

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**MMS ISSUES PROPOSED NOTICE OF SALE  
FOR COOK INLET SALE 149**

The proposed Notice of Sale and draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Lease Sale 149 in Alaska's Cook Inlet has been issued by the Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS). The Notice proposes offering 402 blocks covering about 2 million acres in Cook Inlet. The proposed sale is currently scheduled for the summer of 1996.

"Even though 402 blocks will be offered," said acting MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman, "no more than 250 leases can be issued, and they will have lease terms of five years."

Quarterman said the Alaska Regional Office has been carrying out an extensive outreach effort for the past several years. "Since March of 1991, our people have held 50 meetings with interested groups in a dozen communities," she declared, "and we'll be conducting workshops in key areas next month with public hearings scheduled for March."

In response to public concern about the water quality of Cook Inlet, MMS contracted with the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) to complete a water quality study in Cook Inlet. The results indicate that water quality in Cook Inlet is good, notwithstanding oil exploration, development, and production occurring in Upper Cook Inlet in State waters for the past 33 years.

Approximately \$2.6 million has been invested to date on other environmental and socio-economic studies exclusive to the area relating to oil spills, physical oceanography, fisheries, and marine mammals of Cook Inlet.

The proposed Notice of Sale and draft EIS may be obtained by written request to the Alaska OCS Region, Minerals Management Service, Room 603, 949 E 36th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska, 99508-4302, Attn: Library, or by telephone (907) 271-6691.

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