

Niobium							Brazil	Brazil	High-strength steel for defense and infrastructure
Platinum group metals							South Africa	South Africa	Catalysts, superalloys for jet engines
Potash							Canada	Canada	Agricultural fertilizer
Rare earth elements							China	China	Aerospace guidance, lasers, fiber optics
Rhenium							Chile	Chile	Jet engines (superalloys), catalysts
Scandium							China	China	Lightweight alloys, fuel cells
Strontium							Spain	Mexico	Aluminum alloys, permanent magnets, flares
Tantalum							Rwanda	China	Capacitors in cellular phones, jet engines (superalloys)
Tellurium							China	Canada	Infrared devices (night-vision), solar cells
Tin							China	Peru	Solder, flat-panel displays (indium-tin-oxide)
Titanium							China	South Africa	Jet engines (superalloys) and airframes (titanium alloys), armor
Tungsten							China	China	Cutting and drilling tools, catalysts, jet engines (superalloys)
Uranium							Kazakhstan	Canada	Nuclear applications, medical applications
Vanadium							China	South Africa	Jet engines (superalloys) and airframes (titanium alloys), high-strength steel
Zirconium and hafnium							Australia	China	Thermal barrier coating in jet engines, nuclear applications

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This draft list is based on the definition of a “critical mineral” provided in Executive Order 13817. The U.S. Government and other organizations may also use other definitions and rely on other criteria to identify a material or mineral as “critical” or otherwise important. This draft list is not intended to replace related terms and definitions of materials that are deemed strategic, critical or otherwise important (*e.g.*, National Defense Stockpile). In addition, there are many minerals not listed on the draft critical minerals list, but which are still of significant importance to the U.S. economy. Industrial minerals, for example, are the materials that form the physical basis of our nation’s infrastructure. The materials for making cement, for example, limestone, clays, shales, and aggregates; materials to reinforce concrete structures such as iron and steel for rebar and steel mesh/wire grids, materials on which to place infrastructure such as base courses composed of crushed stone and aggregates. These construction

commodities are the largest (by volume) sectors of the U.S. minerals industries. Other minerals include inputs into the chemical industries or agricultural sector including sulfur, salt, phosphate, and gypsum. The manufacture of products such as glass, ceramics, refractories, and abrasives require quartz, soda ash, feldspar, kaolin, ball clays, mullite and kyanite, industrial diamonds, garnets, corundum, and borates. These materials are not considered critical in the conventional sense because the U.S. largely meets its needs for these through domestic mining and processing and thus a supply disruption is considered unlikely.

Please submit written comments on this draft list by March 19, 2018 to facilitate consideration. In particular, DOI is interested in comments addressing the following topics: The make-up of the draft list and the rationale associated with potential additions or subtractions to the draft list. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that

your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Authority: E.O. 13817, 82 FR 60835 (December 26, 2017).

Timothy R. Petty,
Assistant Secretary for Water and Science.
[FR Doc. 2018-03219 Filed 2-15-18; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Bureau of Ocean Energy Management**

Docket No. BOEM-2017-0078]

Gulf of Mexico, Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), Oil and Gas Lease Sale 250; MMAA104000

AGENCY: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Availability of a Record of Decision.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is announcing the availability of a Record of Decision for proposed Gulf of Mexico (GOM) region-wide oil and gas Lease Sale 250. This Record of Decision identifies BOEM's selected alternative for proposed Lease Sale 250, which is analyzed in the *Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf Lease Sale: Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement 2018* (2018 GOM Supplemental EIS).

ADDRESSES: The Record of Decision is available on BOEM's website at <http://www.boem.gov/nepaprocess/>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For more information on the Record of Decision, you may contact Mr. Greg Kozlowski, Deputy Regional Supervisor, Office of Environment, by telephone at 504-736-2512 or by email at greg.kozlowski@boem.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In the 2018 GOM Supplemental EIS, BOEM evaluated five alternatives in regards to proposed Lease Sale 250. These alternatives are summarized below:

Alternative A—Region-wide OCS Lease Sale: This is BOEM's preferred alternative. This alternative would allow for a proposed GOM region-wide lease sale encompassing all three planning areas: The Western Planning Area (WPA); the Central Planning Area (CPA); and a small portion of the Eastern Planning Area (EPA) not under Congressional moratorium. Under this alternative, BOEM would offer for lease all available unleased blocks within the proposed region-wide lease sale area for oil and gas operations with the following exceptions: Whole and portions of blocks deferred by the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006; blocks that are adjacent to or beyond the United States' Exclusive Economic Zone in the area known as the northern portion of the Eastern Gap; whole and partial blocks within the current boundary of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary; and blocks whose lease status is currently under appeal. The unavailable blocks are listed in Section I of the Final Notice of Sale for proposed Lease Sale 250. The proposed region-wide lease sale area encompasses about 91.93 million acres (ac). As of February 2018, approximately 77.3 million ac of the proposed region-wide lease sale area are currently available for lease. As described in the 2018 Final GOM Supplemental EIS, the estimated amounts of resources projected to be leased, discovered, developed, and produced as a result of the proposed region-wide lease sale are between 0.211 and 1.118 billion barrels of oil

(BBO) and 0.547 and 4.424 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of natural gas.

