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TITLE 30--MINERAL RESOURCES

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

PART 203--RELIEF OR REDUCTION IN ROYALTY RATES--Table of Contents

Subpart B--OCS Oil, Gas, and Sulfur General

Source: 63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998, unless otherwise noted.

Royalty Relief for End-of-life Leases

Sec. 203.50 Who may apply for end-of-life royalty relief?

You may apply for royalty relief in two situations.

(a) Your end-of-life lease (as defined in Sec. 203.2) is an oil and gas lease and has average daily production of at least 100 barrels of oil equivalent (BOE) per

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month (as calculated in Sec. 203.73) in at least 12 of the past 15 months. The most recent of these 12 months are considered the qualifying months. These 12 months should reflect the basic operation you intend to use until your resources are depleted. If you changed your operation significantly (e.g., begin re-injecting rather than recovering gas) during the qualifying months, or if you do so while we are processing your application, we may defer action on your application until you revise it to show the new circumstances.

(b) Your end-of-life lease is other than an oil and gas lease (e.g., sulphur) and has production in at least 12 of the past 15 months. The most recent of these 12 months are considered the qualifying months.

[63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998, as amended at 63 FR 57249, Oct. 27, 1998]

Sec. 203.51 How do I apply for end-of-life royalty relief?

You must submit a complete application and the required fee to the appropriate MMS Regional Director. Your MMS regional office will provide specific guidance on the report formats. A complete application for relief includes:

(a) An administrative information report (specified in Sec. 203.83) and

(b) A net revenue and relief justification report (specified in Sec. 203.84).

Sec. 203.52 What criteria must I meet to get relief?

(a) To qualify for relief, you must demonstrate that the sum of royalty payments over the 12 qualifying months exceeds 75 percent of the sum of net revenues (before-royalty revenues minus allowable costs, as defined in Sec. 203.84).

(b) To re-qualify for relief, e.g., either applying for additional relief on top of relief already granted, or applying for relief sometime after your earlier agreement terminated, you must demonstrate that:

- (1) You have met the criterion listed in paragraph (a) of this section, and
- (2) The 12 required qualifying months of operation have occurred under the current royalty arrangement.

Sec. 203.53 What relief will MMS grant?

(a) If we approve your application and you meet certain conditions, we will reduce the pre-application effective royalty rate by one-half on production up to the relief volume amount. If you produce more than the relief volume amount:

- (1) We will impose a royalty rate equal to 1.5 times the effective royalty rate on your additional production up to twice the relief volume amount; and
- (2) We will impose a royalty rate equal to the effective rate on all production greater than twice the relief volume amount.

(b) Regardless of the level of production or prices (see Sec. 203.54), royalty payments due under end-of-life relief will not exceed the royalty obligations that would have been due at the effective royalty rate.

- (1) The effective royalty rate is the average lease rate paid on production during the 12 qualifying months.
- (2) The relief volume amount is the average monthly BOE production for the 12 qualifying months.

Sec. 203.54 How does my relief arrangement for an oil and gas lease operate if prices rise sharply?

In those months when your current reference price rises by at least 25 percent above your base reference price, you must pay the effective royalty rate on all monthly production.

- (a) Your current reference price is a weighted average of daily closing prices on the NYMEX for light sweet crude oil and natural gas over the most recent full 12 calendar months;
- (b) Your base reference price is a weighted average of daily closing prices on the NYMEX for light sweet crude oil and natural gas during the qualifying months; and
- (c) Your weighting factors are the proportions of your total production volume (in BOE) provided by oil and gas during the qualifying months.

Sec. 203.55 Under what conditions can my end-of-life royalty relief arrangement for an oil and gas lease be ended?

(a) If you have an end-of-life royalty relief arrangement, you may renounce

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it at any time. The lease rate will return to the effective rate during the qualifying period in the first full month following our receipt of your renouncement of the relief arrangement.

- (b) If you pay the effective lease rate for 12 consecutive months, we will terminate your relief. The lease rate will return to the effective rate in the first full month following this termination.
- (c) We may stipulate in the letter of approval for individual cases certain events that would cause us to terminate relief because they are

inconsistent with an end-of-life situation.

Sec. 203.56 Does relief transfer when a lease is assigned?

Yes. Royalty relief is based on the lease circumstances, not ownership. It transfers upon lease assignment.

Royalty Relief For Deep Water Expansion Projects And Pre-Act Deep Water Leases

Sec. 203.60 Who may apply for deep water royalty relief?

You may apply for royalty relief under Secs. 203.61(b) and 203.62 if:

(a) You are a lessee of a lease in water at least 200 meters deep in the GOM and lying wholly west of 87 degrees, 30 minutes West longitude;

(b) We have assigned your pre-Act lease to a field (as defined in Sec. 203.0); and

(c) You either:

(1) Hold a pre-Act lease on an authorized field (as defined in Sec. 203.0) or

(2) Propose an expansion project (as defined in Sec. 203.0) or

(3) Propose a development project (as defined in Sec. 203.0).

[67 FR 1875, Jan. 15, 2002]

Sec. 203.61 How do I assess my chances for getting relief?

You may ask for a nonbinding assessment (a formal opinion on whether a field would qualify for royalty relief) before turning in your first complete application on an authorized field. This field must have a qualifying well under 30 CFR part 250, **subpart A**, or be on a lease that has allocated production under an approved unit agreement.

(a) To request a nonbinding assessment, you must:

(1) Submit a draft application in the format and detail specified in guidance from the MMS regional office for the GOM;

(2) Propose to drill at least one more appraisal well if you get a favorable assessment; and

(3) Pay a fee under Sec. 203.3.

(b) You must wait at least 90 days after receiving our assessment to apply for relief under Sec. 203.62.

