



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

FOR RELEASE:

December 5, 2000

Barney Congdon
(504) 736-2595

Caryl Fagot
(504) 736-2590

Debra Winbush
(504) 736-2597

**MMS Announces the Release of the
Draft Environmental Impact Statement
for Proposed Eastern Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 181**

The Minerals Management Service (MMS) today announced the release of a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on proposed Eastern Gulf of Mexico (GOM) Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Lease Sale 181. This is the only Eastern GOM sale scheduled in the current 5-Year Leasing Plan covering the years 1997-2002 and the first proposed sale in the Eastern GOM since 1988. Proposed Lease Sale 181 is scheduled to be held in December 2001.

The Proposed Lease Sale 181 area includes 120 blocks in a narrow strip beginning 15 miles offshore Alabama and another 913 blocks in deeper water, which are nearer to Louisiana than to Florida. The proposed sale area does not include any blocks within 100 miles offshore Florida. The deeper water area is immediately adjacent to the prolific energy area in the Central Gulf of Mexico called Mississippi Canyon. The total 1,033 blocks involve a total of 5.9 million acres, which is 8 percent of the total area in the entire Eastern Gulf Planning Area.

The Proposed Lease Sale 181 area contains potentially significant oil and gas resources that are largely unexplored at this point. The MMS estimates that the resources that will be developed from this sale could be as high as 240 million barrels of oil and 1.8 trillion cubic feet of gas. The entire lease sale area could contain up to 370 million barrels of oil and 3.2 trillion cubic feet of gas.

The Draft EIS is now available for public review and comment period that will close on January 23, 2001. You may obtain single copies of the draft EIS from the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, Attention: Public Information Office (MS-5034), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, Room 114, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394 or by calling 1-800-200-GULF. Copies have also been provided to libraries throughout the Gulf Coast area.

The MMS will hold public hearings to receive comments on the draft EIS for proposed Sale 181. The hearings provide the Secretary of the Interior with information from interested parties to help in the evaluation of potential effects of the proposed lease sale. The hearings will be held on the following dates, times and locations:

New Orleans, Louisiana

January 8, 2001
2:00-4:00 p.m.
Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region
1201 Elmwood Park Blvd
New Orleans, Louisiana

Pensacola, Florida

January 9, 2001
6:00-9:00 p.m.
New World Landing
600 South Palafox
Pensacola, Florida

Tallahassee, Florida

January 10, 2001
1:00-4:00 p.m. and
6:00-9:00 p.m.
Tallahassee-Leon County Civic Center
Tallahassee, Florida

Mobile, Alabama

January 11, 2001
6:00-9:00 p.m.
Adams Mark Hotel
64 South Water Street
Mobile, Alabama

**Eastern Gulf of Mexico
Proposed Sale 181
Area of Consideration**



0 10 20 30 Miles
▨ Available for Leasing Consideration
■ Active Leases

You may send written comments on the draft EIS to the Regional Director (MS-5410), Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394. The comment period on the Draft EIS will close on January 23, 2001.

MMS is the Federal agency that manages the Nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf. The agency also collects, accounts for, and disburses over \$5 billion per year in revenues from Federal offshore mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on Federal and Indian lands.

-MMS-GOM-

MMS's Website Address: <http://www.mms.gov>