

## Finding of No New Significant Impacts

The Minerals Management Service (MMS) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for proposed Lease Sale 202 in the Beaufort Sea Planning Area of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). During February 2003, the MMS filed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency a multiple-sale Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) assessing the effects of Lease Sale 202 and two other Beaufort Sea lease sales in the 2002-2007 OCS Leasing Program—Lease Sales 186 and 195. This EA tiers from the multiple-sale EIS and the Lease Sale 195 EA, and incorporates much of the information by reference. It also reexamines the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Action and alternatives, based on new information regarding potential impacts or issues that were not available at the time the final EIS was prepared.

All of the information and analysis presented in the multiple-sale EIS was reviewed by MMS. Several topics were determined to have new information requiring a re-evaluation of the environmental impact analysis: subsistence and sociocultural systems, marine and coastal birds, local water quality, bowhead whales, polar bears, other resources, and the cumulative effect of climate change. The new information is summarized in the EA. The EA also analyzes whether this new information indicates that there are likely to be significant new impacts that were not addressed in the multiple-sale EIS. The EA concludes that the likelihood of one or more large oil spills occurring and contacting a land segment is still very low (e.g., less than 2 percent within 60 days). Due primarily to increased concentrations of polar bears on parts of the coast, the relative oil-spill risk to the population has increased since preparation of the multiple-sale EIS. The existing MMS operating regulations, the standard mitigating measures, and the following new Information to Lessees (ITL's), described fully in EA Section III.C.2, would moderate the spill risk to bears:

Proposed New Information to Lessees for protection of polar bears, entitled Planning for Protection of Polar Bears. It states in part that lessees are advised to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and local Native communities while planning their activities and before submission of their Oil Spill Contingency Plans.

Revisions to Standard Information to Lessee Clauses:

Standard ITL No. 4, entitled Bird and Marine Mammal Protection. The revision in part adds polar bears to the list of species that have been proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

Standard ITL No. 11, entitled Sensitive Areas to Be Considered in the Oil Spill Contingency Plans (OSCP). The revision explains in part that coastal aggregations of polar bears during the open water/broken ice period are particularly vulnerable to the effects of an oil spill, which lessees must account for in their OSCP.

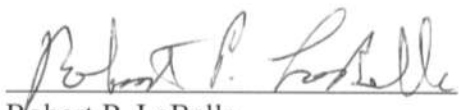
No new significant impact was identified for the proposed lease sale that was not already assessed in the multiple-sale final EIS. Therefore, MMS has determined that a supplemental EIS to the multiple-sale EIS is not required and is issuing this Finding of No New Significant Impacts.

Supporting Documents:

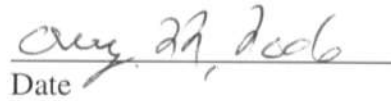
Environmental Assessment, Proposed OCS Lease Sale 202, Beaufort Sea Planning Area, OCS EIS/EA MMS 2006-001, dated July 2006.

Environmental Assessment, Proposed Oil and Gas Lease Sale 195, Beaufort Sea Planning Area, OCS EIS/EA MMS 2004-028, dated July 2004.

Final Environmental Impact Statement, Beaufort Sea Planning Area, Oil and Gas Lease Sales 186, 195, and 202, OCS EIS/EA MMS 2003-001, dated February 2003.



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Date