(c) This assessment is not binding because a complete application may contain more accurate information that does not support our original assessment. It will help you decide whether your proposed inputs for evaluating economic viability and your supporting data and assumptions are adequate.

Effective Date Note: At 63 FR 2619, Jan. 16, 1998, Sec. 203.61 was revised. This section contains information collection and recordkeeping requirements and will not become effective until approval has been given by the Office of Management and Budget.

Sec. 203.62 How do I apply for relief?

You must send a complete application and the required fee to the MMS Regional Director for the GOM.

(a) Your application for deep water royalty relief must include an original and two copies (one set of digital information) of:

(1) Administrative information report;

(2) Deep water economic viability and relief justification report;

- (3) G&G report;
- (4) Engineering report;
- (5) Production report; and
- (6) Deep water cost report.

(b) Section 203.82 explains why we are authorized to require these reports.

(c) Sections 203.81, 203.83, and 203.85 through 203.89 describe what these reports must include. The MMS regional office for the GOM will guide you on the format for the required reports, and we encourage you to contact this office prior to preparing your application for this guidance.

[63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998, as amended at 67 FR 1875, Jan. 15, 2002]

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Sec. 203.63 Does my application have to include all leases in the field?

(a) For authorized fields, we will accept only one joint application for all leases that are part of the designated field on the date of application, except as provided in paragraph (a)(3) of this section and Sec. 203.64. However, we will evaluate all acreage that may eventually become part of the authorized field. Therefore, if you have any other leases that you believe may eventually be part of the authorized field, you must submit data for these leases according to Sec. 203.81.

(1) The Regional Director maintains a Field Names Master List with updates of all leases in each designated field.

(2) To avoid sharing proprietary data with other lessees on the field, you may submit your proprietary G&G report separately from the rest of your application. Your application is not complete until we receive all the required information for each lease on the field. We will not disclose proprietary data when explaining our assumptions and reasons for our determinations under Sec. 203.67.

(3) We will not require a joint application if you show good cause and honest effort to get all lessees in the field to participate. If you must exclude a lease from your application because its lessee will not participate, that lease is ineligible for the royalty relief for the designated field.

(b) If your application seeks only relief for a development project or an expansion project, your application does not have to include all leases in the field.

[63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998, as amended at 67 FR 1875, Jan. 15, 2002]

Sec. 203.64 How many applications may I file on a field or a development project?

You may file one complete application for royalty relief during the life of the field or for a development project or an expansion project designed to produce a reservoir or set of reservoirs. However, you may send another application if:

(a) You are eligible to apply for a redetermination under Sec. 203.74;

(b) You apply for royalty relief for an expansion project;

(c) You withdraw the application before we make a determination; or

(d) You apply for end-of-life royalty relief.

[63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998, as amended at 67 FR 1875, Jan. 15, 2002]

Sec. 203.65 How long will MMS take to evaluate my application?

(a) We will determine within 20 working days if your application for royalty relief is complete. If your application is incomplete, we will explain in writing what it needs. If you withdraw a complete application, you may reapply.

(b) We will evaluate your first application on a field within 180 days, evaluate your first application on a development project or an expansion project within 150 days and evaluate a redetermination under Sec. 203.75 within 120 days after we determine that it is complete.

(c) We may ask to extend the review period for your application under the conditions in the following table.

If--	Then we may--
We need more records to audit sunk costs.	Ask to extend the 120-day or 180-day evaluation period. The extension we request will equal the number of days between when you receive our request for records and the day we receive the records.
We cannot evaluate your application for a valid reason, such as missing vital information or inconsistent or inconclusive supporting data.	Add another 30 days. We may add more than 30 days, but only if you agree.
We need more data, explanations, or revision.	Ask to extend the 120-day or 180-day evaluation period. The extension we request will equal the number of days between when you receive our request and the day we receive the information.

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(d) We may change your assumptions under Sec. 203.62 if our technical evaluation reveals others that are more appropriate. We may consult with you before a final decision and will explain any changes.

(e) We will notify all designated lease operators within a field when royalty relief is granted.

[63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998, as amended at 67 FR 1875, Jan. 15, 2002]

Sec. 203.66 What happens if MMS does not act in the time allowed?

If we do not act within the timeframes established under Sec. 203.65, you get royalty relief according to the following table.

If you apply for royalty relief for	And we do not decide within the time specified	As long as you
(a) An authorized field.....	You get the minimum suspension	Abide by Secs. 203.70 and 203.76.

- volumes specified
in Sec. 203.69.
- (b) An expansion project..... You get a royalty suspension for the first year of production. Abide by Secs. 203.70 and 203.76.
- (c) A development project..... You get a royalty suspension for initial production for the number of months that a decision is delayed beyond the stipulated timeframes set by Sec. 203.65, plus all the royalty suspension volume for which you qualify.

[67 FR 1875, Jan. 15, 2002]

Sec. 203.67 What economic criteria must I meet to get royalty relief on an authorized field or project?

We will not approve applications if we determine that royalty relief cannot make the field, development project, or expansion project economically viable. Your field or project must be uneconomic while you are paying royalties and must become economic with royalty relief.

[67 FR 1876, Jan. 15, 2002]

Sec. 203.68 What pre-application costs will MMS consider in determining economic viability?

(a) We will not consider ineligible costs as set forth in Sec. 203.89(h) in determining economic viability for purposes of royalty relief.

(b) We will consider sunk costs according to the following table.

We will	When determining
(1) Include sunk costs.....	Whether a field that includes a pre-Act lease which has not produced, other than test production, before the application or redetermination submission date needs relief to become economic.
(2) Not include sunk costs.....	Whether an authorized field, a development project, or an expansion project can become economic with full relief (see Sec. 203.67).

