



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Office of Public Affairs

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Minerals Management Service Announces Public Hearings on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for 2007-2012 OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program

19 meetings in 5 States Scheduled

WASHINGTON – The Interior Department’s Minerals Management Service (MMS) will hold public hearings in September, October and November of 2006 to solicit comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Proposed 5-Year Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2007-2012.

Statements on the DEIS, both oral and written, will be recorded at the venues listed below. Speakers may register to testify at each hearing, or may pre-register in advance by notifying the respective hearing contacts listed below. Time limits may be set on oral testimony to allow time for all speakers to participate.

MMS released the proposed plan for the 2007-2012 Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) leasing program and the associated DEIS for comment on August 25, 2006. The DEIS is open for comment until November 22, 2006, and is available for review on the MMS website at: <http://www.mms.gov/5-year/>.

DATES LOCATIONS FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- Sept. 25, 2006 Unalaska City Council Chambers, Unalaska, Alaska, 6:30 p.m.
POC: Mr. Albert Barros, (907) 334-5209.
- Sept. 26, 2006 Cold Bay Community Center, Cold Bay, Alaska, 7:00 p.m.
POC: Mr. Albert Barros, (907) 334-5209.
- Sept. 27, 2006 Allan Nelson Community Building, Nelson Lagoon, Alaska, 4:30 p.m.
POC: Mr. Albert Barros, (907) 334-5209.

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- Sept. 28, 2006 Centerpoint Building, 1st Floor Conference Room, 3801
Centerpoint Drive, Anchorage, Alaska, 5:00 p.m.
POC: Mr. Fred King, (907) 334-5271.
- Sept. 28, 2006 Sand Point City Council Chambers, Sand Point, Alaska, 7:00 p.m.
POC: Mr. Albert Barros, (907) 334-5209.
- Oct. 9, 2006 City of Goodnews Bay Council Chambers, Goodnews Bay, Alaska, 5:00 p.m.
POC: Mr. Albert Barros, (907) 334-5209.
- Oct. 10, 2006 Bristol Bay Borough Building, Naknek, Alaska, 6:30 p.m.
- Oct. 11, 2006 Dillingham City Council Chambers, Dillingham, Alaska, 6:30 p.m.
POC: Mr. Albert Barros, (907) 334-5209.
- Oct. 30, 2006 Marriott Houston Intercontinental at George Bush Intercontinental Airport,
18700 John F. Kennedy Blvd., Houston, Texas, 1:00 p.m.
POC: Mr. Dennis Chew, (504) 736-2793.
- Oct. 31, 2006 Hampton Inn and Suites New Orleans-Elmwood, 5150 Mounes Street,
Harahan, Louisiana, 1:00 p.m.
POC: Mr. Dennis Chew, (504) 736-2793.
- Nov. 1, 2006 Riverview Plaza Hotel, 64 South Water Street, Mobile, Alabama, 1:00 p.m.
POC: Mr. Dennis Chew, (504) 736-2793.
- Nov. 8, 2006 Nuiqsut Community Center, Nuiqsut, Alaska, 7:00 p.m.
POC: Mr. Albert Barros, (907) 334-5209.
- Nov. 10, 2006 Kaktovik Community Center, Kaktovik, Alaska, 7:00 p.m.
POC: Mr. Albert Barros, (907) 334-5209.
- Nov. 13, 2006 Robert James Community Center, Wainwright, Alaska, 7:00 p.m.
POC: Mr. Albert Barros, (907) 334-5209.
- Nov. 14, 2006 Norfolk, Virginia (venue TBA via future Federal Register Notice)
POC: Mr. Dennis Chew, (504) 736-2793.
- Nov. 14, 2006 Point Lay Community Center, Point Lay, Alaska, 7:00 p.m.
POC: Mr. Albert Barros, (907) 334-5209.
- Nov. 15, 2006 Marriott Bay Point Resort, 4000 Marriott Drive, Panama City Beach, Florida, 1:00 p.m.
POC: Mr. Dennis Chew, (504) 736-2793.
- Nov. 15, 2006 Kalgi Center, Point Hope, Alaska, 7:00 p.m.
POC: Mr. Albert Barros, (907) 334-5209.
- Nov. 16, 2006 Inupiat Heritage Center, Barrow, Alaska, 7:00 p.m.
POC: Mr. Albert Barros, (907) 334-5209.

The Proposed 5-Year Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2007-2012 includes a total of 21 OCS lease sales in seven of the 26 OCS planning areas – four areas off Alaska, two areas in the Gulf of Mexico, and one area in the Atlantic. Current presidential withdrawals or congressional moratoria have placed more than 85 percent of the OCS around the lower 48 states off limits to energy development, including all areas off Virginia. The proposed plan includes three sales in restricted areas – two in the North Aleutian Basin of Alaska in 2010 and 2012, and one in the Mid-Atlantic in 2011. These proposed lease sales would only be held if the President chooses to modify the withdrawal in both areas and Congress discontinues the annual appropriations moratorium in the Mid-Atlantic.

(MORE)

The proposed plan is the second draft of a new leasing plan to succeed the current program that expires on June 30, 2007. MMS is accepting comments on the proposed plan through November 24, 2006. The 2007-2012 OCS oil and gas leasing program will be the seventh prepared since Congress passed the OCS Lands Act in 1978, which requires the Secretary of the Interior to prepare and maintain five-year programs for offshore oil and natural gas leasing. The current leasing program runs through June 30, 2007. MMS plans to issue the proposed final program and final EIS for the 2007 – 2012 leasing plan in the spring of 2007. Information on both the DEIS and proposed leasing program as well as further information on how to provide written comments on both is available at: <http://www.mms.gov/5-year/>

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