

**The NewsRoom**

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## **MMS Changing Proprietary Term of Certain Geophysical Information**

### *Geophysical Data Extension from Exploration of the Outer Continental Shelf*

**WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) yesterday published a final rule in the Federal Register that will enable companies to request extensions to the length of time the agency treats their data as proprietary.

The new rule provides the opportunity for companies to apply for an extension to the proprietary term for data collected through geophysical operations under permit, e.g., seismic surveys. Currently, the MMS treats such data as proprietary for a term of 25 years. The new rule, which will take effect September 14, 2009, will allow companies to request a five year extension to that term under certain conditions.

"In today's energy environment," said MMS Associate Director, Offshore Energy and Minerals Management Chris Oynes, "it is imperative that we develop our domestic resources responsibly. This new rule will encourage companies to reprocess old data using new technology and modeling systems to gain a better understanding of the resources available on the Outer Continental Shelf."

The new rule was designed to allow companies sufficient time to market geophysical information that may not otherwise have been reprocessed.

"The opportunity to apply for an extension to the proprietary term provides greater potential for a company to realize the commercial benefits of the data they've analyzed," Oynes said. Because the companies are required to share the data with the MMS, it also will give us a better understanding of available resources and will enable us to make more informed decisions regarding offshore energy development."

The final rule can be found at: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-19198.pdf>

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