

MMS Alaska OCS Region

News Release

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MMS Holds Open House to Discuss First Steps for Beaufort Sea Multi-Sale Environmental Impact Statement

The Minerals Management Service is holding three "Open Houses" on the North Slope to begin the first step for a proposed Beaufort Sea Multi-Sale environmental impact statement. Open Houses will be held in Barrow, Kaktovik, and Nuiqsut in October. Three sales are proposed for the Beaufort Sea Planning Area Program between 2002 and 2007 under the draft proposed 5-Year Program currently being reviewed.

Open Houses are scheduled for Nuiqsut, Tuesday, October 16, from 7-10 p.m. at the Nuiqsut Community Center; Barrow, Thursday, October 18, from 7-10 p.m. in the North Slope Borough Council Chambers; and in Kaktovik, Friday, October 19, from 7-10 p.m. at the Kaktovik Community Center. A meeting will be scheduled in Anchorage for later in the month. MMS will answer questions about the proposal and seek input from local residents on important environmental, social, or economic issues that could arise from a sale in this area. MMS will continue to evaluate issues, if new ones are identified in the future. MMS is especially interested in hearing about any new issues or information that have arisen over the past 2 years.

MMS is proposing to prepare a single EIS for all three proposed Beaufort sales. After completion of the EIS for proposed Sale 186 in 2003, MMS will prepare either an environmental assessment or if necessary a supplemental EIS and a consistency determination for each subsequent sale, Sale 195 in 2005, and Sale 202 in 2007. The public will be asked to comment on each sale proposal.

The Beaufort Sea planning area is located offshore Alaska's northern coast. It extends from 3 to approximately 60 nautical miles offshore in water depths generally ranging from about 25 to 200 feet. The area covers about 9.9 million acres and extends from the Canadian Border on the east to Barrow on the West. All current leases are within 3 to 12 miles of the coast or barrier islands.

For more information about the Open House, please call Robin Cacy at 907-271-6070 or call toll-free at 1-800-764-2627, or via e-mail at akwebmaster@mms.gov.

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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