



NEWS RELEASE

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MMS to hold Public Hearing in Charleston *Agency to Address Draft Environmental Impact Statement for OCS Alternative Energy and Alternate Use Program*

WASHINGTON – The Interior Department’s Minerals Management Service (MMS) will hold a public hearing in Charleston, South Carolina on Thursday, May 3, 2007 to solicit comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Alternative Energy and Alternate Use Program.

The hearing will be held at 7 p.m. at the Courtyard by Marriott Charleston, 35 Lockwood Drive, Charleston, South Carolina.

Statements on the DEIS, both oral and written, will be recorded at the hearing. Speakers should arrive early to allow time to register to testify at the hearing. Time limits may be set on oral testimony to allow time for all speakers to participate. Public transportation is suggested as parking near the venue is extremely limited.

MMS released the draft EIS on March 20, 2007. The public may obtain an electronic copy of the draft EIS at: ocsenergy.anl.gov. MMS is also accepting written comments on the draft programmatic EIS through May 21, 2007 electronically at ocsenergy.anl.gov, or by mail to MMS OCS Alternative Energy and Alternate Use Programmatic EIS, Argonne National Laboratory, 9700 S. Cass Avenue, Argonne, IL 60439.

MMS received authority for the OCS Alternative Energy and Alternate Use Program under the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (mms.gov/offshore/RenewableEnergy/EPAct2005Sec388.pdf.) Under this authority, MMS will regulate alternative energy projects and alternate use of facilities on the OCS. Examples of the general types of alternative energy project activities that MMS has the discretion to authorize include, but are not limited to, wind energy, wave energy, ocean current energy, solar energy, and hydrogen production. Alternate uses of existing facilities may include, but are not limited to, offshore aquaculture, research, education, recreation, and support for offshore operations and facilities.

The Draft Programmatic EIS focuses on potential alternative energy development that may be initiated in the next 5-7 years as well as potential alternate uses of offshore facilities in the same time frame. The programmatic EIS assesses generic impacts from development, operations and

decommissioning of alternative energy or alternate use facilities and identifies key issues and mitigation measures that should be considered in subsequent site-specific reviews. MMS expects to file a Final EIS in August 2007 and publish a Record of Decision in September 2007. Target dates for the draft proposed rule are: publish Notice of Proposed Rulemaking at the end of Summer 2007 and publish the Final Rule in Fall 2008.

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