



MMS Alaska OCS Region

News Release

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MMS Requests Information for Beaufort Sea Oil and Gas Sale 176

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) published a Call for Information and Nominations for an offshore oil and natural gas lease sale in the Beaufort Sea off Alaska's northern coast in the September 7, 1999, *Federal Register*. Proposed Sale 176 is part of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program 1997-2002 and is tentatively scheduled for early-2002.

"The Call is the first step we use in planning a sale," said Alaska Regional Director John Goll. "It gives industry and the public the opportunity to give us information about the sale area and gives industry the opportunity to nominate areas that they'd like to see included in the sale."

The area under consideration extends offshore from three miles to approximately 60 nautical miles and could potentially stretch from Barrow to the Canadian border. "MMS intends to narrow the actual area offered for lease, balancing geologic, environmental and technological information," Goll said.

"In addition to identifying blocks to be included in a possible lease sale, we would like to hear about particular geologic, environmental, biological, archaeological, or social and economic conditions, conflicts, or other information that might bear on potential leasing and development in the area," Goll added. "We are especially interested in any new information, given that this could be our 8th sale in the Beaufort."

MMS is establishing a committee to advise the Regional Director for design of the sale. "Nominations for 10 positions on the Alaska Region Offshore Advisory Committee were sought from North Slope communities, the State of Alaska, the petroleum and support industries, and environmental organizations," Goll said.

MMS will consult with the Director of the Alaska Division of Governmental Coordination regarding board memberships before the Secretary of the Interior makes the final appointments. The first meeting of the committee is planned for later this year to advise the Region on the exact area that should be analyzed in an environmental impact statement.

Nominations and comments on the proposed sale must be received no later than October 22, 1999. Submissions should be sent to the Regional Supervisor, Leasing & Environment, Alaska OCS Region, Minerals Management Service, 949 East 36th Avenue, Room 308, Anchorage, AK 99508-4363. Information about Sale 176 may be found on our website located at www.mms.gov/alaska.

MMS is the federal agency that manages the Nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), and collects, accounts for, and disburses about \$4 billion yearly in revenues from offshore federal mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on federal and Indian lands.