

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

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**MMS ISSUES SECOND MULTI-SALE CALL FOR GULF OF MEXICO SALES**

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) today published a Federal Register notice requesting information for four tentatively scheduled Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) lease sales in the Western Gulf of Mexico: Sales 171, 174, 177 and 180. The first western Gulf sale in the new 5-year program for 1997-2002, scheduled for August 1997, was covered in an environmental impact statement (EIS) filed in December 1996.

This is the second issuance of a multi-sale Call by MMS for proposed Gulf of Mexico (GOM) sales in the new 5-Year Program. A multi-sale call for Central GOM sales in the new 5-year program was published in August 1996.

A multi-sale EIS will be prepared in lieu of a separate draft and final EIS for each of the proposed sales. Proposals will include all available unleased acreage in the Western Gulf of Mexico planning area offshore Texas and in deeper water offshore Louisiana. The area available for nominations and comment consists of approximately 35.9 million acres, of which about 28.4 million acres are unleased.

"MMS has more than a dozen years of leasing at an annual pace in the western and central Gulf of Mexico," said MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman. "That experience has shown that the sale proposals in these two areas are very similar from one year to the next. By modifying our prelease planning and decision process for lease sales in these areas, we're eliminating redundancy, and working smarter and more efficiently. That's good for the federal government, state governments and the energy industry."

Quarterman said that after the first sale, MMS will prepare either an environmental assessment or supplemental EIS and a consistency determination for each sale that follows. A draft EIS is expected to be published in November 1997 and a final EIS published in May 1998.

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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