



**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Minerals Management Service  
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***NEWS RELEASE***

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**NEW 5-YEAR PROGRAM FOR OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF OIL AND GAS  
LEASING FOR 2002-2007 IS APPROVED**

Interior Secretary Gale Norton has approved the Minerals Management Service's 5-Year Program for oil and natural gas lease sales on the Outer Continental Shelf for 2002-2007. The program schedules 20 lease sales in eight OCS planning areas in the Gulf of Mexico and off Alaska.

"The Secretary's approval of the new program is the culmination of an 18-month process during which MMS and the Department of the Interior consulted with coastal states, the public at large, the environmental community and the natural gas and oil industry," said MMS Director Johnnie Burton. "The new program supports the President's National Energy Policy and will help meet the future energy needs of our country in an environmentally sound manner."

Oil and gas produced from the OCS currently provides about one-fourth of the total produced in the United States. New technology has opened up new areas for offshore drilling in the past decade, with 35 rigs currently exploring in water depths of more than 1,000 feet.

The MMS estimates the new 5-year program will make available from 10 to 21 billion barrels of oil and 40 to 60 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. This is enough oil to meet the nation's transportation needs - fuel for every commercial and private vehicle in America - for two to five years. It is enough natural gas to heat, cool and run appliances for every home in America for two to three years. In addition, the program will generate thousands of jobs, produce billions of dollars in revenue for the federal and state governments, and provide oil to fill the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

The first lease sale scheduled under the new program is Western Gulf of Mexico Sale 184, which is slated for August 21, 2002 in New Orleans.

MMS is the federal agency in the U.S. Department of the Interior 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 close to \$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 parks and recreation lands.

--MMS-20 Years of Service to America--

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MMS Internet website address: <http://www.mms.gov>