



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

SPECIAL INFORMATION

FOR RELEASE:

November 22, 2002

**Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement  
and Locations and Dates of Public Hearings on  
Proposed Eastern Planning Area Lease Sales 189 and 197**

The U.S. Department of the Interior, Minerals Management Service (MMS) announces the availability of the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and dates of public hearings on proposed Eastern Planning Area (EPA) Lease Sales 189 and 197. This Draft EIS addresses two proposed Federal actions that offer for lease areas on the Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) in the EPA that may contain economically recoverable oil and gas resources. Federal regulations allow for several related or similar proposals to be analyzed in one EIS (40 CFR 1502.4). Since each proposed lease sale and its projected activities are very similar, a single EIS is being prepared for the two proposed EPA lease sales scheduled in the *Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program: 2002-2007* (the 5-Year Program). Under the 5-Year Program, proposed Lease Sale 189 is scheduled for 2003, while proposed Lease Sale 197 is scheduled for 2005. At the completion of this EIS process, a decision will be made only for proposed Lease Sale 189. An additional National Environmental Policy Act review will be conducted in the year prior to proposed Lease Sale 197 to address any new information relevant to that proposed action.

Two public hearings will be held in order to give interested parties an opportunity to comment on this Draft EIS. The public hearings are scheduled as follows:

- **Harahan, Louisiana:** Wednesday, January 8, 2003, 1:00 p.m., Hampton Inn and Suites, 5150 Mounes Street, and
- **Mobile, Alabama:** Thursday, January 9, 2003, 2:00 p.m., AdamsMark Hotel, 64 South Water Street.

Registration will begin one hour prior to each hearing. You may register in advance by calling Ms. Janet Diaz at (504) 736-2540. Time limitations may make it necessary to limit the length of each oral presentation. You may supplement your oral statement with a written statement that should be submitted at the time of the hearing. Each hearing will briefly recess when all speakers have testified. If there are no additional speakers after the recess, the hearing will adjourn immediately.

Interested parties should submit written comments on this Draft EIS to [environment@boemre.gov](mailto:environment@boemre.gov) or Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, Office of Leasing and Environment, Attention: Regional Supervisor (MS 5410), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394. The comment period closes on January 24, 2003. Comments, including the names and home address of respondents, will be made available for public review. You may request that your name, home address, or both be withheld from the public record by stating so at the beginning of your submission. The MMS will honor such a request to the extent allowable by law. All comments submitted by organizations and businesses or by individuals identifying themselves as representatives of organizations and businesses will be made available for inspection in their entirety. Anonymous comments will not be considered.

You may find out which libraries along the Gulf Coast have copies of this Draft EIS for review or obtain a copy of this Draft EIS by contacting the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, Public Information Office (MS 5034), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, Room 114, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394 (1-800-200-GULF). A list of libraries and their locations is also available on the MMS Internet website at <http://www.mms.gov>. Gulf Coast Libraries with MMS's Environmental Impact Statements website at <http://www.gomr.mms.gov/homepg/regulate/envIRON/libraries.html>.

The MMS is the federal agency that manages the Nation's oil, natural gas and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf in federal offshore waters. The agency also collects, accounts for and disburses mineral revenues from federal and Indian leases. These revenues totaled nearly \$10 billion in 2001 and more than \$120 billion since the agency was created in 1982. Annually, nearly \$1 billion from those revenues go into the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the acquisition and development of state and federal park and recreation lands.

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