

procedures are set out in revised § 250.34 of Title 30 of the CFR.

Dated: June 29, 1984.

John L. Rankin,

Regional Manager, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region.

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5-Year Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program; Development and Request for Comments

AGENCY: Minerals Management Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of request for comments on the development of a new 5-year Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program.

SUMMARY: Section 18 of the OCS Lands Act, as amended, requires the Secretary of the Interior to solicit suggestions from Federal Agencies, coastal States, and others during the preparation of a new 5-Year OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program. The current leasing program, approved in July 1982, schedules lease sales through mid-1987. The Minerals Management Service intends to prepare a program for the period mid-1986 to mid-1991.

DATES: Comments and information must be received by August 27, 1984.

ADDRESS: Comments and information should be mailed to Deputy Associate Director for Offshore Leasing, Minerals Management Service (MS-641), 12203 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091. Hand deliveries to the Department of the Interior may be made at 18th & C Streets NW., Room 2509, Washington, DC. Envelopes or packages should be marked "Comments on the 5-Year OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Telephone contact may be made with Paul R. Stang, (202) 343-1072, for information on the development of a new 5-Year leasing program.

Author

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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Comments are requested from States, local governments, the oil and gas industry, Federal Agencies, and other interested individuals and groups to assist the Department of the Interior in the preparation of a 5-Year OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program to cover the period mid-1986 to mid-1991. The program preparation effort now underway is

expected to take about 2 years to complete. Approval of the new program in mid-1986 will help provide a smooth transition from the current to the new schedule.

The OCS leasing program schedule enables the Federal Government, affected States, industry, and other interested parties to plan for the steps leading to the offshore lease sales. A decision on whether to proceed with a specific sale on the schedule will be made only after all the applicable requirements of the OCS Lands Act (hereafter called the Act), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, and other statutes have been met.

The program preparation process will follow all the procedural steps set out in section 18 of the Act. The purpose of this Notice is to solicit comments early in the program preparation process pursuant to section 18(c)(1) of the Act.

Your comments will be considered in the analysis required by section 18(a) of the Act. Once this analysis is completed, alternatives to the proposal will be developed which will include a range of schedules varying the timing or location of proposed offshore lease sales.

A draft proposed program will be prepared based on the section 18(a) analysis. The draft proposed program will display planning milestones and will refer to sales by name and number. Respondents should be aware that the following concepts will be considered in its development:

1. Both quantitative and qualitative information will be considered in meeting the requirements of section 18(a) of the Act;

2. Leasing activities under the program should assure receipt of fair market value for the lands leased (this is a statutory requirement of section 18(a)(4) of the Act);

3. A more flexible approach to leasing decisions will be considered for those planning areas in which the demand for additional leasing in the 1986-1991 period is expected to be limited but could be substantially increased by unexpected events.

The list of planning areas with boundaries described in Table 1 is open to comment. These areas will be subject to analysis under section 18 and will be considered as candidates for the draft proposed program. There are 18 such planning areas which are described in the current 5-year leasing schedule. Note also that the list includes planning areas which do not appear on the approved current schedule. These are: Hope Basin, St. Matthew-Hall, Aleutian Basin, Eowers Basin, Aleutian Arc, and Washington-Oregon. Note that the

names of Diapir Field and Barrow Arch have been changed to Beaufort Sea and Chukchi Sea, respectively.

Precise marine boundaries between the United States and opposite or adjacent nations have not been determined in all cases. The maritime boundaries and limits depicted in Table 1 and the attached maps, as well as divisions between planning areas where shown, are for initial planning purposes only. These limits shall not affect or prejudice in any manner the position of the United States with respect to the nature or extent of the internal waters, of the territorial sea, of the high seas, or of sovereign rights or jurisdiction for any purpose whatsoever.

Information Requested

Comments are solicited as follows:

Information and comments submitted at this stage should be general or conceptual in nature and relevant to determining the appropriate overall size, timing, and location of sales to be considered in the leasing schedule. Data and information which support these general views are also requested. As required by section 18(c)(1) of the Act, any suggestions from the executive of any affected local government in an affected State shall be first submitted to the Governor of such State.

