



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Agreement Sets Path for Aleutians East Borough Partnership with the Department of the Interior, Minerals Management Service

Anchorage, Alaska - The Aleutians East Borough and the Minerals Management Service recently signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that outlines a cooperative arrangement between the two that will ensure local interests are considered during the evaluation of Proposed North Aleutian Basin Oil and Gas Lease Sale 214 in Alaska's Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).

“MMS is pleased to have the Borough as a partner in this planning process,” said MMS Alaska Regional Director John Goll. “Borough leaders and staff bring a wealth of knowledge about Bristol Bay, its people, their concerns, and their economies which will help us evaluate the proposal for Lease Sale 214.”

“It’s very important that the Borough is at the table throughout this planning process,” said Aleutians East Borough Mayor Stanley Mack. “The Borough has consistently supported leasing in the North Aleutian Basin, provided maximum protection is given to fishery and subsistence resources. Ensuring that offshore exploration and development is conducted in an environmentally safe manner is also crucial. We’re very pleased to have come together to sign the Memorandum of Agreement and are going forward with the process,” added Mack.

Using provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the MOA provides a framework for coordination, communication, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas and information between the MMS and the Borough. The Borough will serve as a cooperating agency, pursuant to provisions of NEPA, under which the MMS is preparing an environmental impact statement for Lease Sale 214.

The area included in the proposal is believed to be natural gas-prone and is located in the southeastern Bering Sea offshore the Borough and the western end of the Aleutian Peninsula. The area under consideration in the North Aleutian Basin Planning Area proposed for the sale covers about 5.6 million acres. The Sale is proposed for 2011.

The Aleutians East Borough stretches from the Alaska Peninsula to the easternmost Aleutian Islands. There are five incorporated cities and two unincorporated villages within the boundaries of the borough which encompasses more than 6,900 square miles of land and more than 8,000 square miles of water.

As the steward of mineral resources on the OCS, MMS is responsible for all phases of mineral resource management in Federal waters, about 1.76 billion acres of submerged lands. Oil from the OCS contributes approximately 27 percent of total U.S. oil production and approximately 15 percent of total U.S. natural gas production.

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