

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

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**FOR RELEASE:**

December 8, 1999

***NEWS RELEASE***

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**MMS PROPOSES CHANGES TO RULE FOR PROSPECTING FOR MINERALS OTHER THAN OIL,  
NATURAL GAS, AND SULPHUR**

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) is proposing changes to a regulation that applies to prospecting for minerals other than oil, natural gas, and sulphur in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). The proposal will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 8, 1999. Comments from the public will be accepted until February 7, 2000.

The proposed rule (30 CFR Part 280) will establish consistency for activities related to all minerals on the OCS and make it parallel with the regulations found in 30 CFR Part 251 Geological and Geophysical (G&G) Explorations of the Outer Continental Shelf for oil, gas, and sulphur.

The proposed changes include:

- a requirement that operators must notify MMS of all scientific research activities conducted in the OCS
- clarification of third party obligations when the third party obtains information collected under a permit.
- uniform proprietary terms for geological information so data for all minerals will be protected for the same amount of time.

The proposed regulation also includes language about reimbursements for reasonable costs of reproducing data and information, and language in cases where coastal zone consistency review is required.

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

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