- (3) Not include sunk costs..... How much suspension volume is necessary to make the field, a development project, or an expansion project economic (see Sec. 203.69(c)).
- (4) Include sunk costs for the project discovery well on each lease. Whether a development project or an expansion project needs relief to become economic.

[63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998, as amended at 67 FR 1876, Jan. 15, 2002]

Sec. 203.69 If my application is approved, what royalty relief will I receive?

If we approve your application, subject to certain conditions, we will not collect royalties on a specified suspension volume for your field, development project, or expansion project. Suspension volumes include volumes allocated to a lease under an approved unit agreement, but exclude any volumes of production that are not normally royalty-bearing under the lease or the regulations of this chapter (e.g., fuel gas).

(a) For authorized fields, the minimum royalty-suspension volumes are:

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- (1) 17.5 million barrels of oil equivalent (MMBOE) for fields in 200 to 400 meters of water;
- (2) 52.5 MMBOE for fields in 400 to 800 meters of water; and
- (3) 87.5 MMBOE for fields in more than 800 meters of water.

(b) For development projects, any relief we grant applies only to project wells and replaces the royalty suspension volume with which we issued your lease. If your project is economic given the royalty suspension volume with which we issued your lease, we will reject the application. Otherwise, the minimum royalty suspension volumes are as shown in the following table:

For	The minimum royalty suspension volume is	Plus
(1) RS leases.....	A volume equal to the combined royalty suspension volumes (or the volume equivalent based on the data in your approved application for other forms of royalty suspension) with which we issued the leases participating in the application that have or plan a well into a reservoir identified in the application.	10 percent of the median of the distribution of known recoverable resources upon which we based approval of your application from all reservoirs included in the project.
(2) Other deep water leases	A volume equal to 10	

issued in sales after
November 28, 2000.

percent of the median
of the distribution
of known recoverable
resources upon which
we based approval of
your application from
all reservoirs
included in the
project.

(c) If your application includes pre-Act or eligible leases in different categories of water depth, we apply the minimum royalty suspension volume for the deepest such lease then assigned to the field. We base the water depth and makeup of a field on the water-depth delineations in the ``Lease Terms and Economic Conditions'' map and the ``Field Names Master List'' documents and updates in effect at the time your application is deemed complete. These publications are available from the MMS Regional Office for the GOM.

(d) You will get a royalty suspension volume above the minimum if we determine that you need more to make the field or development project economic.

(e) For expansion projects, the minimum royalty suspension volume equals 10 percent of the median of the distribution of known recoverable resources upon which we based approval of your application from all reservoirs included in your project plus any suspension volumes required under Sec. 203.66. If we determine that your expansion project may be economic only with more relief, we will determine and grant you the royalty suspension volume necessary to make the project economic.

(f) The royalty suspension volume applicable to specific leases will continue through the end of the month in which cumulative production reaches that volume. You must calculate cumulative production from all the leases in the authorized field or project that are entitled to share the royalty suspension volume.

[63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998, as amended at 67 FR 1876, Jan. 15, 2002]

Sec. 203.70 What information must I provide after MMS approves relief?

You must submit reports to us as indicated in the following table. Sections 203.81, 203.90, and 203.91 describe what these reports must include. The MMS regional office for the GOM will prescribe the formats.

Required report	When due to MMS	Due date extensions
(a) Fabricator's confirmation report.	Within 18 months after approval of relief.	MMS Director may grant you an extension under Sec. 203.79(c) for up to 6 months.
(b) Post-production report.....	Within 120 days after the start of production that is subject to the approved royalty suspension volume.	With acceptable justification from you, MMS Regional Director for the GOM may extend due date up to 30 days.

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[67 FR 1876, Jan. 15, 2002]

Sec. 203.71 How does MMS allocate a field's suspension volume between my lease and other leases on my field?

The allocation depends on when production occurs, when we issued the lease, when we assigned it to the field, and whether we award the volume suspension by an approved application or establish it in the lease terms, as prescribed in this section.

(a) If your authorized field has an approved royalty suspension volume under Secs. 203.67 and 203.69, we will suspend payment of royalties on production from all leases in the field that participate in the application until their cumulative production equals the approved volume. The following conditions also apply:

If . . .	Then . . .	And . . .
(1) We assign an eligible lease to your field after we approve relief.	We will not change your field's royalty suspension volume.	The assigned lease(s) may share in any remaining royalty relief.
(2) We assign a pre-Act or post-November 2000 deep water lease to your field after we approve your application.	We will not change your field's royalty suspension volume.	The assigned lease(s) may share in any remaining royalty relief by filing the short-form application specified in Sec. 203.83 and authorized in Sec. 203.82. An assigned RS lease also gets any portion of its royalty suspension volume remaining even after the field has produced the approved relief volume.
(3) We assign another lease(s) that you operate to your field while we are evaluating your application.	We will change your field's minimum suspension volume if the assigned lease is a pre-Act or eligible lease entitled to a larger minimum or automatic	(i) You toll the time period for evaluation until you modify your application to be consistent with the new field; (ii) We have an additional 60 days to review

