

FOR RELEASE: December 14, 1995

CONTACT: Tom DeRocco
(202) 208-3983

Michael Baugher
(303) 231-3162

MMS GETS "HAMMERED" BY VICE-PRESIDENT FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) will receive Vice President Al Gore's Hammer Award for pioneering work writing regulations in plain English, leading to much improved customer service, agency officials announced today.

The Hammer Award is the Vice President's answer to the \$600 hammer of yesterday's government and, fittingly, consists of a framed \$6.00 hammer, ribbon and a notecard from Vice President Gore. The award is given in recognition of worker teams that exemplify the four principles of President Clinton's National Performance Review (NPR):

- * put customers first;
- * cut red tape;
- * empower employees; and,
- * get back to basics.

"MMS's Using Plain English Team developed clear, easy-to-read and understand regulations, and demonstrated for agencies throughout government how to write regulations that make government work better for people," said NPR Project Manager Robert Stone.

Stone, who will present the award in ceremonies in Denver on Wednesday, December 19, said that MMS's plain English regulations also make it easier for customers to comply; reduce potential for mistakes and misunderstanding; lessen customer frustration; reduce the need for customers to seek clarification; and increase customers' trust and confidence in their government.

"I'm immensely proud of our staff, their commitment to quality and their response to the President's challenge to make government work better for its citizens," said MMS Director

Cynthia Quarterman. "MMS employees recognize that poorly written regulations impose a burden on our customers of having to guess what government wants or requires, and they are working to eliminate the guesswork."

The MMS effort was so successful that the contractor retained by the Department of the Interior to train its staff on plain-English writing, now includes MMS work products among the models in a recently published handbook, *Readable Regulations: Eleven Models*.

The National Park Service, General Services Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, and Veterans Health Administration will also receive the award for their NPR accomplishments.

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

-MMS-

EDITORS NOTE:

- 1) Date/Time/Location: 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, December 19, 1995, at the Veterans Benefits Administration, Regional Office (Auditorium), 155 Van Gordon, Lakewood, Colorado
- 2) Should there be a shutdown of government after December 15, the presentation may be rescheduled.