
News Release

For Immediate Release

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MMS Defers OCS Sales in Cook Inlet, Chukchi Sea, and Gulf of Alaska

The Minerals Management Service announced that it was deferring proposed OCS lease sales offshore Alaska in the Chukchi Sea, the Gulf of Alaska, and Cook Inlet. Sales will be considered for these areas in the next 5-Year Plan which goes into effect in June 2002.

“During the past few months, we have been talking to the companies active in Alaska to check the pulse of industry interest in more OCS sales,” said MMS Alaska Regional Director John Goll. “Companies expressed a continuing interest in Cook Inlet, the Chukchi Sea, and the Gulf of Alaska, but not in the near future,” Goll added.

MMS’s decision to defer these sales was made in light of the current drop in oil prices and the status of operations in Cook Inlet and on the North Slope.

“Companies are interested in developing those areas closest to established infrastructure,” Goll said. “Industry is focusing on projects such as Liberty and Northstar plus proposed leasing in NPR-A and on State lands. By deferring these three sales, we be able to learn more about the areas of industry interest and complete many of the ongoing studies being conducted in these areas.”

In addition to deferring three sales, MMS will delay proposed OCS lease sale 176 for one year. MMS will begin the formal process for the sale until late summer 1999 with a projected sale date of 2001.

The MMS is the federal agency that manages and regulates the nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf, and collects, and last year disbursed about \$6 billion in revenues from offshore federal mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on federal and Indian lands.

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