

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Office of Communications**

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Call for Information and Nominations and Request for Information To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for Four Proposed Federal Gas and Oil Lease Sales in the Western Gulf of Mexico

We need your information!

The Minerals Management Service (MMS) has published the Call for Information and Nominations and the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for four proposed Western Gulf of Mexico gas and oil lease sales. The specific sales included in this action are Sales 171,174, 177, and 180 tentatively scheduled in August of each year beginning in 1998 and running through 2001. The Call and Notice were published in the January 29, 1997, issue of the Federal Register Notice (62FR4322-4325).

The Call and Notice of Intent are information-gathering steps to ensure that all interests and concerns regarding the specific sales are communicated to the MMS. The Call requests nominations and comments from both industry and environmental groups on areas of interest or special concerns. The information gathered in the Call assists in the determination of areas to be offered for lease. The Notice of Intent initiates an information-gathering process used in developing the EIS that will be prepared for the areas identified for leasing by the Call process. Federal agencies and State and local governments and other interested parties are requested to send their written comments on the scope of the EIS. For example, with regard to previous impact statements such issues are

- Are there any additional significant issues that should be addressed?
- Does MMS adequately address the environmental effects (direct, indirect, and cumulative) projected as a result of OCS activities?
- Are there additional alternatives that should be considered?
- Are there any additional significant resources that should be analyzed?
- Are there any data gaps that should be considered in preparation of this document?
- Are there additional mitigative measures that should be considered?

The proposed action analyzed in the EIS will be each of the four remaining sales on the 5-year schedule for the Western Gulf of Mexico Planning Area. The EIS will include an analysis of the environmental effects of holding one sale, a sale "typical" of any in the planning area, which may be held in the remainder of the 5-year program.

Comments on the Notice of Intent should be received within 45 days following the publication date in the Federal Register, i.e., no later than March 16, 1997. Responses may be sent by FAX to (504) 736-2407 or mailed to the following address:

Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region
Office of Leasing and Environment
Attention: Regional Supervisor (MS 5400)
1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard
New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394

Specific information on the Notice of Intent may be obtained from Ms. Deborah Cranswick at (504) 736-2744 or Mr. George Hampton at (504) 736-2465. Specific information on the Call for Information and Nominations may be

obtained from Mr. Charles Hill at (504) 736-2795.

Copies of the Call/Notice of Intent may be obtained from the Public Information Office at (800) 200-GULF or (504) 736-2519.

MMS is the federal agency that manages and regulates the Nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), and collects, accounts for, and disburses about \$4 billion each year from offshore mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on federal and Indian lands.

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