Alternative B—Region-wide OCS Lease Sale Excluding Available Unleased Blocks in the WPA Portion of the Proposed Lease Sale Area: This alternative would offer for lease all available unleased blocks within the CPA and EPA portions of the proposed lease sale area for oil and gas operations, with the following exceptions: Whole and portions of blocks deferred by the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006; and blocks that are adjacent to or beyond the United States' Exclusive Economic Zone in the area known as the northern portion of the Eastern Gap. The proposed CPA/EPA lease sale area encompasses about 63.35 million ac. As of February 2018, approximately 51.2 million ac of the proposed CPA/EPA lease sale area are currently available for lease. The estimated amounts of resources projected to be leased, discovered, developed, and produced as a result of the proposed lease sale under Alternative B are 0.185–0.970 BBO and 0.441–3.672 Tcf of gas.

Alternative C—Region-wide OCS Lease Sale Excluding Available Unleased Blocks in the CPA and EPA Portions of the Proposed Lease Sale Area: This alternative would offer for lease all available unleased blocks within the WPA portion of the proposed lease sale area for oil and gas operations, with the following exception: Whole and partial blocks within the current boundary of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary. The proposed WPA lease sale area encompasses about 28.58 million ac. As of February 2018, approximately 26.2 million ac of the proposed WPA lease sale area are currently available for lease. The estimated amounts of resources projected to be leased, discovered, developed, and produced as a result of the proposed lease sale under Alternative C are 0.026–0.148 BBO and 0.106–0.752 Tcf of gas.

Alternative D—Alternative A, B, or C, with the Option to Exclude Available Unleased Blocks Subject to the Topographic Features, Live Bottom (Pinnacle Trend), and/or Blocks South of Baldwin County, Alabama, Stipulations: This alternative could be combined with any of the Action alternatives above (*i.e.*, Alternatives A, B, or C) and would allow the flexibility to offer leases under any alternative with additional exclusions. Under Alternative D, the decision-maker could exclude from leasing any available unleased blocks subject to any one and/or a combination of the following stipulations: Topographic Features Stipulation; Live Bottom Stipulation;

and Blocks South of Baldwin County, Alabama, Stipulation (not applicable to Alternative C). This alternative considered blocks subject to these stipulations because these areas have been emphasized in scoping, can be geographically defined, and adequate information exists regarding their ecological importance and sensitivity to OCS oil- and gas-related activities.

A total of 207 blocks within the CPA and 160 blocks in the WPA are affected by the Topographic Features Stipulation. There are currently no identified topographic features protected under this stipulation in the EPA. The Live Bottom Stipulation covers the pinnacle trend area of the CPA, affecting a total of 74 blocks. Under Alternative D, the number of blocks that would become unavailable for lease represents only a small percentage of the total number of blocks to be offered under Alternative A, B, or C (<4%, even if blocks subject to all three stipulations were excluded). Therefore, Alternative D could reduce offshore infrastructure and activities, but Alternative D also shifts the location of offshore infrastructure and activities farther from these sensitive zones and would not lead to a reduction in overall offshore infrastructure and activities.

Alternative E—No Action: This alternative is not holding proposed region-wide Lease Sale 250 and is identified as the environmentally preferred alternative.

*Lease Stipulations—*The 2018 GOM Supplemental EIS describes all lease stipulations, which are included in the Final Notice of Sale Package. In the Record of Decision for the 2017–2022 Five-Year Program, the Secretary of the Interior required the protection of biologically sensitive underwater features in all Gulf of Mexico oil and gas lease sales as programmatic mitigation; therefore, the application of the Topographic Features Stipulation and Live Bottom Stipulation are being adopted and applied for applicable designated lease blocks in Lease Sale 250.

The additional eight lease stipulations for proposed region-wide Lease Sale 250 are the Military Areas Stipulation; the Evacuation Stipulation; the Coordination Stipulation; the Blocks South of Baldwin County, Alabama, Stipulation; the Protected Species Stipulation; the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea Royalty Payment Stipulation; the Below Seabed Restrictions due to Rights-of-Use and Easement for Floating Production Facilities Stipulation; and the Stipulation on the Agreement between the United States of America and the

United Mexican States Concerning Transboundary Hydrocarbon Reservoirs in the Gulf of Mexico. These eight stipulations will be added as lease terms where applicable and will be enforceable as part of the lease. Appendix B of the *Gulf of Mexico OCS Oil and Gas Lease Sales: 2017–2022; Gulf of Mexico Lease Sales 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 256, 257, 259, and 261; Final Multisale Environmental Impact Statement (2017–2022 GOM Multisale EIS)* provides a list and description of standard post-lease conditions of approval that may be required by BOEM or the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement as a result of plan and permit review processes for the Gulf of Mexico OCS Region.

