

lease WYW127411 effective September 1, 2005, under the original terms and conditions of the lease and the increased rental and royalty rates cited above. BLM has not issued a valid lease affecting the lands.

Pamela J. Lewis,
Chief, Branch of Fluid Minerals Adjudication.
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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CA-930-06-5870-HN]

Call for Public Nominations of Inholding Properties for Potential Purchase by the Federal Government in the State of California

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act of 2000 (43 U.S.C. 2303) (FLTFA), this notice provides the public the opportunity to nominate inholding properties within the State of California for possible acquisition by the Federal agencies identified below.

DATES: Nominations may be submitted at any time following the publication of this notice.

ADDRESSES: Nominations should be mailed to the attention of the FLTFA Program Manager for the agency listed below having jurisdiction over the adjacent Federally designated area.

Bureau of Land Management, 2800 Cottage Way, Room W-1834, Sacramento, CA 95825.

National Park Service, PWR-LP, 1111 Jackson Street, Suite 700, Oakland, CA 94607-4807.

U.S. Forest Service, 1323 Club Drive, Vallejo, CA 94592.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California/Nevada Operations Office, 2800 Cottage Way, W-2606, Sacramento, CA 95825.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joy Wehking, FLTFA Program Manager, BLM California State Office, phone 916-978-4647; e-mail cafltfaprogram@ca.blm.gov, or visit BLM's Web site at <http://www.ca.blm.gov/pa/lands/fltfa>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with the FLTFA, the four Federal agencies noted above are offering to the public at large the opportunity to nominate lands in the State of California for possible Federal

acquisition. Under the provisions of FLTFA, only the following lands are eligible for nomination: (1) Inholdings within a Federally designated area; or (2) lands that are adjacent to Federally designated areas that contain exceptional resources.

An inholding is any right, title, or interest held by a non-Federal entity, in or to a tract of land that lies within the boundary of a Federally designated area.

A Federally designated area is an area, in existence on July 25, 2000, set aside for special management, including units of the national park, national wildlife refuge, and national forest systems; national monuments, national conservation areas, national riparian conservation areas, national recreation areas, national scenic areas, research natural areas, national outstanding natural areas, national natural landmarks, and areas of critical environmental concern managed by the Bureau of Land Management; wilderness or wilderness study areas; and units of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System or National Trails System. If you are not sure of whether a particular area meets the statutory definition in FLTFA, of a Federally designated area, you should consult the statute or contact the BLM as provided above.

Exceptional resource refers to a resource of scientific, natural, historic, cultural or recreational value that has been documented by a Federal, state, or local government authority, and for which there is a compelling need for conservation and protection under the jurisdiction of a Federal agency in order to maintain the resource for the benefit of the public.

Nominations meeting the above criteria may be submitted by any individual, group or governmental body. If submitted by a party other than the landowner, the landowner must also sign the nomination to confirm their willingness to sell. Nominations will only be considered eligible by the agencies if: (1) The nomination package is complete; (2) acquisition of the nominated land or interest in land would be consistent with an agency approved land use plan; (3) the land does not contain a hazardous substance or is not otherwise contaminated and would not be difficult or uneconomic to manage as Federal lands; and (4) acceptable title can be conveyed in accordance with Federal title standards. Priority will be placed on nominations for inholdings in areas where there is no local or tribal government objection to Federal acquisition.

The agencies will assess the nominations for public benefits and rank the nominations in accordance

with a jointly prepared state level Interagency Implementation Agreement for FLTFA and a national level Interagency Memorandum of Understanding among the agencies. The nomination and identification of an inholding does not obligate the landowner to convey the property nor does it obligate the United States to acquire the property.

All Federal land acquisitions must be made at fair market value established by applicable provisions of the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions.

Further information, including the required contents for a nomination package, and details of the Statewide Interagency Implementation Agreement, may be obtained by contacting Joy Wehking with the Bureau of Land Management at the address noted above, or by visiting the California FLTFA Web site at <http://www.ca.blm.gov/pa/lands/fltfa>.

Mike Pool,

State Director, California.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Minerals Management Service

Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), Western and Central Gulf of Mexico, Oil and Gas Lease Sales for Years 2007-2012

AGENCY: Minerals Management Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and Scoping Meetings.

1. Authority

The Notice of Intent (NOI) and notice of scoping meetings is published pursuant to the regulations (40 CFR 1501.7) implementing the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.* (1988)).

2. Purpose of Notice of Intent

Pursuant to the regulations implementing the procedural provisions of the NEPA, MMS is announcing its intent to prepare an EIS on the tentatively scheduled 2007-2012 oil and gas leasing proposals in the Western and Central Gulf of Mexico (GOM), off the States of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. The NOI also serves to announce the scoping process for this EIS. Throughout the scoping process, Federal, State, and local government

agencies, and other interested parties have the opportunity to aid MMS in determining the significant issues and alternatives to be analyzed in the EIS. The EIS analysis will focus on the potential environmental effects of oil and natural gas leasing, exploration, development, and production in the areas identified through the Area Identification procedure as the proposed lease sale areas. Alternatives that may be considered for each sale are no action (*i.e.*, cancel the sale), or defer certain areas from the sale.

