



NEWS RELEASE

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MMS Publishes OCS Alternative Energy and Alternate Use Program Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement

Public Hearings Scheduled for April and May 2007

Washington, DC – The Interior Department’s Minerals Management Service (MMS) is accepting public comments on the draft programmatic environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Alternative Energy and Alternate Use (AEAU) program. The Notice of Availability for the AEAU draft programmatic EIS is listed in the *Federal Register* reading room today. The draft EIS is available for review online at: ocsenergy.anl.gov. Written comments will be accepted through May 21, 2007, and MMS will also hold public hearings on the document in April and May of 2007.

“The draft environmental impact statement is a crucial step in developing the Alternative Energy and Alternate Use Program, and public feedback and participation at this stage of the process is vitally important,” said MMS Director Johnnie Burton. “The public has a unique opportunity to influence the creation of new and promising uses of our Nation's considerable ocean resources, through submission of written comments on the draft EIS or live input at upcoming hearings.”

MMS received authority for the OCS Alternative Energy and Alternate Use Program [under Section 388 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005](#). Under this authority, MMS will regulate alternative energy projects and alternate use of facilities on the OCS. Examples of the general types of alternative energy project activities that MMS has the discretion to authorize include, but are not limited to, wind energy, wave energy, ocean current energy, solar energy, and hydrogen production. Alternate uses of existing facilities may include, but are not limited to, offshore aquaculture, research, education, recreation, and support for offshore operations and facilities.

The Draft Programmatic EIS focuses on potential alternative energy development that may be initiated in the next 5-7 years as well as potential alternate uses of offshore facilities in the same time frame. The programmatic EIS assesses generic impacts from development, operations and decommissioning of alternative energy or alternate use facilities and identifies key issues and mitigation measures that should be considered in subsequent site-specific reviews. MMS expects to file a Final EIS in August 2007 and publish a Record of Decision in September 2007. Target dates for the draft proposed rule are: publish Notice of Proposed Rulemaking at the end of June 2007 and publish the Final Rule in December 2007/January 2008.

Public hearings on the draft programmatic EIS will be held at the following locations:

- April 16, 2007** **Washington, DC – 10 a.m.**
Main Interior Building
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC
- April 24, 2007** **West Long Branch, New Jersey – 7 p.m.**
Monmouth University
400 Cedar Avenue
West Long Branch, NJ
- April 25, 2007** **Melville (Long Island), New York – 7 p.m.**
Melville Marriott
1350 Old Walt Whitman Road
Melville, New York
- April 26, 2007** **Newton (Boston), Massachusetts – 7 p.m.**
Marriott Boston Newton
2345 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02466
- May 1, 2007** **Houston, Texas – 7 p.m.**
Houston Airport Marriott
18700 John F. Kennedy Blvd
Houston, TX
- May 1, 2007** **San Francisco, California – 7 p.m.**
The Presidio
Prince Room, Golden Gate Club
135 Fisher Loop
San Francisco, CA
- May 2, 2007** **Portland, Oregon – 7 p.m.**
Residence Inn & Courtyard North Harbour
1250 N. Anchor Way
Portland, OR
- May 2, 2007** **Miami, Florida – 7 p.m.**
Holiday Inn Miami International Airport
1111 South Royal Poinciana Blvd
Miami Springs, FL
- May 3, 2007** **Charleston, South Carolina – 7 p.m.**
Courtyard by Marriott Charleston
35 Lockwood Drive
Charleston, SC

The public may obtain an electronic copy of the draft programmatic EIS at: ocsenergy.anl.gov. A single printed or CD-ROM copy of the draft programmatic EIS can be requested by writing to the Minerals Management Service, Environmental Assessment Branch Office (MS 4042), 381 Elden Street, Herndon, Virginia, 20170.

MMS is also accepting written comments on the draft programmatic EIS for the next 60 days electronically, using the online comment form at ocsenergy.anl.gov, or by mail to: MMS OCS Alternative Energy and Alternate Use Programmatic EIS, Argonne National Laboratory, 9700 S. Cass Avenue, Argonne, IL 60439.

Comments must be received by May 21, 2007.

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