



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

NEWS RELEASE

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MMS CALLS FOR PUBLIC INPUT IN REVIEWING REGULATIONS

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) published its annual notice requesting public comments on significant regulations in the June 12, 1998, *Federal Register*.

"MMS has spent the last five years focusing on customer service by ensuring our regulations are necessary, effective, and are written in plain language. As we move in the direction of performance-based regulations, we are asking for comments on how we can reward exceptional performance by industry with regulatory relief. We're looking for ideas on which regulations can be more performance-based and less prescriptive," said MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman.

The notice gives the public an opportunity to comment on MMS regulations that should be eliminated or revised and informs the public on how MMS has acted on the 57 comments received in response to notices published in March 1994, May 1995, May 1996, and April 1997.

Quarterman added, "For example, when asked to consider appropriate leak rates for offshore safety devices, MMS initiated a research project to investigate the industry concerns. The first testing results are due this fall. On the Royalty Management Program side, legislation passed in 1996 allowed MMS to pay interest for overpayments of royalty on oil and gas leases on Federal lands for the first time. To expedite this, MMS issued two "Dear Payor" letters in 1997 initiating the new process. We're also developing a rule on interest payments which we hope to publish for comment this year."

Written comments must be received by August 11, 1998. Mail comments to the U.S. Department of the Interior; Minerals Management Service; Mail Stop 4230; 1849 C Street, NW; Washington, D.C. 20240; Attention: Bettine Montgomery, MMS regulatory coordinator, Policy and Management Improvement.

MMS is the Federal agency that manages the Nation's natural gas, oil, and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf, and collects, accounts for, and last year disbursed about \$6 billion in revenues from offshore Federal 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