

Billing Code: 4310-MR-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Docket No. BOEM-2020-0018

TITLE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Cook Inlet Lease Sale 258.

MMAA104000

AGENCY: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is announcing the availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) on the Cook Inlet Lease Sale 258.

The proposed action addressed in the Draft EIS is to conduct an oil and gas lease sale in the Cook Inlet Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Planning Area. Cook Inlet stretches from the Gulf of Alaska to Anchorage in south-central Alaska. The proposed lease sale would offer for lease all available OCS blocks in the northern portion of the Cook Inlet Planning Area and would provide qualified bidders the opportunity to bid on OCS lease blocks in Cook Inlet to gain conditional rights to explore, develop, and produce oil and natural gas. Proposed Lease Sale 258 covers an area of approximately 1.09 million acres. It is estimated the resource potential for the Lease Sale Area includes 162.7 million barrels of oil and 229.5 – 290.7 billion cubic feet of natural gas.

The Draft EIS provides an analysis of the potential impacts of the proposed action and a discussion of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action. In addition to the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative, BOEM analyzed three alternatives consistent with internal agency scoping, past public input from National Programs and lease sales, and comments

received during the scoping period following the Notice of Intent (NOI). The alternatives include:

- Beluga Whale Mitigation Alternative
- Sea Otter Mitigation Alternative
- Gillnet Mitigation Alternative

This Notice of Availability announces the start of the public review and comment period and serves to announce public hearings on the Draft EIS. After the public hearings and written comments on the Draft EIS have been reviewed and considered, a Final EIS will be prepared.

The Draft EIS and associated information, including the Exploration, Development and Production, and Decommissioning Scenario (E&D Scenario) are available on the agency's website at <https://www.boem.gov/ak258>.

DATES: Comments should be submitted no later than [INSERT DATE 45 CALENDAR DAYS FROM THE PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE].

BOEM will host public hearings concerning the Draft EIS from January 16 through March 1, 2021.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comment Submission: All interested parties, including Federal, state, tribal, and local governments and/or agencies and the public are invited to submit written comments on the Draft EIS through the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the field entitled "Enter Keyword or ID," enter BOEM-2020-0018, and then click "search." Follow the instructions to submit comments and view supporting and related materials available for this notice.

BOEM does not accept anonymous comments. Name and contact information are required to submit comments on the Federal eRulemaking Portal. Before including your address, phone number, email address or other personal identifying information within the body of your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comments to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Public Hearings: BOEM will host virtual public hearings on the Draft EIS at <https://www.boem.gov/ak258> in February of 2021. The purpose of these hearings is to receive public comments on the Draft EIS. These hearings are scheduled as follows:

- February 9, 2021 from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. (AKST)
- February 10, 2021 from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. (AKST)
- February 11, 2021 from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. (AKST)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Alaska Regional Office, 3801 Centerpoint Drive, Suite 500, Anchorage, Alaska 99503–5823; or Ameer Howard, Project Manager, (907) 334–5200.

AUTHORITY: This Notice of Availability for a Draft EIS is in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4231 et seq.), and is published pursuant to 43 CFR 46.415.

Walter D. Cruickshank
Acting Director, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management