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Minerals Management Service and American Bureau of Shipping Sign Memorandum of Agreement for Scientific and Technical Cooperation

Scientific and technical cooperation relative to offshore oil, gas and minerals activities will be the focus of a Memorandum of Agreement signed today by the American Bureau of Shipping and the Minerals Management Service.

The purpose of the MOA is to establish a formal framework for the augmentation of scientific and technical collaboration between ABS and MMS with respect to offshore oil and gas operations. Cooperative activities in these fields may include exchanges of technical information on safety of personnel and offshore installations; cooperative research relative to risk and reliability of operations; fixed offshore facilities, pipelines and floating production facilities (including floating production, storage and offloading facilities—FPSOs); development and evaluation of standards and guidelines; accident or incident investigations; as well as other activities.

“Both ABS and MMS seek to provide mutual support to each other to extend the capabilities of our respective programs and activities,” said MMS Deputy Director Walter Cruickshank.

The ABS has long been associated with the traditions of the sea as a not-for-profit, non-governmental ship classification society. Since 1862 when it was chartered by the state of New York, ABS has been deeply involved in marine developments and innovations. Its mission is to promote the security of life and property on the seas, and protect the natural environment, primarily through the development and verification of standards for the design, construction and operational maintenance of marine and offshore oil and gas facilities.

“It is vital to the credibility and mission of the MMS to maintain close contact with all elements of the offshore community as we meet the many technological challenges associated with deepwater developments,” said Cruickshank. “The MMS and ABS will jointly support standards and guideline

developments, as well as cooperative research which will be targeted toward improved safety, pollution prevention and operational efficiency of offshore oil and gas facilities.”

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 American Indian leases. These revenues totaled over \$6 billion in 2002 and nearly \$127 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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