

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Office of Communications**

For Release: April 10, 1996

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MMS ASKS FOR INDICATIONS OF INTEREST IN ALASKA SALES

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) is asking potential bidders to indicate whether they have a continuing interest in three future Alaska offshore natural gas and oil lease sales.

In a notice published in the April 10 Federal Register, the agency asks industry to identify areas of interest outlining groups of blocks using MMS's Beaufort Sea Sale 144 maps; Cook Inlet Sale 149 maps; for the Gulf of Alaska/Yakutat Sale 158, comments should address whether MMS should continue preparations for the sale or defer the area for consideration in the 5-Year Program for 1997-2002. The three sales are included in the 5-Year Program for 1992-1997, and are in various stages of the pre-sale process. Agency officials said all indications of interest and comments containing confidential information will be deemed proprietary information. The agency is asking for responses by April 25.

Beaufort Sea Sale 144 is currently scheduled for late September 1996 with the final environmental impact statement (EIS) due to be filed in May.

Cook Inlet Sale 149 is currently scheduled for late June 1996.

Gulf of Alaska/Yakutat Sale 158 preparations have been proceeding toward a proposed mid-1997 sale date. Recent information from industry, however, showed much less interest in the area among companies which had earlier supported the proposal.

MMS is the federal agency that manages the Nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral resources on the OCS, and collects, accounts for 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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