



U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region



FOR RELEASE:

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**Minerals Management Service Has Prepared an Environmental Assessment
for Proposed Federal Oil and Gas Lease Sale 175 in the Central Gulf of Mexico**

Background

A single Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared for all five Central Gulf of Mexico Planning Area (CPA) sales scheduled in the current 5-Year Program (MMS 97-0033). Although the EIS addressed five proposed sale actions, only one sale decision would be made each year. The EIS served as a decision document for Sale 169, which was held on March 18, 1998. One Call for Information and Nominations (Call) and Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS (NOI) was issued at the beginning of the multisale prelease process to explain the multisale approach. Additionally, only one Area Identification (Area ID) was prepared to cover each 5-year period. The Area ID described the sales' geographical area, the proposed actions, and alternatives for the five scheduled CPA sales.

Action

The Minerals Management Service (MMS) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for proposed CPA oil and gas Lease Sale 175. The sale included in this action is tentatively scheduled for March 2000. The EA Notice of Availability was published in the November 23, 1999, issue of the **Federal Register**.

In this Environmental Assessment, MMS has reexamined the potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives based on any new information regarding potential impacts and issues that was not available at the time the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Lease Sales 169, 172, 175, 178, and 182 was prepared.

In summary, no new significant impacts were identified for proposed Lease Sale 175 that were not already assessed in the FEIS for Lease Sales 169, 172, 175, 178, and 182. As a result, MMS determined that a supplemental EIS is not required and prepared a Finding of No New Significant Impact.

You may obtain single copies of the EA from the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, Attention: Public Information Office (MS 5034), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, Room 114, New Orleans, LA 70123-2394 or by calling 1-800-200-GULF.

Specific information on the EA may be obtained from Mr. George Hampton at (504) 736-2465. Specific information on the proposed lease sale may be obtained from Mr. Charles Hill at (504) 736-2795.

The MMS is the Federal agency that manages and regulates the Nation's natural gas, oil, and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf, and collects, accounts for, and disburses about \$6 billion each year from offshore mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on Federal and Indian lands.

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