A. As noted above, the Secretary is required by section 18(a) of the Act to consider a number of factors in formulating a 5-year leasing program. We would like to have information and your suggestions relevant to the requirements of section 18(a). The following list provides an indication of the kind of information which would be most useful in conducting the section 18(a) analysis. Please note that not all factors may be relevant to all wishing to comment.

(1) Information on the economic, social, and environmental values of the renewable and nonrenewable resources contained in the OCS and the potential impact of oil and gas exploration on other resource values of the OCS and the marine, coastal, and human environments.

(2) Existing information concerning geographical, geological, and ecological characteristics of the regions of the OCS and nearshore environments.

(3) Suggested methods and information for analyzing the sharing of developmental benefits and environmental risks among the various regions (planning areas) and ways to determine what constitutes an equitable sharing.

(4) Other uses of the sea and seabed, including fisheries, navigation, existing

or proposed sealanes, potential sites of deepwater ports, and other anticipated uses of the resources and space of the OCS.

(5) Methods and information for assessing relative environmental sensitivity and marine productivity of the different planning areas of the OCS.

(6) Relevant environmental and predictive information pertinent to offshore and coastal areas potentially affected by OCS development.

(7) The location of planning areas with respect to, and the relative needs of, regional and national energy markets.

We would also like to have information on the availability of transportation networks to bring oil and gas supplies to demand areas, both on a current and projected basis.

B. Industry respondents are asked to address the following information needs in some detail. It should be emphasized that this information will be used to identify areas of potential for oil and gas development. When weighed against comments on possible environmental effects and the results of various environmental and other cost analyses, these expressions of interest play an important role in the section 18 balancing which ultimately determines the size, timing, and location of sales included in the 5-year program.

The following information is requested with respect to the OCS planning areas:

(1) Ranking of planning areas by order of oil and gas potential. To allow comparisons of responses in a consistent format, we ask that a single list be submitted showing areas ranked 1 through 24;

(2) Ranking of planning areas by order of interest in exploration and development, including reasons for any possible differences in this ranking compared to that in item (1); and

(3) Technological feasibility of conducting exploration and development within specified time periods for each planning area or, if appropriate, for specified portions of each planning area.

C. Suggestions are requested for possible revisions in the planning area boundaries described earlier in this Notice, with reasons for any such revisions.

D. Our information and knowledge of the oil and gas resources of the OCS will be more advanced in 1986 compared to 1982 when the current 5-year program was approved. We believe it may be appropriate to examine ways to help assure that we can accommodate this additional information when the new program begins and adjust the program

as further knowledge of the OCS resources and national energy needs evolves. Hence, suggestions are also requested for changes in the leasing process which will allow for a more flexible program while still identifying location and timing as precisely as possible for planning purposes.

Dated: June 14, 1984.

Wm. D. Bettenberg,

Director, Minerals Management Service.

Dated: July 5, 1984.

Approved:

William Clark,

Secretary.

Table 1—Description of Planning Areas

1. *North Atlantic*: Lies offshore of the New England States and is bounded on the west by 71° W. longitude and on the south by approximately 39° N latitude.

2. *Mid-Atlantic*: Extends north from approximately 35° N. latitude along the coast to the intersection of 71° W. longitude thence south along 71° W. longitude to approximately 39° N. latitude, thence east along the 39th parallel.

3. *South Atlantic*: Lies offshore of the States of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida and is bounded on the north by approximately 35° N. latitude.

4. *Eastern Gulf of Mexico*: Lies offshore of Florida and is bounded on the west by approximately 88° W. longitude and on the north and east by Florida.

5. *Central Gulf of Mexico*: Lies south of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama and is bounded on the east by approximately 88° W. longitude. Its western boundary begins at the offshore boundary between Texas and Louisiana and proceeds southeasterly to approximately 28° N. latitude and 93° 30' W. longitude, thence east to approximately 92° W. longitude, and thence south.

6. *Western Gulf of Mexico*: Lies south and east of Texas. It is bounded on the east by the extension of the boundary between Texas and Louisiana and proceeds southeasterly to approximately 28° N. latitude and 93° 30' W. longitude, thence east to approximately 92° W. longitude, and thence south.

