

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**MMS ANNOUNCES CALL FOR INFORMATION FOR
GULF OF ALASKA/YAKUTAT SALE 158**

The Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) has announced a Call for Information and Nominations and Notice of Intent (CALL/NOI) to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for an oil and gas lease sale, Sale 158--Gulf of Alaska/Yakutat. The sale is tentatively scheduled for mid-1995.

"With the Nation continuing to import oil at an alarming rate, it is important for us to find, produce and develop the energy resources offshore the United States," said MMS Director Scott Sewell.

The CALL/NOI constitutes an early data gathering step in the three-year pre-lease sale planning process to ensure that all interests and concerns regarding specific sales are communicated to MMS. The CALL, which outlines the area to be considered for leasing and the area MMS believes has hydrocarbon potential, requests nominations from industry on areas of interest and information from interested parties on environmental or special concerns. The NOI begins the "scoping" process used in preparation of the EIS, and is designed to involve Federal agencies, State and local governments, and other interested parties.

MMS Regional Director Alan D. Powers noted that decisions on specific blocks to be offered for leasing or possible special environmental protection measures to be applied to leases will be made after completion of a comprehensive evaluation. "If we proceed with the leasing process, this will include preparation of a draft EIS, issuance of a Proposed Notice of Sale, public hearings, preparation of a final EIS, consultation with the Governor of Alaska, and consideration of all comments," Powers said.

(more)

The area detailed in the Call is situated offshore the State of Alaska in Federal waters in the Gulf of Alaska near Yakutat and extends approximately 70 nautical miles into the Gulf of Alaska. The area available for nominations and comments consists of approximately 1307 whole and partial blocks encompassing about 7.2 million acres.

Nominations and comments on the Call are due 45 days after publication in the Federal Register. Written comments on the scope of the EIS, significant issues which should be addressed, and alternatives which should be considered will be accepted until October 5, 1992. Responses should be sent to:

Minerals Management Service
Alaska OCS Region
Regional Supervisor, Leasing and Environment
949 East 36th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99508-4302.

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NOTICE TO EDITORS: A DETAILED FACT SHEET IS ATTACHED.