects."

Goll said that the multi-sale process in the Beaufort Sea will incorporate planning and analysis for Sales 186, 195, and 202 tentatively scheduled for 2003, 2005, and 2007 respectively.

"Although we are proposing to prepare a single EIS for all three Beaufort sales in the upcoming 5-Year Program, we will not compromise environmental standards or our commitment to producing a complete scientific record on which to base leasing decisions," Goll said. "After the first EIS is completed for Sale 186, we will prepare either an environmental assessment or a supplemental EIS and a consistency determination for each subsequent sale. The public will have opportunity to comment on each sale proposal," he added.

Since 1979, MMS has written seven EIS's and held seven lease sales in the Beaufort Sea. MMS oversees an extensive environmental, social, and economic studies program that evaluates the impacts of offshore oil and gas development in the arctic. Some of the ongoing studies include monitoring studies of the Northstar and Liberty development project areas, under-ice currents, oil spill risk from oil production and transportation in the arctic, and changes in trace metal concentrations.

The Call for Information is the first step in a process that will take about 2 years to complete. The Call is the first opportunity the public and industry have to provide comments on and suggestions for the area of the potential lease sales, identify environmental effects and potential uses conflicts, and propose possible alternatives, lease terms, and mitigating measures.

The Beaufort Sea Planning area is located offshore Alaska's northern coast. It extends from about 3 to approximately 60 nautical miles offshore in water depths

ranging from about 25 to 200 feet. Water depths in a small portion of the sale area north of Harrison Bay drop to about three thousand feet. The area covers about 9.9 million acres.

Comments must be received by November 5, 2001, and may be sent to the MMS Alaska OCS Region, 949 East 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Room 308, Anchorage, AK 99508; submitted via e-mail to [Beaufortmulti-Sale@mms.gov](mailto:Beaufortmulti-Sale@mms.gov). Please call MMS at 907-271-6070 or toll-free at 1-800-764-2627 if you have additional questions.

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 collections totaled nearly \$8 billion last year and more than \$110 billion since the agency was created in 1982. Annually, nearly \$1 billion from those revenues go into the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the acquisition and development of state and federal park and recreation lands.

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