

Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program 2012-2017

As part of the Administration’s all-of-the-above energy strategy to expand safe and responsible domestic production, the Department of the Interior’s OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2012-2017 makes all of the areas with the highest-known resource potential available for exploration and development. The Program, completed by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), advances a regionally tailored approach that is designed to account for the distinct needs of the areas across the OCS.



Making the areas with highest-known resource potential available

The Program schedules 15 potential lease sales in six offshore areas, including those with the highest resource potential of any OCS areas. The first sale in the Program, Lease Sale 229, was held November 28, 2012 in the Western Gulf of Mexico. The Program has scheduled 14 additional sales in offshore areas with active leases and known or anticipated hydrocarbon potential – including the Western and Central Gulf of Mexico (GOM), the portion of the Eastern GOM not currently under Congressional moratorium, and the Chukchi Sea, Beaufort Sea and Cook Inlet, offshore of Alaska. These areas’ significant resource potential is described in the table below.

Resources Estimates for the 2012 - 2017 Program			
Planning area	Estimated Undiscovered Technically Recoverable Resources		
	Oil (Bbbl)	Gas (Tcf)	Barrels of Oil Equivalent (Bbbl)
Central Gulf	30.47	130.91	53.76
Chukchi Sea	15.38	76.77	29.04
Western Gulf	12.38	69.45	24.74
Beaufort Sea	8.22	27.64	13.14
Cook Inlet	1.01	1.20	1.23
Eastern Gulf (area not under Congressional moratorium)	0.25	0.65	0.36
Total Program	67.71	306.62	122.27
Total OCS	88.59	398.37	159.49

Advancing a regionally targeted approach

Offshore oil and gas leasing should not be “one size fits all,” and the Program recognizes the distinct needs of regions across the OCS and accounts for factors including current and developing information about resource potential; maturity of infrastructure to support oil and gas resource development – including emergency response assets; regional interest and local communities’ concerns; and the overall need for a balanced approach to our use of the Nation’s shared natural resources.

Total Acreage offered in the Five Year Program	
Total OCS	218.94 million
Alaska	125.19 million
GOM	93.75 million
Alaska	
Chukchi Sea	55.11 million
Beaufort Sea	64.72 million
Cook Inlet	5.36 million
Gulf of Mexico	
Western	28.58 million
Central	64.51 million
Eastern	0.66 million

Gulf of Mexico

The majority of scheduled lease sales (12) are in the GOM, which currently supplies more than a quarter of U.S. domestic oil production, where resource potential is best understood, and where there is mature infrastructure to support the oil and gas industry. For the Western and Central GOM, the Program schedules annual area wide sales of all available, unleased acreage, as has been the typical practice in these areas. Additionally, since a portion of the Eastern GOM Planning Area was made available for leasing under the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA), there are two scheduled sales there. The remainder of the Eastern GOM planning area is under Congressional moratorium.

Offshore Alaska

The Program schedules three potential sales offshore Alaska, one each in the Chukchi Sea and Beaufort Sea Planning Areas that span the Alaskan Arctic, and one in the Cook Inlet Planning Area off of South-Central Alaska.

One of the key elements of the Program is an innovative, targeted approach to offshore leasing in the Arctic that accounts for the significant resource potential of Arctic areas; environmental protection; and the social, cultural and subsistence needs of Native Alaskan communities. This forward-leaning approach aims to maximize the availability of oil and gas resource potential in areas made available for leasing while minimizing potential conflicts with environmentally sensitive areas and subsistence use. Drawing on the best information available, including traditional knowledge from Native Alaskan communities, scientific research, and information about geology and resource potential (including information developed as a result of any upcoming exploration), BOEM will design potential Arctic

lease sales in a way that best balances factors such as resource potential, subsistence use, and environmental considerations. This analysis will help define the specific features of Arctic sales – like the size and location of the sale area and the terms and conditions to ensure that any leases are developed responsibly.

Atlantic

The Program does not include areas off the Atlantic coast for leasing. While a preliminary OCS development strategy announced in early 2009 included the Mid- and South Atlantic Planning Areas, a number of specific considerations supported the decision not to schedule lease sales in these areas at this time, including the outdated nature of resource evaluation information and concerns raised by the Department of Defense (DoD). BOEM is pursuing a specific strategy for the Atlantic that is focused on expediting efforts to facilitate updated resource evaluation to support future leasing decisions. This includes completing an environmental review that could support approval of new seismic and other survey activity in the Mid- and South Atlantic as early as 2013. BOEM continues to work with DoD and others to identify and resolve potential conflicts that have been identified in this region. For example, DoD previously identified significant conflicts with nearly 80 percent of the proposed Sale 220 area offshore of Virginia. Further, longer term analysis and planning regarding the infrastructure and resources necessary to support oil and gas activity is also needed for the Atlantic.

Pacific

Areas off the Pacific coast are not included, consistent with recommendations from governors from across the West Coast, as well as local agencies.

Engaging in a transparent lease-sale planning process

BOEM is implementing a number of measures to enhance the effectiveness and transparency of the pre-lease planning process and to encourage stakeholder feedback in the design of potential lease sales. These tools include an [alternative and mitigation tracking table](#) that will allow commenters to track the status of their recommended mitigation measures and exclusion areas, and [interactive maps](#) that can be found on the [Five Year Program website](#). BOEM will also publish an annual progress report on the Five Year Program with updates on program implementation.