	<p>suspension volume.</p>	<p>the new information; and (iii) The assigned lease(s) shares the royalty suspension we grant to the new field. If you do not agree to toll, we will have to reject your application due to incomplete information. But, an eligible lease we assigned to the field kept its automatic suspension volume.</p>
<p>(4) We assign another operator's lease to your field while we are evaluating your application.</p>	<p>We will change your field's minimum suspension volume provided the assigned lease joins the application and is entitled to a larger minimum suspension volume.</p>	<p>(i) You both toll the time period for evaluation until both of you modify your application to be consistent with the new field; (ii) We have an additional 60 days to review the new information; and (iii) The assigned lease(s) shares the royalty suspension we grant to the new field. If you (the original applicant) do not agree to toll, the other operator's lease retains any suspension volume it has or may share in any relief that we grant by filing the short form application specified in Sec. 203.83 and authorized in Sec. 203.82.</p>
<p>(5) We reassign a well on a pre-Act, eligible, or post-November 2000 deep water lease to another field.</p>	<p>The past production from the well counts toward the</p>	<p>The past production from that well will not count toward</p>

royalty suspension volume of the field to which we assigned the well.	any royalty suspension volume granted to the field from which we reassigned it.
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(b) If your authorized field has a royalty suspension volume established under Sec. 260.111 of this title (i.e., a field with a pre-Act lease where an eligible lease starts production first), we will suspend payment of royalties on production from all eligible leases in the field until their cumulative production equals the established volume. The following conditions also apply:

If . . .	Then . . .	And . . .
(1) We assign another eligible lease to your field.	Your field's royalty suspension volume does not change.	The assigned lease may share in any remaining royalty relief.
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(2) We assign an RS lease to your field.	Your field's royalty suspension volume does not change.	The assigned lease gets only the volume suspension with which we issued it, and its production volume counts against the field's royalty suspension volume.
(3) We assign a pre-Act lease or a lease issued after November 2000 without royalty suspension to your field.	Your field's royalty suspension volume does not change.	We assign lease shares none of the volume suspension, and its production does not count as part of the suspension volume.
(4) A pre-Act or post-November 2000 deep water lease applies (along with the other leases in the field) and qualifies (subject to any pre-existing suspension volumes) for royalty relief under Secs. 203.67 and 203.69.	Your field's royalty suspension volume may increase or stay the same, but will not diminish.	(i) All leases in the field share the royalty suspension volume if we approve the application; or (ii) The eligible or RS leases in the field keep their respective volumes if we reject the application.

(c) When a project has more than one lease, the royalty suspension volume for each lease equals that lease's actual production from the project (or production allocated under an approved unit agreement) until total production for all leases in the project equals the project's approved royalty suspension volume.

(d) You may receive a royalty-suspension volume only if your entire lease is west of 87 degrees, 30 minutes West longitude. If the field lies on both sides of this meridian, only leases located entirely west of the meridian will receive a royalty-suspension volume.

[63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998, as amended at 67 FR 1877, Jan. 15, 2002]

Sec. 203.72 Can my lease receive more than one suspension volume?

Yes. You may apply for royalty relief that involves more than one suspension volume under Sec. 203.62 in two circumstances.

(a) Each field that includes your lease may receive a separate royalty-suspension volume, if it meets the evaluation criteria of Sec. 203.67.

(b) An expansion project on your lease may receive a separate royalty-suspension volume, even if we have already granted a royalty-suspension volume to the field that encompasses the project. But the reserves associated with the project must not have been part of our original determination, and the project must meet the evaluation criteria of Sec. 203.67.

Sec. 203.73 How do suspension volumes apply to natural gas?

You must measure natural gas production under the royalty-suspension volume as follows: 5.62 thousand cubic feet of natural gas, measured in accordance with 30 CFR part 250, **subpart L**, equals one barrel of oil equivalent.

Sec. 203.74 When will MMS reconsider its determination?

You may request a redetermination after we withdraw approval or after you renounce royalty relief, unless we withdraw approval due to your providing false or intentionally inaccurate information. Under certain conditions you may also request a redetermination if we deny your application or if you want your approved royalty suspension volume to change. In these instances, to be eligible for a redetermination, at least one of the following four conditions must occur.

(a) You have significant new G&G data and you previously have not either requested a redetermination or reapplied for relief after we withdrew approval or you relinquished royalty relief. ``Significant'' means that the new G&G data:

(1) Results from drilling new wells or getting new three-dimensional seismic data and information (but not reinterpreting old data);

(2) Did not exist at the time of the earlier application; and

(3) Changes your estimates of gross resource size, quality, or projected flow rates enough to materially affect the results of our earlier determination.

(b) You demonstrate in your new application that the technology that

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most efficiently develops this field or lease was not considered or deemed feasible in the original application. Your newly proposed technology must improve the profitability, under equivalent market conditions, of the field or lease relative to the development system

proposed in the prior application.

(c) Your current reference price decreases by more than 25 percent from your base reference price as calculated under this paragraph.

(1) Your current reference price is a weighted-average of daily closing prices on the NYMEX for light sweet crude oil and natural gas over the most recent full 12 calendar months;

(2) Your base reference price is a weighted average of daily closing prices on the NYMEX for light sweet crude oil and natural gas for the full 12 calendar months preceding the date of your most recently approved application for this royalty relief; and

(3) The weighting factors are the proportions of the total production volume (in BOE) for oil and gas associated with the most likely scenario (identified in Secs. 203.85 and 203.88) from your most recently approved application for this royalty relief.

(d) Before starting to build your development and production system, you have revised your estimated development costs, and they are more than 120 percent of the eligible development costs associated with the most likely scenario from your most recently approved application for this royalty relief.

[63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998; 63 FR 24747, May 5, 1998, as amended at 67 FR 1878, Jan. 15, 2002]

Sec. 203.75 What risk do I run if I request a redetermination?

If you request a redetermination after we have granted you a suspension volume, you could lose some or all of the previously granted relief. This can happen because you must file a new complete application and pay the required fee, as discussed in Sec. 203.62. We will evaluate your application under Sec. 203.67 using the conditions prevailing at the time of your redetermination request. In our evaluation, we may find that you should receive a larger, equivalent, smaller, or no suspension volume. This means we could find that you do not qualify for the amount of relief previously granted or for any relief at all.

Sec. 203.76 When might MMS withdraw or reduce the approved size of my relief?