After careful consideration, BOEM has selected the preferred alternative (Alternative A) in the 2018 GOM Supplemental EIS for proposed Lease Sale 250. BOEM's selection of the preferred alternative meets the purpose and need for the proposed action, as identified in the 2018 GOM Supplemental EIS, and provides for orderly resource development with protection of the human, marine, and coastal environments while also ensuring that the public receives an equitable return for these resources and that free-market competition is maintained.

Authority: This Notice of Availability of a Record of Decision is published pursuant to the regulations (40 CFR part 1505) implementing the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*).

Dated: February 13, 2018.

Walter D. Cruickshank,

Acting Director, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.

[FR Doc. 2018–03280 Filed 2–15–18; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Lease Sale 250; MMAA104000

AGENCY: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Interior.

ACTION: Final Notice of Sale.

SUMMARY: On Wednesday, March 21, 2018, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) will open and publicly announce bids received for blocks offered in the Gulf of Mexico (GOM) Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Region-wide Oil and Gas Lease Sale 250

(GOM Region-wide Sale 250), in accordance with the provisions of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA), as amended, and the implementing regulations issued pursuant thereto. The GOM Region-wide Sale 250 Final Notice of Sale (NOS) package contains information essential to potential bidders.

DATES: Public bid reading for GOM Region-wide Sale 250 will begin at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 21, 2018, at 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana. All times referred to in this document are Central Standard Time, unless otherwise specified.

Bid Submission Deadline: BOEM must receive all sealed bids between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on weekdays, excluding holidays, prior to the sale, with the exception of Tuesday, March 20, 2018, the day before the lease sale, when the Bid Submission Deadline is 10:00 a.m. For more information on bid submission, see Section VII, “Bidding Instructions,” of this document.

ADDRESSES: Public bid reading for GOM Region-wide Sale 250 will be held at 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana. The venue will not be open to the general public, media, or industry. Instead, the bid opening will be available for public viewing on BOEM's website at www.boem.gov via live-streaming video beginning at 9:00 a.m. on the date of the sale. BOEM will also post the results on its website after bid opening and reading are completed. Interested parties may download the Final NOS package from BOEM's website at <http://www.boem.gov/Sale-250/>. Copies of the sale maps may be obtained by contacting the BOEM GOM Region at: Gulf of Mexico Region Public Information Office, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123–2394, (504) 736–2519 or (800) 200–GULF.

For more information on bid submission, see Section VII, “Bidding Instructions,” of this document.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ann Glazner, Acting Regional Supervisor, Office of Leasing and Plans, 504–736–2607, ann.glazner@boem.gov or Dr. Andrew Krueger, Acting Chief, Leasing Division, 703–787–1554, andrew.krueger@boem.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Table of Contents

This Final NOS includes the following sections:

- I. Lease Sale Area
- II. Statutes and Regulations
- III. Lease Terms and Economic Conditions
- IV. Lease Stipulations

- V. Information to Lessees
- VI. Maps
- VII. Bidding Instructions
- VIII. Bidding Rules and Restrictions
- IX. Forms
- X. The Lease Sale
- XI. Delay of Sale

I. Lease Sale Area

Blocks Offered for Leasing: BOEM will offer for bid in this lease sale all of the available unleased acreage in the GOM, except those blocks listed in “Blocks Not Offered for Leasing” below.

Blocks Not Offered for Leasing: The following whole and partial blocks are not offered for lease in this sale. The BOEM Official Protraction Diagrams (OPDs) and Supplemental Official Block Diagrams are available online at <https://www.boem.gov/Maps-and-GIS-Data/>.

Whole and partial blocks that lie within the boundaries of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary (in the East and West Flower Garden Banks and the Stetson Bank), identified in the following list:

High Island, East Addition, South Extension (Leasing Map TX7C)

Whole Block: A–398

Partial Blocks: A–366, A–367, A–374, A–375, A–383, A–384, A–385, A–388, A–389, A–397, A–399, A–401

High Island, South Addition (Leasing Map TX7B)

Partial Blocks: A–502, A–513

Garden Banks (OPD NG15–02)

Partial Blocks: 134, 135

Blocks that are adjacent to or beyond the United States Exclusive Economic Zone in the area known as the northern portion of the Eastern Gap:

Lund South (OPD NG 16–07)

Whole Blocks: 128, 129, 169 through 173, 208 through 217, 248 through 261, 293 through 305, and 349

Henderson (OPD NG 16–05)

Whole Blocks: 466, 508 through 510, 551 through 554, 594 through 599, 637 through 643, 679 through 687, 722 through 731, 764 through 775, 807 through 819, 849 through 862, 891 through 905, 933 through 949, and 975 through 992

Partial Blocks: 467, 511, 555, 556, 600, 644, 688, 732, 776, 777, 820, 821, 863, 864, 906, 907, 950, 993, and 994

Florida Plain (OPD NG 16–08)

Whole Blocks: 5 through 24, 46 through 67, 89 through 110, 133 through 154, 177 through 197, 221 through 240, 265 through 283, 309 through 327, and 363 through 370

All whole and portions of blocks deferred by the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006, Public Law 109–432:

Pensacola (OPD NH 16–05)

Whole Blocks: 751 through 754, 793 through 798, 837 through 842, 881 through 886, 925 through 930, and 969 through 975