

Preparation of the OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program—Proposed Program (PP)

Q. What is the Minerals Management Service (MMS)?

A. The MMS is an agency within the United States Department of the Interior (DOI). The mission of the MMS is to manage the mineral resources on the Nation's Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) in an environmentally sound and safe manner, and to collect, verify, and distribute, in a timely fashion, mineral revenues generated from Federal (onshore and offshore) and Native American lands.

Q. What is a 5-year oil and gas leasing program and why does MMS prepare one?

A. The OCS Lands Act (OCSLA) requires the DOI to prepare a 5-year program that specifies the size, timing, and location of areas to be assessed for Federal offshore natural gas and oil leasing. How MMS develops the program is specified by section 18 of the OCSLA. There are three opportunities for public comment and three drafts of the program before it is approved by the Secretary of the Interior. The current program runs through June 30, 2007.

Q. What is the PP?

A. The 5-year OCS leasing program for 2007-2012 is currently being developed. The proposed program (PP) is the third step in this multi-step process to develop the new 5-year program. It includes a proposal for OCS lease offerings for the 2007-2012 timeframe.

The areas included in the PP warrant further study and analysis. The PP provides a basis for conducting further analysis and gathering further information needed for future decisions.

Q. What does the PP propose?

A. The PP proposes a total of 21 OCS lease sales in seven of the 26 OCS planning areas.

The proposal includes leasing in the areas of the OCS that are in the current 5-year program for 2002-2007 and additional areas off Alaska, the Gulf of Mexico, and Atlantic Coast. Several state and local governments expressed interest in potential energy development in these additional areas off their

coasts. Some of these areas are currently withdrawn from leasing through June 30, 2012, under section 12 of the OCS Lands Act. No leasing can occur in these areas unless the withdrawal is lifted and congress lifts the moratoria.

Q. What are moratoria and what areas are covered?

A. The Administration continues to fully support the existing Presidential withdrawal and current congressional moratoria. Much of the OCS is currently subject to a Presidential withdrawal from leasing through June 2012, under section 12 of the OCSLA. These areas include North Aleutian Basin, Alaska; Washington-Oregon; Northern, Central, and Southern California; Eastern Gulf of Mexico (except for a portion located off Alabama and more than 100 miles off Florida); and the South, Mid, and North Atlantic.

In addition, most of these areas have been subject to annual Congressional moratoria on leasing since the 1980's. The exception is the North Aleutian Basin, which has not been under moratoria since FY 2004.

Q. How does one submit comments?

A. Comments must be submitted via the MMS internet commenting system at <http://www.mms.gov/5-year/2007-2012main.htm> or by mail. Mail comments and information to:

5-Year Program Manager
Minerals Management Service (MS 4010)
381 Elden Street
Room 3120
Herndon, Virginia 20170

Please label your comments and the packaging in which they are submitted according to the subject matter.

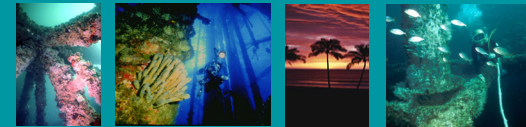
Q. What happens next?

A. Based on all the information available, MMS will prepare a Proposed Program with a 90-day comment period. This will be the second draft of the proposal. Any area not included at this stage cannot be proposed for leasing during 2007-2012.

OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2007-2012

- Aug 2005** Request for Comments and Information [45-day comment period]
- Feb 2006** Draft Proposed Program [60-day comment period]
- Aug 2006** Proposed Program and Draft EIS [90-day comment period]
- Mar 2007** Proposed Final Program and Final EIS [60-day waiting period]
- May 2007** Approval
- July 1, 2007** Current program ends
New program begins

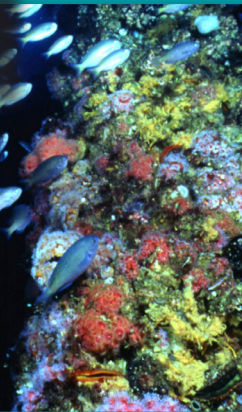
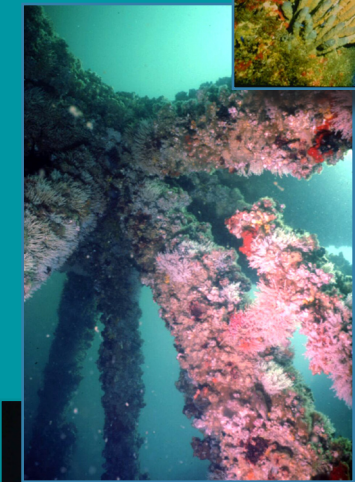
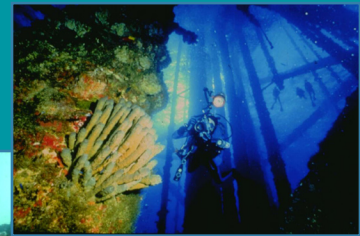
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Minerals Management Service

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Proposed Program



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Federal OCS Areas - Alaska and Lower 48

Proposed Program
2007-2012

U.S. Outer Continental Shelf Areas

LEGEND

- Proposed Program Areas
- Planning Areas

August 2006