7. *Southern California*: Bounded on the north by approximately 34° 30' N. latitude and on the south by the U.S.-Mexico provisional boundary.

8. *Central and Northern California*: Bounded on the south by approximately 34° 30' N. latitude and on the north by approximately 42° N. latitude.

9. *Washington-Oregon*: Lies offshore of these two States and is bounded on the south by approximately 42° N.

latitude and on the north by approximately 48° 30' N. latitude.

10. *Gulf of Alaska*: It is bounded approximately on the west by 151° 55' W. longitude, thence east along 59° N. latitude to 148° W. longitude, thence south to 58° N. latitude, thence east along 58° N. latitude to 147° W. longitude, thence south.

11. *Kodiak*: Lies generally southeast of Kodiak Island. It is bounded on the west by 156° W. longitude. From 156° W. longitude, it extends east along 57° N. latitude, thence northeast to 59° N. latitude, thence to 148° W. longitude, thence south to 58° N. latitude, thence east to 147° W. longitude, thence south.

12. *Cook Inlet*: Lies east of 156° W. longitude and north of 57° N. latitude to the Federal/State boundary south of Kalgin Island.

13. *Shumagin*: Lies southeast of the Alaskan Peninsula. It is bounded on the west by 165° W. longitude, on the east by 156° W. longitude, and on the north by 57° N. latitude.

14. *Aleutian Arc*: Bounded on the east by 165° W. longitude south of the Aleutian Islands chain, 171° W. longitude north of the Aleutian Islands chain, and on the north by 53° N. latitude thence west to 174° E. longitude thence north to 54° N. latitude thence west.

15. *North Aleutian Basin*: Lies in the eastern Bering Sea northwest of the Alaskan Peninsula and south of 59° N. latitude. It is bounded on the west by 165° W. longitude.

16. *St. George Basin*: Lies in the eastern Bering Sea northwest of the Aleutian Islands chain and is bounded on the north by 59° N. latitude and on the west by 174° W. longitude from 59° N. latitude to 56° N. latitude, thence east to 171° W. longitude, thence south. It is bounded on the east by 165° W. longitude.

17. *Bower Basin*: Lies in the Bering Sea north of the Aleutian Islands chain. It is bounded on the north by 56° N. latitude, on the east by 171° W. longitude, on the south by 53° N. latitude west to 174° E. longitude, thence north to 54° N. latitude, thence west.

18. *Aleutian Basin*: Lies in the Bering Sea north of the Bowers Basin area. It is bounded on the south by 56° N. latitude, and on the east by 174° W. longitude from 56° N. latitude to 58° N. latitude, thence west to 180° W. longitude, thence north.

19. *Navarin Basin*: Lies in the western Bering Sea west of St. Matthew Island and south of 63° N. latitude. It is bounded on the northwest by the U.S. - Russia Convention Line of 1867, on the

east by 174° W. longitude, on the west by 180° W. longitude, and on the south by 58° N. latitude.

20. *St. Matthew-Hall*: Bounded on the north by 63° N. latitude, on the west by 174° W. longitude, and on the south by 59° N. latitude.

21. *Norton Basin*: Lies south and southwest of the Seward Peninsula. It is bounded on the south by 63° N. latitude, on the west by the U.S. - Russia

Convention Line of 1867, and on the north by 65° 34' N. latitude.

22. *Hope Basin*: Lies north of the Seward Peninsula and is bounded on the west by the U.S. - Russia Convention Line of 1867, on the north by 68° 17' N. latitude and on the south by 65° 34' N. latitude.

23. *Chukchi Sea*: Bounded on the south by 68° 17' N. latitude, on the west by the U.S. - Russia Convention Line of 1867. The northern boundary extends

west along 71° N. latitude from the state territorial sea to 162° W. longitude, thence north from this juncture along 162° W. longitude.

24. *Beaufort Sea*: Lies offshore of Alaska in the Beaufort Sea and the Arctic Ocean. It is bounded on the west by the Chukchi Sea planning area and extends eastward to the limit of U.S. jurisdiction.

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