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INTERIOR SECRETARY BABBITT NAMES FIVE NEW
MEMBERS TO THE OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF
SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt has named five scientists to the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Scientific Committee of the Minerals Management Advisory Board. The new appointees to the 15-member committee are:

* Eric A. Crecelius, Ph.D., Technical Group Manager, Marine Chemistry & Ocean Processes, Battelle Pacific Northwest Division Marine Sciences Laboratory, Sequim, Washington;

* Steven N. Murray, Ph.D., Professor of Biological Science, California State University, Fullerton;

* Henry J. Niebauer, Ph.D., Professor of Marine Science, School of Fisheries and Ocean Science, University of Alaska, Fairbanks;

* William W. Schroeder, Ph.D., Professor and Coordinator of the Marine Science Program, University of Alabama, Dauphin Island; and,

* Douglas Wartzog, Ph.D., Associate Vice-Chancellor for Research and Dean of the Graduate School, University of Missouri, St. Louis.

"The OCS Scientific Committee members advise the Director of the Minerals Management Service (MMS) and the Secretary of the Interior on the feasibility, appropriateness and scientific value of the agency's Environmental Studies Program," explained MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman. "We feel fortunate to have these five scientists agree to join us in such an important endeavor. Their expertise and credentials in their chosen field are impeccable, and we look forward to working with them."

Quarterman said that the main function of the Environmental Studies Program (ESP) is to obtain environmental information through research to be considered in the decision-making process at all stages of the offshore oil, gas and minerals management

program. The program operates under the following objectives:

- * to provide information on the status of the environment upon which the prediction of impacts of OCS minerals extraction may be based;
- * to provide information on the ways and extent that OCS minerals extraction can potentially impact the human, marine and coastal environments;
- * to ensure that information already available or being collected under the program is in a form that can be used in the decision-making process associated with a specific leasing action, exploration and development activities and other OCS minerals management responsibilities; and,
- * to provide a basis for future monitoring of OCS operations, including assessments of short-term impacts attributable to the OCS minerals management program.

The OCS Scientific Committee reviews the relevance of proposed studies and of data being produced by the program, and may recommend changes in the program's scope, directions and emphasis.

Members are appointed on the basis of their scientific competence, reputation within their particular fields of expertise and ability to evaluate important elements of the OCS Environmental Studies Program. An effort is made to balance membership with respect to technical skills and geographic representation. Committee members are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior for two-year terms, and may be appointed to serve two additional two-year terms. Except for reimbursement of travel and per diem expenses, committee members serve without compensation.

The MMS is the federal agency that manages the Nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral resources on the OCS, and collects and disburses about \$4 billion yearly in revenues from offshore federal mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on Federal and Indian lands.