

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

NEWS RELEASE

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**TRANSPORTATION AND INTERIOR DEPARTMENTS
REACH NEW AGREEMENT CONCERNING OFFSHORE PIPELINES
ON THE OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF**

The U.S. Department of the Interior's (DOI) Minerals Management Service (MMS) announced today the signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Transportation governing pipelines operating on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). Both departments had been jointly regulating offshore pipelines under a May 1976 agreement. In 1994, however, the National Academy of Sciences' Marine Board recommended that to make better use of inspection resources and help integrate DOI and DOT marine pipeline safety regulations, the inspection tasks under DOT regulations offshore should be performed by MMS under a new interagency agreement.

Under provisions of the agreement, DOI's Minerals Management Service and DOT's Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) will consult and cooperate in future rulemakings to ensure technical compatibility between their respective regulations and to avoid unnecessary or burdensome requirements for OCS pipeline operators.

"This Administration is dedicated to ensuring public safety through common-sense oversight. It's important that we continue to coordinate our efforts to reap the benefits of increased efficiency by eliminating duplicative work, which has led to some confusion in the past," said MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman. "This new MOU was developed over a period of time with extensive involvement of our customers. We began in May 1995 with a *Federal Register* notice requesting public comments. In May 1996, we met with a joint industry workgroup representing OCS oil and natural gas producers and transmission pipeline operators. Both agencies agreed with a proposal developed by the workgroup, which recommended a resolution of jurisdictional boundary issues to MMS and RSPA. Under the MOU, MMS would have regulatory responsibility for producer-operated facilities and pipelines, and RSPA would have responsibility for transportation pipelines and associated pumping or compressor facilities."

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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