



NEWS RELEASE

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

NEWS MEDIA CONTACT
Nicolette Nye, 703/787-1011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, May 22, 2006

MMS Seeks Comments on OCS Safety and Environmental Management Systems

Agency issues Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

WASHINGTON – The Minerals Management Service (MMS) is seeking comments to improve the regulatory approach to Safety and Environmental Management Systems (SEMS) for energy operations conducted in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). SEMS is a nontraditional, performance-focused tool for integrating and managing offshore operations. The purpose of SEMS is to enhance the safety and cleanliness of operations by reducing the frequency and severity of accidents. The MMS has asked industry to voluntarily adopt SEMS.

“We believe the effective use of SEMS would improve the safety and environmental performance of oil and gas operations on the OCS,” said MMS Director Johnnie Burton. “We are considering a range of options for ensuring industry compliance with the regulations.”

In an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) published in today’s [Federal Register](#), MMS is seeking to improve the current voluntary regulatory approach to SEMS in order to minimize injuries, fatalities, accidents, fires, explosions, collisions, pollution incidents, or damage to the marine environment on the OCS. MMS also requests comments on a regulatory scheme that would allow companies with outstanding performance records to operate under an alternative compliance program, and on improving the efficiency of the current regulatory system by making it more responsive to innovative approaches and technological and environmental changes.

(MORE)

MMS is accepting comments for the next 90 days. All comments must be identified with 1010-AD15, and can be submitted electronically through MMS's Public Connect on-line commenting system, <https://ocsconnect.mms.gov>; by email at rules.comments@mms.gov ; by fax at 703-787-1546; or via mail to:

Minerals Management Service
Attention: Rules Processing Team (RPT)
381 Elden Street, MS-4024
Herndon, Virginia 20170-4817

-- MMS --

R-06-3508