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CONTACT: Tom DeRocco
(202) 208-3983

INTERIOR REFOCUSSES REINVENTION FOR MMS

The Interior Department announced today that it will focus its efforts to reinvent and streamline the Minerals Management Service (MMS) within its current structure rather than devolving it to the states and tribes.

Interior's announcement comes in response to concerns that the MMS's key stakeholders raised about its earlier devolution proposal.

Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Bob Armstrong, said, "This has been a constructive dialogue. As the National Performance Review suggests, we've consulted with our stakeholders and we've listened to them. The dialogue from the July 18-19 Denver outreach meeting, added to other comments we've received, have provided valuable feedback and constructive information for MMS. It is now time to move on and focus instead on other streamlining initiatives for MMS."

"Clearly, stakeholders have agreed that neither the status quo, nor the devolution proposal, are acceptable. Between these two ends of the spectrum, we must forge a program that better meets the needs of all constituents," said MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman.

"The reinvention process continues," said Armstrong. "MMS will now move forward with its many current and planned streamlining initiatives. The bureau will also continue to work with all constituents to look for new, creative ways to conduct its business better. I hope that the new Royalty Policy Committee will join forces with us to advance the streamlining options put on the table over the past four months."

Added Quarterman, "Working with our stakeholders has been an important part of what we have done for the last three years. We will keep looking for ways to trim costs, work smarter and more efficiently, and meet our royalty collection responsibilities."

The proposal to transfer the Offshore Energy and Minerals Management Program to another federal agency is also withdrawn.

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