We will withdraw approval of relief for any of the following reasons.

(a) You change the type of development system proposed in your application (e.g., change from a fixed platform to floating production system, or from an independent development and production system to one with subsea wells tied back to a host production facility, etc.).

(b) You do not start building the proposed development and production system within 18 months of the date we approved your application, unless the MMS Director grants you an extension under Sec. 203.79(c). If you start building the proposed system and then suspend its construction before completion, and you do not restart continuous building of the proposed system within 18 months of our approval, we will withdraw the relief we granted.

(c) Your actual development costs are less than 80 percent of the eligible development costs estimated in your application's most likely scenario, and you do not report that fact in your post-production development report (Sec. 203.70). Development costs are those expenditures defined in Sec. 203.89(b) incurred between the application submission date and start of production. If you report this fact in the post-production development report, you may retain the lesser of 50 percent of the original royalty suspension volume or 50 percent of the median of the distribution of the potentially recoverable resources

anticipated in your application.

(d) We granted you a royalty-suspension volume after you qualified for a redetermination under Sec. 203.74(c), and we find out your actual development costs are less than 90 percent of the eligible development costs associated with your application's most likely scenario. Development costs are those expenditures defined in Sec. 203.89(b) incurred between your application submission date and start of production.

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(e) You do not send us the fabrication confirmation report or the post-production development report, or you provide false or intentionally inaccurate information that was material to our granting royalty relief under this section. You must pay royalties and late-payment interest determined under 30 U.S.C. 1721 and Sec. 218.54 of this chapter on all volumes for which you used the royalty suspension. You also may be subject to penalties under other provisions of law.

[63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998, as amended at 67 FR 1878, Jan. 15, 2002]

Sec. 203.77 May I voluntarily give up relief if conditions change?

Yes, by sending a letter to that effect to the MMS Regional Director for the GOM.

[67 FR 1878, Jan. 15, 2002]

Sec. 203.78 Do I keep relief if prices rise significantly?

If prices rise above a base price for light sweet crude oil or natural gas, set by statute for pre-Act leases, indicated in your original lease agreement or Notice of Sale for post-November 2000 deep water leases, you must pay full royalties as prescribed in this section. For post-November 2000 deepwater leases, price thresholds apply on a lease basis, so different leases on the same field, development project, or expansion project may have different price thresholds.

(a) Suppose the arithmetic average of the daily closing NYMEX light sweet crude oil prices for the previous calendar year exceeds \$28.00 per barrel, as adjusted in paragraph (f) of this section. In this case, we retract the royalty relief authorized in this section and you must:

(1) Pay royalties on all oil production for the previous year at the lease stipulated royalty rate plus interest (under 30 U.S.C. 1721 and Sec. 218.54 of this chapter) by March 31 of the current calendar year, and

(2) Pay royalties on all your oil production in the current year.

(b) Suppose the arithmetic average of the daily closing NYMEX natural gas prices for the previous calendar year exceeds \$3.50 per million British thermal units (Btu), as adjusted in paragraph (f) of this section. In this case, we retract the royalty relief authorized in this section and you must:

(1) Pay royalties on all natural gas production for the previous year at the lease stipulated royalty rate plus interest (under 30 U.S.C. 1721 and Sec. 218.54 of this chapter) by March 31 of the current calendar year, and

(2) Pay royalties on all your natural gas production in the current year.

(c) Production under both paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section counts as part of the royalty-suspension volume.

(d) You are entitled to a refund or credit, with interest, of

royalties paid on any production (that counts as part of the royalty-suspension volume):

(1) Of oil if the arithmetic average of the closing oil prices for the current calendar year is \$28.00 per barrel or less, as adjusted in paragraph (f) of this section, and

(2) Of gas if the arithmetic average of the closing natural gas prices for the current calendar year is \$3.50 per million Btu or less, as adjusted in paragraph (f) of this section.

(e) You must follow our regulations in part 230 of this chapter for receiving refunds or credits.

(f) We change the prices referred to in paragraphs (a), (b), and (d) of this section periodically. For pre-Act leases, these prices change during each calendar year after 1994 by the percentage that the implicit price deflator for the gross domestic product changed during the preceding calendar year. For post-November 2000 deepwater leases, these prices change as indicated in the lease instrument or in the Notice of Sale under which we issued the lease.

[63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998, as amended at 67 FR 1878, Jan. 15, 2002]

Sec. 203.79 How do I appeal MMS's decisions related to Deep Water Royalty Relief?

(a) Once we have designated your lease as part of a field and notified you and other affected operators of the designation, you can request reconsideration by sending the MMS Director a letter within 15 days that also states your reasons. The MMS Director's response is the final agency action.

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(b) Our decisions on your application for relief from paying royalty under Sec. 203.67 and the royalty-suspension volumes under Sec. 203.69 are final agency actions.

(c) If you cannot start construction by the deadline in Sec. 203.76(b) for reasons beyond your control (e.g., strike at the fabrication yard), you may request an extension up to 1 year by writing the MMS Director and stating your reasons. The MMS Director's response is the final agency action.

(d) We will notify you of all final agency actions by certified mail, return receipt requested. Final agency actions are not subject to appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals under 30 CFR part 290 and 43 CFR part 4. They are judicially reviewable under section 10(a) of the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 702) only if you file an action within 30 days of the date you receive our decision.

Sec. 203.80 When can I get royalty relief if I am not eligible for end-of-life or deep water royalty relief?

