



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Minerals Management Service

**MMS**

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## Overview of MMS Environmental Review Process

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MMS Maryland Task Force  
April 14, 2010  
Maryland Energy Administration

# Multi-Step Environmental Review Process

Programmatic AEAU EIS

Competitive  
Commercial

Lease Sale EIS

SAP EA/EIS

COP EA/EIS

Non Competitive  
Commercial

Lease Issuance/  
SAP EA/EIS

COP EA/EIS

Non Competitive  
ROW/RUE

Grant Issuance/GAP  
EA/EIS

# Environmental Analysis



# Environmental Studies

## MMS Mandate:

Protect the environment and develop information necessary to assess and manage environmental impacts on the human, marine, and coastal environments.



# The National Environmental Policy Act "NEPA"

- Disclose Plans
- Involve Public
- Identify and Evaluate Alternatives
- Avoid & Mitigate Negative Effects
- Integrate Environmental Analyses

Council on Environmental Quality  
Executive Office of the President

REGULATIONS  
For Implementing The Procedural Provisions Of The  
NATIONAL  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
POLICY ACT



Reprint  
40 CFR Parts 1500-1508  
(as of July 1, 1986)

# Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Assessment (EA)

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- Purpose and Need for Action
- Alternatives Including the Proposed Action
- Affected Environment
- Environmental Consequences
  - Cumulative Effects

# Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

## Steps:

- Public Scoping Meetings and Comment Period
- Draft EIS
- Public Hearings and Comment Period
- Final EIS
- Record of Decision



# Environmental and Socioeconomic Resources and Issues

- Air Quality
- Water Quality
- Marine Mammals
- Sea Turtles
- Birds
- Bats
- Seafloor Habitats



- Physical Oceanography
- Coastal Habitats
- Socioeconomics
- Cultural Resources
- Fisheries
- Multiple Use Conflicts

# Impact Producing Factors

- Visual and aesthetic interference
- Vessel traffic
- Air emissions
- Bottom disturbance
- Discharges
- Infrastructure (emplacement and presence)
- Noise
- Lighting





# Mitigation Measures

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- MMS's primary mitigation strategy is avoidance
- Lease Stipulations
- Source of mitigation measures:
  - Subject matter experts through the NEPA process
  - Consultations
  - Renewable Energy Regulatory Framework
  - Best Management Practices in the Record of Decision on the AEAU Programmatic EIS
  - Applicable stipulations from OCS oil and gas leases
  - Input from Task Force

# Major Federal Agencies Involved in OCS Activities



Minerals Management Service



U.S. Coast Guard



Environmental Protection Agency



Fish and Wildlife Service



Army Corps of Engineers



Federal Aviation Administration



U.S. Geological Survey



National Marine Fisheries Service

# State, Tribal & Local Stakeholders Involved in OCS Activities for Maryland

- Maryland Energy Administration
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Maryland Department of the Environment
- Maryland Department of Planning
- State Historic Preservation Office
- Board of Public Works
- Public Services Commission
- Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs
- Local Governments

# The National Environmental Policy Act "NEPA"



# Environmental Consultation Processes: Required for MMS Lease Issuance or Plan Approval

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- Consultations:
  - Coastal Zone Management Act
  - Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Essential Fish Habitat)
  - National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106)
  - Endangered Species Act (Section 7)
- Clean Air Act General Conformity Determination
- Migratory Birds Treaty Act/Executive Order Analysis

**Run concurrently with NEPA process**

## **Other Environmental Processes: Required by Other Federal Agencies or Responsibility of Applicant**

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- Marine Mammal Protection Act
- Federal Aviation Act
- USCG Ports and Waterways Safety Act, Maritime Transportation Act
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permitting under Section 404, Clean Water Act, Section 10 Rivers and Harbors Act
- EPA NPDES/VGP Permitting
- EPA New Source PSD permitting
- FERC Licensing and Coordination
- DOD Coordination

**MMS Environmental  
Review Process  
for OCS Wind Energy  
Offshore Maryland**



# When will the NEPA Analysis begin?

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- MMS will coordinate closely with federal, tribal, state and local stakeholders in order to help states meet their goals and determine timelines for leasing.
- An important factor in determining the start of NEPA analysis is the issuance of the Request for Interest (RFI).
- MMS expects the NEPA analysis to begin within 6 to 12 months after an RFI is issued.



# Multi-Step Environmental Review Process

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- 1) Programmatic Lease Sale EIS and Consultations
  - Minimum 18-24 months
  
- 2) Site Specific EA and Consultations for Site Assessment Activities
  - Minimum 6 months
  
- 3) Site Specific EIS and Consultations for Construction and Operation Activities
  - Minimum 18-24 months

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## More Information...

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