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MMS EXTENDS COMMENT PERIOD ON GULF OF MEXICO LEASING
POLICIES
(#40002)

The U.S. Interior Department's Minerals Management Service (MMS) today announced that it is extending a call for public comment on general policies for managing natural gas and oil resources in the Central and Western Gulf of Mexico (GOM).

The original call for comments was issued Dec. 11, 1993. Comments were to be accepted by MMS through February 7, 1994. Today's announcement extends the comment period by 30 days, until March 9, according to MMS Director Tom Fry.

"A number of people had asked for more time to make comments," Fry said. "We're gratified to see the depth of public interest in these issues, and we're happy to extend the comment period."

Basic leasing policies now in use in the GOM were established more than a decade ago. Since that time, Fry said, many of the conditions facing the industry have changed. "MMS," he said, "is interested in continuing a dialogue relative to developing a leasing system that will work best for all concerned."

Fry noted that MMS has not expressed a preference for any alternative to present policies. He said the agency is particularly interested in hearing from as broad a spectrum of interested parties as possible. "This call for formal public comment is only part of a continuing opportunity for dialogue between MMS and our constituents," he said.

Responses to the call for comments should be mailed to the Program Director, Office of Program Development and Coordination, Minerals Management Service (MS-4430), 381 Elden St., Room 1324, Herndon, VA 22070.

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