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SHELIKOF STRAIT DEFERRED FROM PROPOSED OCS SALE 149 (#40005)

The Shelikof Strait area will be deferred from a proposed federal offshore oil and gas lease sale in the Cook Inlet Planning Area, the U.S. Interior Department's Minerals Management Service (MMS) announced today.

"As part of the public comment process on development of the sale proposal, we have been working closely with local government and the general public to better understand and address their concerns," said MMS Director Tom Fry.

"I believe that significant progress has been made in addressing the public's concerns," he said. "Consistent with this Administration's policy to resolve conflicts, further progress is possible if we are able to concentrate our efforts in the Cook Inlet area."

The revised proposed sale area in the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) would encompass 403 blocks covering about 2.0 million acres. In response to concerns expressed about potential environmental effects in other portions of the proposed sale area, the draft EIS will also evaluate alternatives to defer additional portions of the proposed sale area and special mitigating measures, Fry said.

The area to be considered in the draft EIS compares with 3.7 million acres in the initial proposal. As a result of today's decision, the draft EIS will be delayed until later this year.

-MMS-

Subject: PR-1/27/94 Sale 149/Shelikof Strait Deferred from Proposed OCS Sale 149 (#40005)