FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
OIL AND GAS RESOURCES ON THE OCS

How Does BOEM Assess Oil and Gas Resources on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS)?

BOEM utilizes a geologic play-based approach to estimate undiscovered oil and gas resources, considering all available geophysical, geological, technological and economic information. Resources are estimated for each geologic play, and then aggregated for each OCS planning area within a region.

How are Undiscovered Resources Distributed on the OCS?

Oil and gas resources on the OCS are not uniformly distributed. The location of oil and gas resources on the OCS is influenced by the presence of petroleum system components, including mature source rocks, porous reservoirs, and sealed hydrocarbon traps.

How are Undiscovered Resources Characterized?

BOEM assesses undiscovered technically recoverable resources (UTRR) and undiscovered economically recoverable resources (UERR). UTRR are characterized as resources that could be produced from the subsurface using conventional extraction techniques without any economic considerations. UERR represents a subset of UTRR that is considered to be commercially recoverable at specific oil and gas prices and associated exploration and development costs.

How Much Oil and Gas Remains Undiscovered on the OCS?

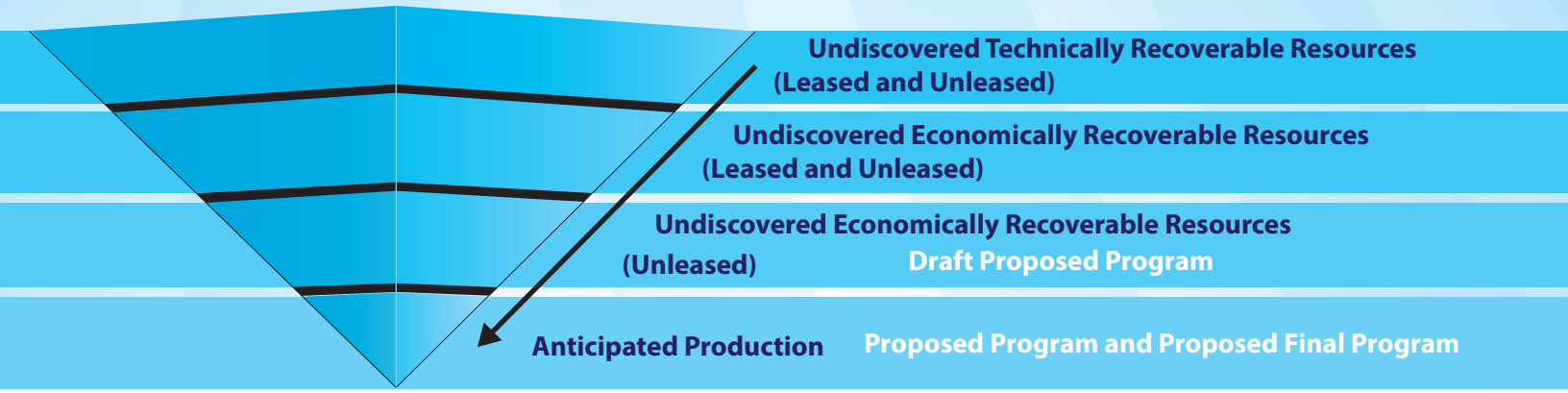
BOEM estimates that the entire OCS contains approximately 77 to 104 billion barrels of oil and 283 to 378 trillion cubic feet of natural gas that is yet to be found and potentially recovered. Figure 2 (map on the back) shows resource estimates by planning area.

How is the Assessment of Undiscovered Resources Used in the National OCS Program?

Resource estimates provide the foundation for the economic, social and environmental analysis used to inform the National OCS Program. Figure 1 identifies the process of how the undiscovered resources inform the various stages of the National OCS Program.

I. Draft Proposed Program – Incorporates UERR that are expected to be available for lease as of July 2019.
II. Proposed Program and Proposed Final Program – Incorporates the subset of the UERR anticipated to be leased, discovered, and produced.

