

MMS Alaska OCS Region

News Release

For Immediate Release-
January 29, 2002

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MMS Identifies Area for Beaufort Sea Sale 186—Multi-Sale EIS To Be Prepared

The Minerals Management Service will study a 9.7 million-acre area of the Beaufort Sea identified for inclusion in the next federal outer continental shelf lease sale. The area to be evaluated in an environmental impact statement contains 1,877 whole and partial blocks from three to approximately 60 nautical miles offshore and stretches east from Barrow to the Canadian border.

The EIS for Sale 186 will evaluate the three Beaufort Sea oil and gas lease sales included in the draft 5-Year Program, 2002-2007; Sales 186, 195, and 202. It is the first time the agency has prepared a multi-sale EIS for the Beaufort Sea although a similar process was used in the Central and Western Gulf of Mexico for all sales in the 1997-2002 5-Year Program. Sale 186 is tentatively scheduled for 2003. The subsequent sales are tentatively scheduled for 2005 and 2007, respectively.

The draft EIS will be released for public review in May 2002. MMS will hold public hearings on the draft EIS in communities adjacent to the sale area and in Anchorage. MMS will continue to work closely with local communities and user groups throughout the process. MMS is also working with local communities to integrate traditional knowledge into the EIS process.

MMS has conducted seven Federal oil and gas lease sales in the Beaufort Sea since 1979 and issued 688 leases. Industry drilled 30 exploratory wells. Only 54 leases remain. Ten leases were determined by MMS to be producible. One, BP's Northstar Project, came on line in November 2001 and is currently providing 45 thousand barrels of oil per day to the Trans Alaska Pipeline.

Copies of the Area Identification map for Sale 186 are available at or by writing to the MMS Information Resource Center in Anchorage. The address is Minerals Management Service at 949 East 36th Avenue, Room 308, Anchorage, Alaska, 99508-4363. Copies may also be obtained by calling toll-free 1-800-764-2627.

MMS is the federal agency in the U.S. Department of the Interior that manages the nation's natural gas, oil, and other mineral resources on the outer continental shelf in federal offshore waters. The agency also collects, accounts for, and disburses mineral revenues from federal offshore leases and federal and Indian onshore mineral leases. These revenues totaled nearly \$8 billion last year and more than \$110 billion since the agency was created in 1982.

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