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MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE SUPPORTS  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE VOTE TO CONTINUE OUTER  
CONTINENTAL SHELF MORATORIA

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) supports today's House Appropriations Committee's vote to continue current moratorium on leasing in certain areas offshore the United States, MMS officials announced today.

Today's vote reverses the June 20, vote by the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior. Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) moratoria provisions for certain areas offshore California, Washington, Oregon, the Atlantic seaboard, the Florida Gulf Coast and the Alaska coast, have been included in the Department of the Interior's Appropriations Act since fiscal year 1982.

"MMS and this Administration support continuance of the OCS moratoria," said MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman. "We have been working with states and local communities to assure them that no leasing would occur off their coasts until we resolve conflicts and have addressed their concerns over development of known natural gas and oil reserves under existing leases in their areas. Lifting the moratoria would have been premature and caused unnecessary contention," she added.

Quarterman said that MMS will continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure all OCS leasing decisions are based on sound science, concern for the environment and wise use of the nation's natural resources.

No offshore leasing is planned in the areas under moratoria through June 1997, when the current 5-Year Program for OCS Oil and Gas Leasing expires. The Department has begun preparation of the next 5-Year Program for July 1997 through June 2002, and will be releasing its draft proposed plan for public comment this summer.

MMS is the federal agency that manages the nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral resources on the OCS, and collects and disburses about \$4 billion yearly in revenues from offshore federal mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on federal

and Indian lands.

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