Figure 1: Undiscovered Technically Recoverable Resources to Anticipated Production Workflow



BOEM
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

boem.gov/National-Program/

Assessment of Undiscovered Technically Recoverable Oil and Gas Resources of the Nation's Outer Continental Shelf, 2016

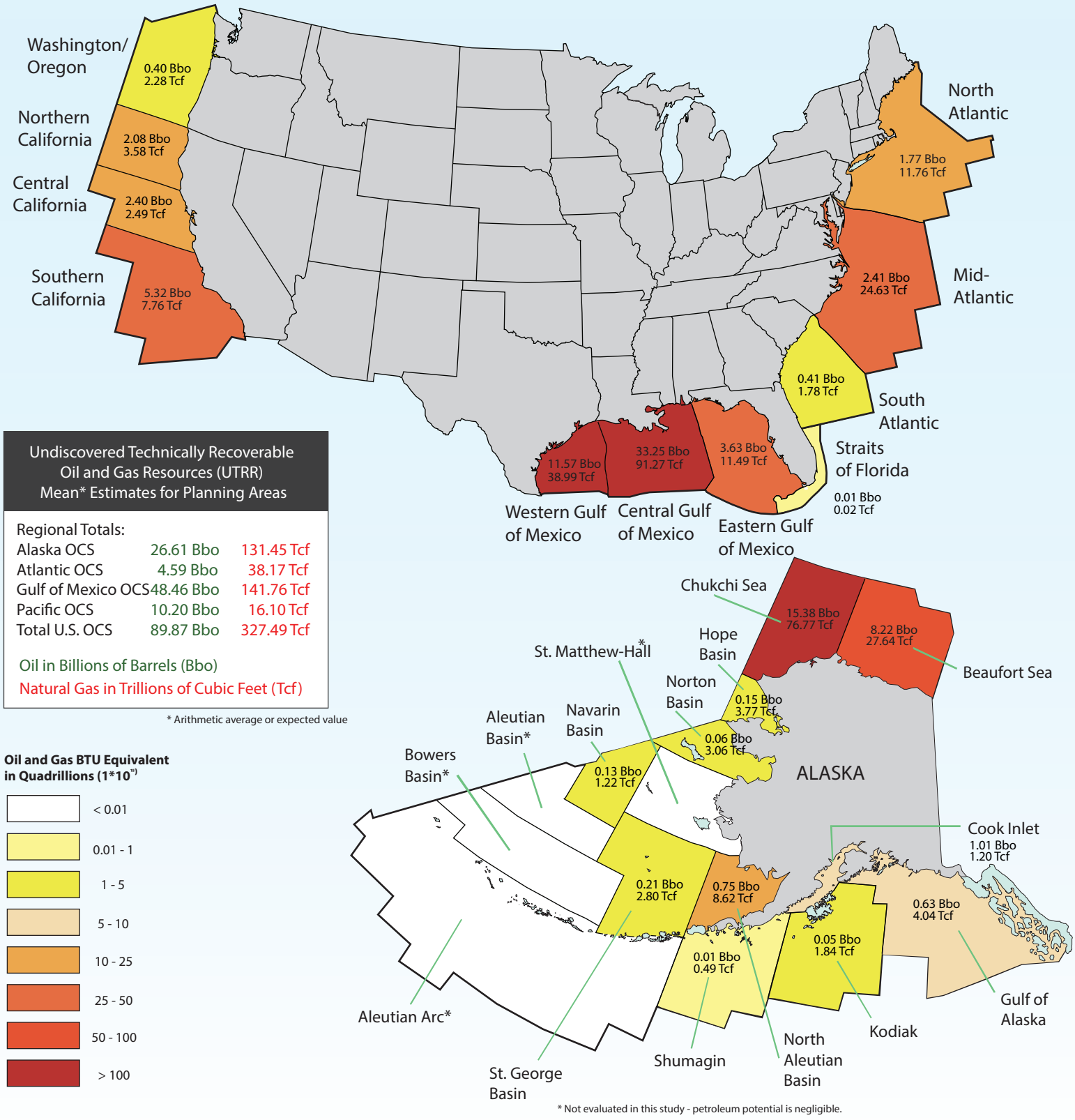


Figure 2: Distribution of mean UTRR by OCS planning area.
The darker colors signify higher volume of UTRR; lighter colors indicate relatively lower volume of UTRR.

BOEM
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

boem.gov/National-Program/