



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

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Gulf of Mexico Deepwater Operations and Activities: Environmental Assessment

[OCS Report MMS 2000-001](#)

The Minerals Management Service (MMS) of the Department of the Interior has published an environmental assessment on the potential effects of deepwater Gulf of Mexico oil and gas exploration, development, and production. The assessment, [Gulf of Mexico Deepwater Operations and Activities: Environmental Assessment](#) (MMS Publication number 2000-001), (*Internet Note: PDF file size 5.3 MB; If you experience problems when opening in browser, right click on the link, for Explorer click Save Target As, for Netscape click Save Link As, and save to a local directory. Open saved file in Acrobat Reader.*) reports that MMS has found most deepwater operations to be substantially the same as those in conventional, shallow-water on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), and that no environmental impact statement is required.

The environmental assessment, directed to government officials and the public, has the following objectives:

- Ensuring that deepwater activities are safe and environmentally sound;
- Determining which oil and gas deepwater activities are substantially different from those in the shallower water of the OCS, and those that are substantially the same;
- Identifying and evaluating possible impacts of those activities;
- Developing and evaluating necessary mitigation measures to offset any negative impacts;
- Identifying needed research and study topics regarding deepwater development and its impact on environmental resources; and
- Summarizing deepwater technologies, activities, and impacts.

Charged with managing the development of OCS natural gas and oil resources while protecting the environment and human safety, MMS prepared this environmental assessment of deepwater operations by using the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. The Agency found that NEPA documents, established project-specific and program reviews, and existing mitigation measures adequately protect the environment and human life. Those activities substantially different from shallow-water operations on the OCS can be addressed through additional mitigation measures, preparation of a more-detailed environmental assessment or environmental impact statement, or through additional research and scientific studies. Those mitigation measures proposed by the present environmental assessment will be studied by a team of scientists.

You can obtain copies of the environmental assessment from the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, Public Information Office (MS 5034), 1201 Elmwood Park Blvd., New Orleans, LA 70123-2304, or by telephoning 1-800-200-GULF, and asking for publication MMS 2000-001. There is no charge. You can read the assessment on the MMS website at www.gomr.mms.gov, or at selected Federal Depository Libraries. You will also be able to obtain this report shortly from the National Technical Information Service of the U. S. Department of Commerce, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, VA 22161, telephone (703) 487-4650, fax (703) 321-8547, rush orders 1-800-336-4700.

Questions on the Assessment can be directed to Ms. Deborah Cranswick in the Leasing and Environment Office at (504) 736-2744; questions on deepwater operations can be addressed to Mr. Jim Regg in the Field Operations Office at (504) 736-2843. Written questions can be sent to the above address.

The MMS is the Federal Agency that manages the Nation's oil, natural gas, and other mineral resources on the OCS; and collects, accounts for, and disburses about \$4 billion in yearly revenues from offshore Federal mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on Federal and American Indian lands.

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MMS's Website Address: <http://www.mms.gov>

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