We may grant royalty relief when it serves the statutory purposes summarized in Sec. 203.1, and our formal relief programs provide inadequate encouragement to increase production or development. Unless your lease lies wholly west of 87 degrees, 30 minutes West longitude in the Gulf of Mexico, your lease must be producing to qualify for relief. Before you may apply for royalty relief apart from our end-of-life or deepwater programs, we must agree that your lease or project has two or more of the following characteristics:

(a) The lease has produced for a substantial period and the lessee can recover significant additional resources. Significant additional resources means enough to allow production for at least a year more than

would be profitable without royalty relief.

(b) Valuable facilities (e.g., a platform or pipeline that would be removed upon lease relinquishment) exist that we do not expect a successor lessee to use. If the facilities are located off the lease, their preservation must depend on continued production from the lease applying for royalty relief. We will only consider an allocable share of costs for off-lease facilities in the relief application.

(c) A substantial risk exists that no new lessee will recover the resources.

(d) The lessee made major efforts to reduce operating costs too recently to use the formal program for royalty relief (e.g., recent significant change in operations).

(e) Circumstances beyond the lessee's control, other than water depth, preclude reliance on one of the existing royalty relief programs.

[67 FR 1879, Jan. 15, 2002]

Required Reports

Sec. 203.81 What supplemental reports do royalty-relief applications require?

(a) You must send us the supplemental reports, indicated in the following table by an X, that apply to your field. Sections 203.83 through 203.91 describe these reports in detail.

Required reports	End-of- life lease	Expansion project
(1) Administrative information Report.....	X	X
(2) Net revenue & relief justification report.....	X	
(3) Economic viability & relief justification report (RSVP model inputs justified by other required reports).....		X
(4) G&G report.....		X
(5) Engineering report.....		X
(6) Production report.....		X
(7) Deep water cost report.....		X
(8) Fabricator's confirmation report.....		X
(9) Post-production development report.....		X

(b) You must certify that all information in your application, fabricator's confirmation and post-production development reports is accurate, complete, and conforms to the most recent content and presentation guidelines

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available from the MMS GOM Regional Office.

(c) With your application and post-production development report, you must submit an additional report prepared by an independent CPA that:

(1) Assesses the accuracy of the historical financial information in your report; and

(2) Certifies that the content and presentation of the financial data and information conform to our most recent guidelines on royalty relief. This means the data and information must--

(i) Include only eligible costs that are incurred during the qualification months; and

(ii) Be shown in the proper format.

(d) You must identify the people in the CPA firm who prepared the reports referred to in paragraph (c) of this section and make them available to us to respond to questions about the historical financial information. We may also further review your records to support this information.

[63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998, as amended at 67 FR 1879, Jan. 15, 2002]

Sec. 203.82 What is MMS's authority to collect this information?

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved the information collection requirements in part 203 under 44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq. and assigned OMB control number 1010-0071.

(a) We use the information to determine whether royalty relief will result in production that wouldn't otherwise occur. We rely largely on your information to make these determinations.

(1) Your application for royalty relief must contain enough information on finances, economics, reservoirs, G&G characteristics, production, and engineering estimates for us to determine whether:

(i) We should grant relief under the law, and

(ii) The requested relief will ultimately recover more resources and return a reasonable profit on project investments.

(2) Your fabricator confirmation and post-production development reports must contain enough information for us to verify that your application reasonably represented your plans.

(b) Applicants (respondents) are Federal OCS oil and gas lessees. Applications are required to obtain or retain a benefit. Therefore, if you apply for royalty relief, you must provide this information. We will protect information considered proprietary under applicable law and under regulations at Sec. 203.63(b) and part 250 of this chapter.

(c) The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 requires us to inform you that we may not conduct or sponsor, and you are not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

(d) Send comments regarding any aspect of the collection of information under this part, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, Minerals Management Service, Mail Stop 4230, 1849 C Street, NW., Washington, DC 20240.

[63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998, as amended at 65 FR 2875, Jan. 19, 2000]

Sec. 203.83 What is in an administrative information report?

This report identifies the field or lease for which royalty relief is requested and must contain the following items:

(a) The field or lease name;

(b) The serial number of leases we have assigned to the field, names of the lease title holders of record, the lease operators, and whether any lease is part of a unit;

(c) Well number, API number, location, and status of each well that has been drilled on the field or lease or project (not required for non-oil and gas leases);

(d) The location of any new wells proposed under the terms of the application (not required for non-oil and gas leases);

(e) A description of field or lease history;

(f) Full information as to whether you will pay royalties or a share

of production to anyone other than the United States, the amount you will pay, and how much you will reduce this payment if we grant relief;

(g) The type of royalty relief you are requesting;

(h) Confirmation that we approved a DOCD or supplemental DOCD (Deep

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Water expansion project applications only); and

(i) A narrative description of the development activities associated with the proposed capital investments and an explanation of proposed timing of the activities and the effect on production (Deep Water applications only).

[63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998, as amended at 67 FR 1879, Jan. 15, 2002]

Sec. 203.84 What is in a net revenue and relief justification report?

This report presents cash flow data for 12 qualifying months, using the format specified in the ``Guidelines for the Application, Review, Approval, and Administration of Royalty Relief for End-of-Life Leases'', U.S. Department of the Interior, MMS. Qualifying months for an oil and gas lease are the most recent 12 months out of the last 15 months that you produced at least 100 BOE per day on average. Qualifying months for other than oil and gas leases are the most recent 12 of the last 15 months having some production.

(a) The cash flow table you submit must include historical data for:

(1) Lease production subject to royalty;

(2) Total revenues;

(3) Royalty payments out of production;

(4) Total allowable costs; and

(5) Transportation and processing costs.

(b) Do not include in your cash flow table the non-allowable costs listed at 30 CFR 220.013 or:

(1) OCS rental payments on the lease(s) in the application;

(2) Damages and losses;

(3) Taxes;

(4) Any costs associated with exploratory activities;

(5) Civil or criminal fines or penalties;

(6) Fees for your royalty relief application; and

(7) Costs associated with existing obligations (e.g., royalty overrides or other forms of payment for acquiring the lease, depreciation on previously acquired equipment or facilities).

