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**MMS ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR PROPOSED BEAUFORT SEA SALE 170
AND MODIFICATION OF THE SALE AREA**

Today, the Department of the Interior, Minerals Management Service (MMS) announced the availability of the Proposed Notice of Sale for Beaufort Sea Sale 170. The sale is planned for August 1998. MMS Associate Director Carolita Kallaur made the announcement during a speech at the Whaling Captains Convention in Barrow, Alaska. The proposal has been forwarded to Alaska's Governor Knowles for his comments with a final decision on the sale due in July.

"Blocks offshore the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) are not included in the Proposed Notice of Sale," noted Kallaur. "By not offering any tracts offshore ANWR in this sale, additional time can be taken to further assess the possible cumulative effects on the refuge. We will carefully monitor progress in offshore technology, emergency response plans, and subsea pipelines as part of this Administration's unwavering commitment to protect ANWR and its critically important resources," remarked Kallaur.

"In making this proposal, the MMS considered the comments received from the Alaska Outer Continental Shelf Advisory Committee, a body established and chartered to provide a forum for stakeholders in Alaska to make recommendations regarding Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) lease sales," Kallaur added.

The Proposed Notice of Sale more closely matches the area offered by the State of Alaska in its successful November sale. The notice also includes a proposal that is similar to that adopted by the State to protect Nuiqsut's bowhead whale subsistence harvest in the Beaufort Sea. This Proposed Notice places the area within 10 miles of Cross Island in a special zone that requires industry to obtain certain agreements with the North Slope Borough and the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission prior to the installation of permanent facilities.

Consideration of the area offshore ANWR for leasing will be deferred until the next scheduled federal lease sale in the Beaufort Sea. OCS Lease Sale 176 is scheduled for 2000 and will follow the State of Alaska's Beaufort Sea Areawide Sale to be conducted in 1999. The results of Alaska's areawide sale will provide important information for consideration before Federal OCS Sale 176.

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 last year disbursed about \$6 billion in revenues from offshore federal mineral leases and onshore mineral leases on federal and Indian lands.

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