



NEWS

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Secretary Norton Announces Area of Proposed 181 Lease Sale on Outer Continental Shelf

(WASHINGTON) - Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton today proposed a Notice of Sale for oil and natural gas production in a portion of the Outer Continental Shelf, also known as Sale 181. The area in the eastern Gulf of Mexico was first proposed by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and President Bill Clinton after negotiations with Florida Governor Lawton Chiles and other coastal governors in 1997.

"We have listened and worked carefully with officials and affected citizens around the 181 lease area. The outcome is a balanced and common sense proposal," said Secretary Norton. "[Our modified 181 area](#) has been adjusted from 5.9 million acres to 1.5 million. The adjusted area is at least 100 miles from any portion of the Florida coast. For example, it's northern border is more than 100 miles from Pensacola, Florida and the eastern edge is 285 miles from the shores of Tampa Bay.

"The 181 Area proposed today will help our nation reduce our dependence on foreign oil, including unstable nations such as Iran and Iraq. The proposal also works to meet the President's commitment to develop our nation's energy needs in an environmentally safe way.

"The Department projects the adjusted area contains 1.25 trillion cubic feet of natural gas - enough to serve one million U.S. families for 15 years. The area also contains 185 million barrels of oil - enough to fuel the automobiles of a million families for nearly six years.

"The funds from this and other lease sales are an important source of revenue to help protect our nation's environment and our natural resources. Since 1982, the Department has collected \$110.4 billion from onshore and offshore leases. Over \$16.3 billion of those resources have gone to fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This is one more example of this administration's pledge to help protect our most precious national treasures for future generations of Americans," concluded Secretary Norton.

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