(c) We may, in reviewing and evaluating your application, disallow costs when you have not shown they are necessary to operate the lease, or if they are inconsistent with end-of-life operations.

[63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998, as amended at 63 FR 57249, Oct. 27, 1998]

Sec. 203.85 What is in an economic viability and relief justification report?

This report should show that your project appears economic without royalties and sunk costs using the RSVP model we provide. The format of the report and the assumptions and parameters we specify are found in the ``Guidelines for the Application, Review, Approval and Administration of the Deep Water Royalty Relief Program,'' U.S. Department of the Interior, MMS. Clearly justify each parameter you set in every scenario you specify in the RSVP. You may provide supplemental information, including your own model and results. The economic viability and relief justification report must contain the following

items for an oil and gas lease.

(a) Economic assumptions we provide which include:

- (1) Starting oil and gas prices;
- (2) Real price growth;
- (3) Real cost growth or decline rate, if any;
- (4) Base year;
- (5) Range of discount rates; and
- (6) Tax rate (for use in determining after-tax sunk costs).

(b) Analysis of projected cash flow (from the date of the application using annual totals and constant dollar values) which shows:

- (1) Oil and gas production;
- (2) Total revenues;
- (3) Capital expenditures;
- (4) Operating costs;
- (5) Transportation costs; and
- (6) Before-tax net cash flow without royalties, overrides, sunk costs, and ineligible costs.

(c) Discounted values which include:

- (1) Discount rate used (selected from within the range we specify).
- (2) Before-tax net present value without royalties, overrides, sunk costs, and ineligible costs.

(d) Demonstrations that:

- (1) All costs, gross production, and scheduling are consistent with the data in the G&G, engineering, production, and cost reports (Secs. 203.86 through 203.89) and

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(2) The development and production scenarios provided in the various reports are consistent with each other and with the proposed development system. You can use up to three scenarios (conservative, most likely, and optimistic), but you must link each to a specific range on the distribution of resources from the RSVP Resource Module.

Sec. 203.86 What is in a G&G report?

This report supports the reserve and resource estimates used in the economic evaluation and must contain each of the following elements.

(a) Seismic data which includes:

- (1) Non-interpreted 2D/3D survey lines reflecting any available state-of-the-art processing technique in a format readable by MMS and specified by the deep water royalty relief guidelines;
- (2) Interpreted 2D/3D seismic survey lines reflecting any available state-of-the-art processing technique identifying all known and prospective pay horizons, wells, and fault cuts;
- (3) Digital velocity surveys in the format of the GOM region's letter to lessees of 10/1/90;
- (4) Plat map of ``shot points;' ' and
- (5) ``Time slices;' ' of potential horizons.

(b) Well data which includes:

- (1) Hard copies of all well logs in which--
 - (i) The 1-inch electric log shows pay zones and pay counts and lithologic and paleo correlation markers at least every 500-feet,
 - (ii) The 1-inch type log shows missing sections from other logs where faulting occurs,
 - (iii) The 5-inch electric log shows pay zones and pay counts and labeled points used in establishing resistivity of the formation, 100 percent water saturated (R<INF>o</INF>) and the resistivity of the undisturbed formation (R<INF>t</INF>), and
 - (iv) The 5-inch porosity logs show pay zones and pay counts and

labeled points used in establishing reservoir porosity or labeled points showing values used in calculating reservoir porosity such as bulk density or transit time;

- (2) Digital copies of all well logs spudded before December 1, 1995;
- (3) Core data, if available;
- (4) Well correlation sections;
- (5) Pressure data;
- (6) Production test results;
- (7) Pressure-volume-temperature analysis, if available; and

(8) A table listing the wells and completions, and indicating which sands and fault blocks will be targeted for completion or recompletion.

(c) Map interpretations which includes for each reservoir in the field:

(1) Structure maps consisting of top and base of sand maps showing well and seismic shot point locations;

(2) Isopach maps for net sand, net oil, net gas, all with well locations;

(3) Maps indicating well surface and bottom hole locations, location of development facilities, and shot points; and

(4) An explanation for excluding the reservoirs you are not planning to develop.

(d) Reservoir-specific data which includes:

(1) Probability of reservoir occurrence with hydrocarbons;

(2) Probability the hydrocarbon in the reservoir is all oil and the probability it is all gas;

(3) Distributions or point estimates (accompanied by explanations of why distributions less appropriately reflect the uncertainty) for the parameters used to estimate reservoir size, i.e., acres and net thickness;

(4) Most likely values for porosity, salt water saturation, volume factor for oil formation, and volume factor for gas formation;

(5) Distributions or point estimates (accompanied by explanations of why distributions less appropriately reflect the uncertainty) for recovery efficiency (in percent) and oil or gas recovery (in stock-tank-barrels per acre-foot or in thousands of cubic feet per acre foot);

(6) A gas/oil ratio distribution or point estimate (accompanied by explanations of why distributions less appropriately reflect the uncertainty) for each reservoir;

(7) A yield distribution or point estimate (accompanied by explanations of why distributions less appropriately reflect the uncertainty) for each gas reservoir; and

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(8) Reserve or resource distribution by reservoir.

(e) Aggregated reserve and resource data which includes:

(1) The aggregated distributions for reserves and resources (in BOE) and oil fraction for your field computed by the resource module of our RSVP model;

(2) A description of anticipated hydrocarbon quality (i.e., specific gravity); and

(3) The ranges within the aggregated distribution for reserves and resources that define the development and production scenarios presented in the engineering and production reports. Typically there will be three ranges specified by two positive reserve and resource points on the aggregated distribution. The range at the low end of the distribution will be associated with the conservative development and production scenario; the middle range will be related to the most likely development and production scenario; and, the high end range will be consistent with the optimistic development and production scenario.