3. Supplemental Information

Federal regulations allow for several proposals to be analyzed in one EIS (40 CFR 1502.4). Since each sale proposal and projected activities are very similar each year for each sale area, MMS is proposing to prepare a single EIS (multisale EIS) for the five Western and six Central GOM annual lease sales scheduled for 2007–2012 in the draft proposed Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program: 2007–2012 (See 71 FR 7064, February 10, 2006). The multisale approach is intended to focus the NEPA/EIS process on differences between the proposed sales and on new issues and information. The multisale EIS will eliminate the repetitive issuance of complete draft and final EIS's for each sale area. The resource estimates and scenario information for the EIS analyses will be presented as a range that would encompass the resources and activities estimated for any of the eleven proposed lease sales. At the completion of this EIS process, decisions will be made only for the first proposed sale in each sale area, scheduled to be held in 2007 (Western) and 2007 (Central). Subsequent to these first sales, a NEPA review will be conducted for each of the other proposed lease sales in the 2007–2012 Leasing Program. Formal consultation with other Federal Agencies, the affected States, and the public will be carried out to assist in the determination of whether or not the information and analyses in the original multisale EIS are still valid. These consultations and NEPA reviews will be completed before decisions are made on the subsequent sales. For more information on the proposed sales or the EIS, you may contact Dennis Chew, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, MS 5410, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123–2394 or e-mail environment@mms.gov. You may also contact Mr. Chew by telephone at (504) 736–2793.

4. Cooperating Agency

The MMS invites other Federal agencies and state, tribal, and local governments to consider becoming cooperating agencies in the preparation of the multisale EIS. We invite qualified government entities to inquire about cooperating agency status for the EIS. Following the guidelines from the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ), qualified agencies and governments are those with “jurisdiction by law or special expertise.” Potential cooperating agencies should consider their authority and capacity to assume the responsibilities of a cooperating agency and to remember that an agency’s role in the environmental analysis neither enlarges nor diminishes the final decision making authority of any other agency involved in the NEPA process. Upon request, MMS will provide potential cooperating agencies with a written summary of ground rules for cooperating agencies, including time schedules and critical action dates, milestones, responsibilities, scope and detail of cooperating agencies’ contributions, and availability of predecisional information. MMS anticipates this summary will form the basis for a Memorandum of Understanding between the MMS and each cooperating agency. Agencies should also consider the “Factors for Determining Cooperating Agency Status” in Attachment 1 to CEQ’s January 30, 2002, Memorandum for the Heads of Federal Agencies: Cooperating Agencies in Implementing the Procedural Requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. A copy of this document is available at: <http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/cooperating/cooperatingagenciesmemorandum.html> and <http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/cooperating/cooperatingagencymemofactors.html>.

The MMS, as the lead agency, will not provide financial assistance to cooperating agencies. Even if an organization is not a cooperating agency, opportunities will exist to provide information and comments to MMS during the normal public input phases of the NEPA/EIS process. If further information about cooperating agencies is needed, please contact Mr. Dennis Chew at (504) 736–2793.

5. Comments

Federal, State, local government agencies, and other interested parties are requested to send their written comments on the scope of the EIS, significant issues that should be

addressed, and alternatives that should be considered one of the following three ways:

1. Electronically using MMS’s new Public Connect online commenting system at <https://ocsconnect.mms.gov>. This is the preferred method for commenting. From the Public Connect “Welcome” screen, search for “WPA and CPA Multisale EIS 2007–2012” or select it from the “Projects Open for Comment” menu.

2. In written form enclosed in an envelope labeled “Comments on the Multisale EIS” and mailed (or hand carried) to the Regional Supervisor, Leasing and Environment (MS 5410), Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123–2394.

3. Electronically to the MMS e-mail address: environment@mms.gov.

Comments should be submitted no later than 45 days from the publication of this NOI.

6. Scoping Meetings

The MMS will hold scoping meetings to obtain additional comments and information regarding the scope of the EIS. The scoping meetings are scheduled as follows:

- Tuesday, March 28, 2006, Wyndham Greenspoint, 12400 Greenspoint Drive, Houston, Texas, 1 p.m.

- Wednesday, March 29, 2006, Hampton Inn and Suites New Orleans-Elmwood, 5150 Mounes Street, Harahan, Louisiana, 1 p.m.

- Thursday, March 30, 2006, Riverview Plaza Hotel, 64 South Water Street, Mobile, Alabama, 7 p.m.

The MMS is preparing a separate EIS for the new 5-year OCS oil and gas leasing program for proposed lease sales to be held from 2007–2012. MMS will also use the scoping meetings on the multisale EIS as an opportunity to solicit comments on the scope of the 5-year program EIS. Information concerning the 5-year program and EIS can be accessed at <http://www.mms.gov/5-year/2007-2012main.htm>.

Dated: February 24, 2006.

Thomas A. Readinger,

Associate Director, Offshore Minerals Management.

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