

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management  
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region**

***SPECIAL INFORMATION***

---

March 2013

**BOEM Issues Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and  
Notice of Plans to Hold Public Meetings for Gulf of Mexico OCS Oil and Gas  
Proposed Eastern Planning Area Lease Sales 225 and 226**

The U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), announces the availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for proposed Eastern Planning Area (EPA) Lease Sales 225 and 226 (EPA 225/226 Draft EIS). The two proposed oil and gas lease sales are tentatively scheduled for 2014 and 2016, respectively, under the *Proposed Final Outer Continental Shelf Oil & Gas Leasing Program: 2012-2017*. BOEM is proposing to offer for oil and gas leasing approximately 657,905 acres in the proposed EPA lease sale area.

This EIS for proposed EPA Lease Sales 225 and 226 uses information contained in three previous environmental impact statements. This EIS tiers from the *Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program: 2012-2017, Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement* (Five-Year Program EIS) (USDO, BOEM, 2012b) and, due to the close proximity of the proposed EPA lease sale area to the Central Planning Area, incorporates by reference all of the relevant material published in the EIS's that were prepared for the nearby or adjacent Western and Central Planning Areas (WPA and CPA): *Gulf of Mexico OCS Oil and Gas Lease Sales: 2012-2017; Western Planning Area Lease Sales 229, 233, 238, 246, and 248; Central Planning Area Lease Sales 227, 231, 235, 241, and 247, Final Environmental Impact Statement* (2012-2017 WPA/CPA Multisale EIS) (USDO, BOEM, 2012c) and *Gulf of Mexico OCS Oil and Gas Lease Sales: 2013-2014; Western Planning Area Lease Sale 233; Central Planning Area Lease Sale 231, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* (2013-2014 WPA/CPA Supplemental EIS) (USDO, BOEM, 2012d).

This Draft EIS also updates the analysis in the *Gulf of Mexico OCS Oil and Gas Lease Sale 224: Eastern Planning Area, Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* (OCS EIS/EA MMS 2007-060). It also analyzes information on the baseline conditions and potential environmental effects of oil and natural gas leasing, exploration, development, and production in the EPA. BOEM conducted an extensive search for information pertinent to the lease sales, including consideration of the *Deepwater Horizon* explosion, oil spill, and cleanup; surveys of scientific journals and credible scientific data and information from academic institutions and Federal, State, and local agencies; and interviews with personnel from academic institutions and Federal, State, and local agencies. BOEM has examined the potential impacts of routine activities and accidental events, including a possible low-probability catastrophic event associated with the proposed lease sales, as well as the proposed lease sales' incremental contribution to the cumulative impacts on environmental and socioeconomic resources. The oil and gas resource estimates and scenario information for this Draft EIS are presented as a range that would encompass the resources and activities estimated for the proposed EPA lease sales.

BOEM published in the November 18, 2011, *Federal Register*, a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for the proposed EPA lease sales. The NOI sought input on the scope of the EIS, which covers the proposed EPA oil and gas lease sales offshore the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. The public scoping period was opened on March 20, 2012, and closed on May 4, 2012. BOEM also published in the March 1, 2013, *Federal Register*, the Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS for proposed EPA Lease Sales 225 and 226.



BOEM will hold public meetings to obtain comments regarding the EPA 225/226 Draft EIS. The meetings are scheduled as follows:

- **Tallahassee, Florida:** March 26, 2013, Hilton Garden Inn Tallahassee Central 1330 Blairstone Road, Tallahassee, Florida 32301; one meeting beginning at 1:00 p.m. EDT;
- **Panama City Beach, Florida:** March 27, 2013, Wyndham Bay Point Resort, 4114 Jan Cooley Drive, Panama City Beach, Florida 32408; two meetings, the first beginning at 1:00 p.m. CDT and the second beginning at 6:00 p.m. CDT;
- **Mobile, Alabama:** March 28, 2013, Five Rivers—Alabama’s Delta Resource Center, 30945 Five Rivers Boulevard, Spanish Fort, Alabama 36527; one meeting beginning at 1:00 p.m. CDT;
- **Gulfport, Mississippi:** March 29, 2013, Courtyard by Marriott Gulfport Beachfront MS Hotel, 1600 East Beach Boulevard, Gulfport, Mississippi 39501; one meeting beginning at 1:00 p.m. CDT; and
- **New Orleans, Louisiana:** April 1, 2013, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123, beginning at 1:00 p.m. CDT.

If you cannot attend the public meetings for the Draft EIS for EPA Lease Sales 225 and 226, you may submit written comments within 45 days following the publication date of the Notice of Availability of the Draft EPA 225/226 EIS in the Federal Register, in one of the following ways:

1. In an envelope labeled “Comments on the EPA 225/226 Draft EIS” and mailed (or hand carried) to Mr. Gary D. Goeke, Chief, Regional Assessment Section, Office of Environment (GM 623E), Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394; and
2. Through the regulations.gov web portal: Navigate to <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for “Oil and Gas Lease Sales: Gulf of Mexico, Outer Continental Shelf; Eastern Planning Area Lease Sales 225 and 226”. (Note: It is important to include the quotation marks in your search terms.) Click on the “Comment Now!” button to the right of the document link. Enter your information and comment, then click “Submit”.
3. BOEM email address: [boemegomeis@BOEM.gov](mailto:boemegomeis@BOEM.gov)

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

BOEM will be printing and distributing a very limited number of paper copies. In keeping with the Department of the Interior's mission of the protection of natural resources and to limit costs while ensuring the availability of the document to the public, BOEM will primarily distribute digital copies of the EPA 225/226 Draft EIS on compact discs. However, if you require a paper copy, BOEM will provide one upon request if copies are still available.

1. You may obtain a copy of the EPA 225/226 Draft EIS from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394, Attention: Public Information Office (GM 250I), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, Room 250, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394 (1-800-200-GULF).
2. You may download or view the EPA 225/226 Draft EIS on BOEM's website at <http://www.boem.gov/Environmental-Stewardship/Environmental-Assessment/NEPA/nepaprocess.aspx>.

If you have any questions, please call Mr. Gary D. Goeke at (504) 736-3233.