



NEWS RELEASE

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Minerals Management Service to Hold Public Meeting in Virginia on Development of OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program Environmental Impact Statement

Washington, DC – The Interior Department’s Minerals Management Service (MMS) will hold a public scoping meeting April 4, 2006 in Norfolk, Virginia on the Draft Proposed 5-Year Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2007-2012. The meeting will provide an opportunity for interested citizens and organizations to provide input on the scope, significant issues, and alternatives to be considered in the environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Proposed 2007-2012 OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program.

The meeting will be held at the Doubletree Hotel, 880 Military Highway in Norfolk. In order to accommodate both afternoon and evening attendees, MMS has scheduled two sessions for this meeting -- one beginning at 3 p.m. and another beginning at 7 p.m. The Virginia meeting is one of a series of public scoping meetings on the OCS leasing program MMS is holding in key coastal cities in the Gulf of Mexico, mid-Atlantic, and Alaska.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the MMS will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the 2007-2012 OCS oil and gas 5-year leasing program. The EIS will address the potential impacts of the proposed 5-year program, which was issued for review and comment in draft form in a February 10, 2006, Federal Register notice.

MMS requests comments on information regarding issues and alternatives that should be evaluated in the EIS, including significant environmental issues concerning OCS oil and gas leasing, exploration, and development. The comments will be reviewed by the MMS to determine the scope of the EIS.

MMS is accepting written comments on the intent to prepare an EIS for the Proposed 2007-2012 OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program through April 11, 2006. Comments may be submitted electronically through MMS’s Public Connect on-line commenting system at <https://ocsconnect.mms.gov>, or by mail to Mr. James F. Bennett, Chief, Branch of Environmental Assessment, Minerals Management Service, 381 Elden Street, Mail Stop 4042, Herndon, Virginia 20170.

MMS Main Website: www.mms.gov

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