



U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region



News Release

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MMS Announces Area Identification and Public Scoping Meetings for Proposed Eastern Gulf of Mexico Sale 181

The Interior Department's Minerals Management Service (MMS) today announced the area to be studied in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for proposed Sale 181. Sale 181 in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico (EGOM) is tentatively scheduled for December 2001.

The area identified for study in the Sale 181 EIS covers a small portion of the EGOM Planning Area offshore Alabama and the Florida Panhandle. It includes 1,033 blocks covering 5.9 million acres (see attached map). This is the same area identified as available for leasing consideration for Sale 181 in the 1997-2002 OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program. During development of this 5-Year Program, the MMS consulted with the States of Alabama and Florida and was responsive to their concerns in identifying the Sale 181 area. The MMS considers all of this area to have potential for the discovery of accumulations of hydrocarbons. None of the EGOM area (69,636,243 acres) outside the Sale 181 area is available for leasing in this 5-year program. In addition, in a June 1998 announcement, the President withdrew from leasing until 2012 numerous areas of the OCS, including all of the EGOM outside the area identified as available for leasing consideration for Sale 181.

Currently, 39 blocks covering 224,640 acres within the 1,033-block study area are under lease (this figure may change before the sale if any of the leases become expired, relinquished, or terminated). Eight wells have been drilled in the area. At this time industry has submitted plans to develop two areas in the EGOM Planning Area: Destin Dome Blocks 1 and 2 (four wells from two surface locations; and DeSoto Canyon Blocks 133 and 177 (two wells in each block). Both of these areas are along the western boundary of the Sale 181 study area and may be associated with well-developed areas of the Central Gulf of Mexico Planning Area.

The MMS will prepare a draft EIS, which will discuss the proposal and alternatives for oil and gas leasing in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico. In order to provide an early and open process for determining the scope of the EIS and for identifying the significant issues, alternatives, and potential mitigating measures to be addressed in the EIS, MMS will hold scoping meetings.

The scoping meetings are scheduled on the dates and at the times and locations indicated below:

Place	Civic Center Port Sulphur, Louisiana
Date	Monday, July 19, 1999
Time	7-10 p.m.

Place Ramada Plaza Hotel, 600 South Beltline Highway
Mobile, Alabama

Date Tuesday, July 20, 1999

Time 6-10 p.m.

Place Civic Center, 505 West Pensacola Street
Tallahassee, Florida

Date Wednesday, July 21, 1999

Time 2-6 p.m.

Place New World Landing, 600 South Palafox Street
Pensacola, Florida

Date Thursday, July 22, 1999

Time 6-10 p.m.

Place Plantation Inn, 1381 West Tunnel Boulevard
Houma, Louisiana

Date Tuesday, July 27, 1999

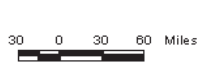
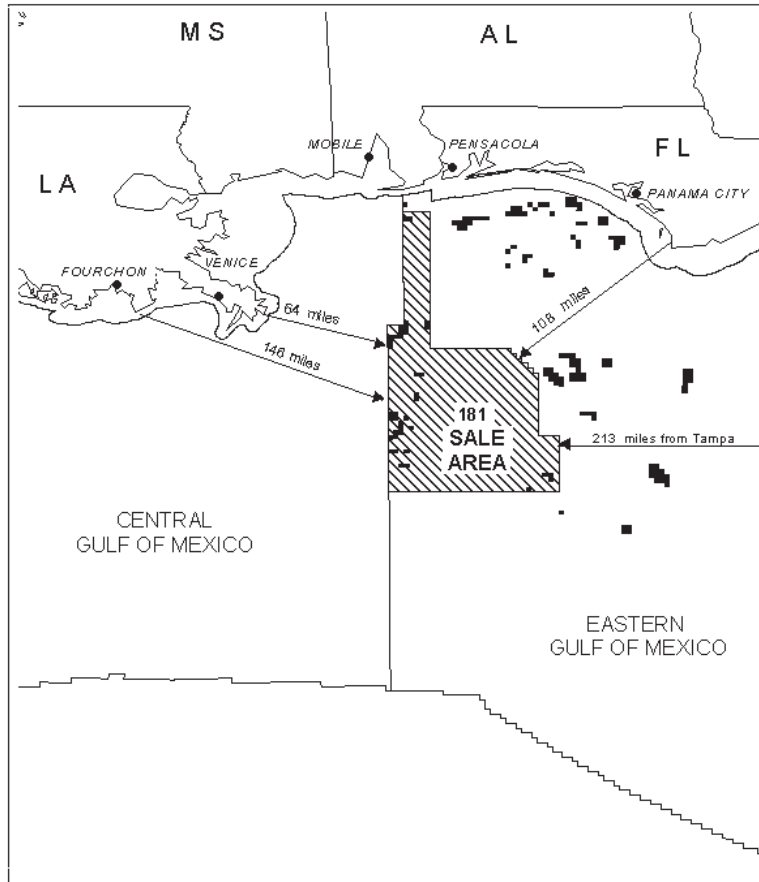
Time 7-10 p.m.



For background and current information visit Sale 181 website:

<http://www.gomr.mms.gov/homepg/offshore/egom/sale181.html>

MMS is the Federal Agency that manages the Nation's oil and gas and other mineral resources on the OCS 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 Indian lands.

Eastern Gulf of Mexico Proposed Sale 181



-  Available for Leasing Consideration
-  Active Leases