

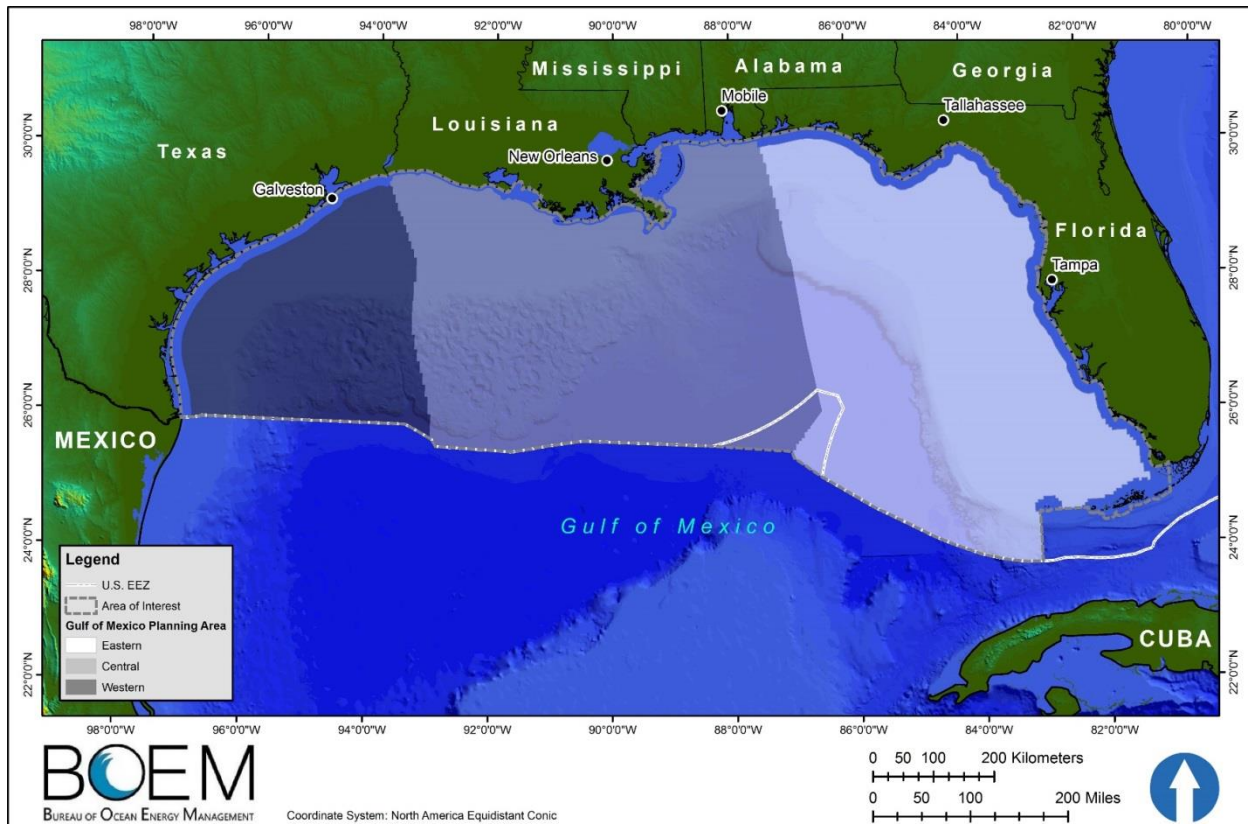
# U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Gulf of Mexico OCS Region

## ***SPECIAL INFORMATION***

August 2017

### **BOEM Issues a Notice of Availability for the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Geological and Geophysical Activities in the Gulf of Mexico**

The U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) announces the availability of the *Gulf of Mexico OCS Geological and Geophysical Activities: Western, Central, and Eastern Planning Areas; Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement* (Programmatic EIS). This Programmatic EIS analyzes the potential environmental effects of geological and geophysical (G&G) activities within Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) waters of the Gulf of Mexico in support of BOEM's Oil and Gas, Renewable Energy, and Marine Minerals Programs. This Programmatic EIS focuses particularly on the potential environmental effects of off-lease and on-lease geological (bottom sampling and test drilling) and geophysical (deep-penetration, high-resolution geophysical, electromagnetic, deep stratigraphic, and remote sensing) surveys.



This Programmatic EIS establishes a framework for BOEM to guide subsequent National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses of site-specific actions and identifies and analyzes appropriate mitigation measures to be used during future G&G activities on the OCS in support of BOEM's Oil and Gas, Renewable Energy, and Marine Minerals Programs. BOEM will

analyze the potential impacts of future site-specific actions in subsequent NEPA evaluations (40 CFR § 1502.20), which will tier from the Final Programmatic EIS.

BOEM and the National Marine Fisheries Service published a combined Notice of Intent to Prepare a Programmatic EIS with a public comment period and a series of public meetings in the *Federal Register* on May 10, 2013. The Notice of Intent sought input on the scope of the Programmatic EIS for proposed G&G activities in the Gulf of Mexico.

A Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft Programmatic EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on September 30, 2016 (81 FR 67380), opening a 60-day comment period that closed on November 29, 2016. BOEM also held a series of public meetings in Metairie, Louisiana; Mobile, Alabama; Gulfport, Mississippi; Houston, Texas; and Fort Walton Beach, Florida. An announcement of the dates, times, and specific locations of the public hearings was included in the NOA for the Draft Programmatic EIS. Since publication of the Draft Programmatic EIS, BOEM has reviewed public comments received, provided responses, and revised the document to address substantive comments; conducted an extensive search for information; and reviewed scientific journals and available scientific data and information from academic institutions and Federal, State, and local agencies.

BOEM will be printing and distributing a very limited number of paper copies. In keeping with the Department of the Interior's mission of the protection of natural resources and to limit costs while ensuring the availability of the document to the public, BOEM will primarily distribute digital copies of the Final Programmatic EIS on compact discs. However, if you require a paper copy, BOEM will provide one upon request if copies are still available.

1. You may obtain a copy of the Final Gulf of Mexico G&G Programmatic EIS from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, Attention: Public Information Office (GM 335A), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394 (1-800-200-GULF).
2. You may download or view the Final Gulf of Mexico G&G Programmatic EIS on BOEM's websites at <http://www.boem.gov/GOM-G-G-PEIS/> and <http://www.boem.gov/nepaprocess/>.

A *Federal Register* notice announcing the availability of the Final Programmatic EIS was published on August 4, 2017.

For further information on the Gulf of Mexico G&G Programmatic EIS, please visit our website at <http://www.boem.gov/GOM-G-G-PEIS/>, and if you have questions concerning the Programmatic EIS process, please call Mr. Greg Kozlowski at 504-736-2512.

If you would like to receive announcements for public meetings and the availability of our environmental documents for Gulf of Mexico OCS activities, please submit your name and contact information to BOEM at <https://www.data.boem.gov/Other/EmailSubscriptions/Default.aspx>. You may also request to be removed from the current BOEM mailing list in the same way.