

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

FOR RELEASE: May 30, 1996

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MMS TO CONSIDER FEDERAL SAND AND GRAVEL SALE OFFSHORE NEW JERSEY

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) published a Request for Interest and Information (RFIN) in the May 21 Federal Register soliciting industry interest in obtaining sand and gravel leases on federal tracts off the coast of northern New Jersey.

The RFIN also seeks other information that would be relevant to a decision on whether to hold a competitive lease sale, which would be the first federal sand and gravel sale ever. If a sale is held, the sand and gravel resources are expected to be used for a broad range of onshore commercial purposes. Certain proposed dredging restrictions are also noted in the RFIN.

"We issued the RFIN in response to a request for a sand and gravel lease sale received in February," said MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman. "MMS is particularly interested in receiving any comments pertaining to geological, biological, environmental, archeological, navigational, recreational, commercial, social, economic, and multiple use considerations."

The area under consideration begins three nautical miles from shore and extends seaward from 11 to 45 nautical miles offshore the New Jersey coast. North to south, the planning area extends from Sandy Hook to near Surfside, NJ, a distance of about 57 nautical miles. No more than 160 whole or partial blocks would be considered for a sale. If a sale is held, it would probably consist of considerably fewer than 160 blocks according to Quarterman. A block is nine square miles or about 5,760 acres.

Written comments should be sent to MMS at 381 Elden Street, Herndon, VA 22070 by July 20, 1996. Fax: (703) 787-1284.

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 mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on federal and Indian lands.

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MMS Internet website address: <http://www.mms.gov>
24 hour Fax-on-Demand Service: (202) 219-1703