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## Protecting the Environment: Minerals Management Service Monitoring Activities on the Outer Continental Shelf

As manager of energy and non-energy mineral resources and alternate energy-related uses on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), the Minerals Management Service (MMS) is responsible for ensuring that exploration, development, and production activities on the OCS are safe and environmentally sound. Through its Environmental Program, MMS is involved in all phases of OCS activity, from the development of the Five-Year Leasing Program through the removal of offshore equipment. A particular goal of the Environmental Program is to develop workable solutions for activities that could have an adverse impact on environmental resources. This allows energy development to continue while the environment is safeguarded.

Through its Environmental Assessment Program, MMS manages OCS operations for continued compliance with key Federal statutes including, but not limited to:

- National Environmental Policy Act
- Coastal Zone Management Act
- Endangered Species Act
- Marine Mammal Protection Act
- Sustainable Fisheries Act
- Clean Air Act
- Clean Water Act
- National Historic Preservation Act


Environmental assessment activities include oversight, policy guidance, and direction for environmental regulations affecting OCS activities;

consultation with interested parties; and preparation of environmental impact statements and environmental assessments.

Through the Environmental Studies Program, MMS funds and manages efforts to better understand the OCS environment and the effects of mineral resource exploration and development activities. MMS conducts or requires environmental compliance monitoring to determine conformity with environmental legal mandates, regulations, lease stipulations and conditions of approval. Conditions of approval include mitigation measures and other requirements.



MMS environmental studies seek partnerships with stakeholders who are involved with, or affected by, OCS activities. MMS has established research partnerships with state universities through its Coastal Marine Institute initiatives in Louisiana and Alaska and through cooperative agreements with



universities in California, Mississippi, Texas and Alabama. MMS also participates in the National Oceanographic Partnership Program, a collaborative community of Federal agencies working to improve knowledge of the ocean environment. The MMS is also extensively engaged in the new and evolving Ocean Governance Structure which is outlined in the President's U.S. Ocean Action Plan.

MMS has funded over \$500 million in environmental studies since 1982 and another \$17 million for its Technology Assessment and Research program, which evaluates new, existing or proposed technologies used in the offshore industry. MMS has requested \$2.62 million in its FY 2007 budget for environmental work related to the oil and gas industry.

MMS manages offshore oil and gas exploration as well as renewable and alternative energy sources such as wind, wave, and solar on 1.76 billion acres of the OCS while protecting the human, marine, and coastal environments. The OCS provides 30 percent of oil and 21 percent of natural gas produced domestically, and sand used for coastal restoration. Currently, MMS administers about 8,500 active mineral leases on approximately 47

million OCS acres. To date, OCS lands have yielded more than 155 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and approximately 15 billion barrels of oil for U.S. consumption.



MMS is a leader in securing the nation's domestic energy supply.

For more information, contact MMS's Office of Public Affairs at (202) 208-3985 or visit [www.mms.gov](http://www.mms.gov).