[63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998, as amended at 67 FR 1879, Jan. 15, 2002]

Sec. 203.87 What is in an engineering report?

This report defines the development plan and capital requirements for the economic evaluation and must contain the following elements.

(a) A description of the development concept (e.g., tension leg platform, fixed platform, floater type, subsea tieback, etc.) which includes:

(1) Its size along with basic design specifications and drawings; and

(2) The construction schedule.

(b) An identification of planned wells which includes:

(1) The number;

(2) The type (platform, subsea, vertical, deviated, horizontal);

(3) The well depth;

(4) The drilling schedule;

(5) The kind of completion (single, dual, horizontal, etc.); and

(6) The completion schedule.

(c) A description of the production system equipment which includes:

(1) The production capacity for oil and gas and a description of limiting component(s);

(2) Any unusual problems (low gravity, paraffin, etc.);

(3) All subsea structures;

(4) All flowlines; and

(5) Schedule for installing the production system.

(d) A discussion of any plans for multi-phase development which includes the conceptual basis for developing in phases and goals or milestones required for starting later phases.

(e) A set of development scenarios consisting of activity timing and scale associated with each of up to three production profiles (conservative, most likely, optimistic) provided in the production report for your field (Sec. 203.88). Each development scenario and production profile must denote the likely events should the field size turn out to be within a range represented by one of the three segments of the field size distribution. If you send in fewer than three scenarios, you must explain why fewer scenarios are more efficient across the whole field size distribution.

[63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998, as amended at 67 FR 1880, Jan. 15, 2002]

Sec. 203.88 What is in a production report?

This report supports your development and production timing and product quality expectations and must contain the following elements.

(a) Production profiles by well completion and field that specify the actual and projected production by year for each of the following products: oil, condensate, gas, and associated gas. The production from each profile must be consistent with a specific level of reserves and resources on the aggregated distribution of field size.

(b) Production drive mechanisms for each reservoir.

Sec. 203.89 What is in a deep water cost report?

This report lists all actual and projected costs for your field, must explain and document the source of each cost estimate, and must identify the following elements.

(a) Sunk costs. Report sunk costs in dollars not adjusted for inflation and only if you have documentation.

(b) Appraisal, delineation and development costs. Base them on actual

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spending, current authorization for expenditure, engineering estimates, or analogous projects. These costs cover:

- (1) Platform well drilling and average depth;
- (2) Platform well completion;
- (3) Subsea well drilling and average depth;
- (4) Subsea well completion;
- (5) Production system (platform); and
- (6) Flowline fabrication and installation.

(c) Production costs based on historical costs, engineering estimates, or analogous projects. These costs cover:

- (1) Operation;
- (2) Equipment; and
- (3) Existing royalty overrides (we will not use the royalty overrides in evaluations).

(d) Transportation costs, based on historical costs, engineering estimates, or analogous projects. These costs cover:

- (1) Oil or gas tariffs from pipeline or tankerage;
- (2) Trunkline and tieback lines; and
- (3) Gas plant processing for natural gas liquids.

(e) Abandonment costs, based on historical costs, engineering estimates, or analogous projects. You should provide the costs to plug and abandon only wells and to remove only production systems for which you have not incurred costs as of the time of application submission. You should also include a point estimate or distribution of prospective salvage value for all potentially reusable facilities and materials, along with the source and an explanation of the figures provided.

(f) A set of cost estimates consistent with each one of up to three field-development scenarios and production profiles (conservative, most likely, optimistic). You should express costs in constant real dollar terms for the base year. You may also express the uncertainty of each cost estimate with a minimum and maximum percentage of the base value.

(g) A spending schedule. You should provide costs for each year (in real dollars) for each category in paragraphs (a) through (f) of this section.

(h) A summary of other costs which are ineligible for evaluating your need for relief. These costs cover:

- (1) Expenses before first discovery on the field;
- (2) Cash bonuses;
- (3) Fees for royalty relief applications;
- (4) Lease rentals, royalties, and payments of net profit share and net revenue share;
- (5) Legal expenses;
- (6) Damages and losses;
- (7) Taxes;
- (8) Interest or finance charges, including those embedded in equipment leases;
- (9) Fines or penalties; and
- (10) Money spent on previously existing obligations (e.g., royalty overrides or other forms of payment for acquiring a financial position in a lease, expenditures for plugging wells and removing and abandoning facilities that existed on the application submission date).

[63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998, as amended at 67 FR 1880, Jan. 15, 2002]

Sec. 203.90 What is in a fabricator's confirmation report?

This report shows you have committed in a timely way to the approved system for production. This report must include the following (or its equivalent for unconventionally acquired systems):

(a) A copy of the contract(s) under which the fabrication yard is building the approved system for you;

(b) A letter from the contractor building the system to the MMS's GOM Regional Supervisor--Production and Development, certifying when construction started on your system; and

(c) Evidence of an appropriate down payment or equal action that you've started acquiring the approved system.

Sec. 203.91 What is in a post-production development report?

For each cost category in the deep water cost report, you must compare actual costs up to the date when production starts to your planned pre-production costs. If your application included more than one development scenario, you need to compare actual costs with those in your scenario of most likely development. Also, you must have this report certified by an

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independent CPA according to Sec. 203.81(c).

[63 FR 2618, Jan. 16, 1998, as amended at 67 FR 1880, Jan. 15, 2002]

Subpart C--Federal and Indian Oil [Reserved]

Subpart D--Federal and Indian Gas [Reserved]

Subpart E--Solid Minerals, General [Reserved]