

easier to understand, including answers to questions such as the following:

- (1) Are the requirements in the rule clearly stated?
- (2) Does the rule contain technical language or jargon that interfere with its clarity?
- (3) Does the format of the rule (grouping and order of sections, use of headings, paragraphing, etc.) aid or reduce its clarity?
- (4) Would the rule be easier to understand if it were divided into more (but shorter) sections?

(5) Is the description of the rule in the "Supplementary Information" section of this preamble helpful in understanding the rule? What else can we do to make the rule easier to understand?

Send a copy of any comments that concern how we could make this rule easier to understand to: Office of Regulatory Affairs, Department of the Interior, Room 7229, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240. You may also e-mail the comments to this address: [Exsec@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Exsec@ios.doi.gov).

#### List of Subjects in 30 CFR Part 250

Continental shelf, Environmental impact statements, Environmental protection, Government contracts, Incorporation by reference, Investigations, Mineral royalties, Oil and gas development and production, Oil and gas exploration, Oil and gas reserves, Penalties, Pipelines, Public lands—mineral resources, Public lands—rights-of-way, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Sulphur development and production, Sulphur exploration, Surety bonds.

Dated: September 21, 1999.

**Sylvia V. Baca,**

*Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management.*

For the reasons stated in the preamble, the MMS proposes to amend 30 CFR part 250 as follows:

#### PART 250—OIL AND GAS AND SULPHUR OPERATIONS IN THE OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF

1. The authority citation for part 250 continues to read as follows:

**Authority:** 43 U.S.C. 1331, *et seq.*

2. In § 250.1000, paragraphs (c)(6) through (c)(13) are added as follows:

##### § 250.1000 General requirements.

\* \* \* \* \*

(c) \* \* \*

(6) Any producer operating a pipeline that crosses into State waters without first connecting to a transporting operator's pipeline on the OCS must comply with this subpart. Compliance

must extend from the point where hydrocarbons are first produced, through and including the last valve and associated safety equipment (e.g., pressure safety sensors) on the last production facility on the OCS.

(7) Any producer operating a pipeline that connects facilities on the OCS must comply with this subpart.

(8) Any operator of a pipeline that has a valve on the OCS downstream (generally landward) of the last production facility may ask in writing that the MMS Regional Supervisor recognize that valve as the point to which MMS will exercise its regulatory authority.

(9) A producer pipeline segment is not subject to MMS regulations for design, construction, operation, and maintenance if:

- (i) It is downstream (generally shoreward) of the last valve and associated safety equipment on the last production facility on the OCS; and
- (ii) It is subject to regulation under 49 CFR parts 192 and 195.

(10) DOT may inspect all upstream safety equipment (including valves, over-pressure protection devices, cathodic protection equipment, and pigging devices, etc.) that serve to protect the integrity of DOT-regulated pipeline segments.

(11) OCS pipeline segments not subject to DOT regulation under 49 CFR parts 192 and 195 are subject to all MMS regulations.

(12) A producer may request that its pipeline operate under DOT regulations governing pipeline design, construction, operation, and maintenance.

(i) The operator's request must be in the form of a written petition to the MMS Regional Supervisor that states the justification for the pipeline to operate under DOT regulation.

(ii) The Regional Supervisor will decide, on a case-by-case basis, whether to grant the operator's request. In considering each petition, the Regional Supervisor will consult with the Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) Regional Director.

(13) A transporter who operates a pipeline regulated by DOT may request to operate under MMS regulations governing pipeline design, construction, operation, and maintenance.

(i) The operator's request must be in the form a written petition to the OPS Regional Director and the MMS Regional Supervisor.

(ii) The MMS Regional Supervisor and the OPS Regional Director will decide how to act on this petition.

\* \* \* \* \*

3. In § 250.1001, the definition for the term "DOI pipelines" is revised and the

definitions for the terms "DOT pipelines," and "Production facility" are added in alphabetical order as follows:

##### § 250.1001 Definitions.

\* \* \* \* \*

DOI pipelines include:

(1) Producer-operated pipelines extending upstream (generally seaward) from each point on the OCS at which operating responsibility transfers from a producing operator to a transporting operator;

(2) Producer-operated pipelines extending upstream (generally seaward) of the last valve (including associated safety equipment) on the last production facility on the OCS that do not connect to a transporter-operated pipeline on the OCS before crossing into State waters;

(3) Producer-operated pipelines connecting production facilities on the OCS;

(4) Transporter-operated pipelines that DOI and DOT have agreed are to be regulated as DOI pipelines; and

(5) All OCS pipelines not subject to regulation under 49 CFR parts 192 and 195.

*DOT pipelines include:*

(1) Transporter-operated pipelines under DOT requirements governing design, construction, maintenance, and operation; or

(2) Producer-operated pipelines that DOI and DOT have agreed are to be regulated under DOT requirements governing design, construction, maintenance, and operation.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Production facilities* means OCS facilities that receive hydrocarbon production either directly from wells or from other facilities that produce hydrocarbons from wells. They may include processing equipment for treating the production or separating it into its various liquid and gaseous components before transporting it to shore.

\* \* \* \* \*

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#### DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

##### 38 CFR Part 20

RIN 2900-AJ73

#### Board of Veterans' Appeals: Rules of Practice—Notice of Appeal in Simultaneously Contested Claim

**AGENCY:** Department of Veterans Affairs.  
**ACTION:** Proposed rule.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) proposes to amend a Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) Rule of Practice, pertaining to a type of notice given in simultaneously contested claim appeals, to eliminate an inconsistency between that Rule of Practice and other Board Regulations.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before November 30, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Mail or hand-deliver written comments to: Director, Office of Regulations Management (02D), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Ave., NW, Room 1154, Washington, DC 20420. Comments should indicate that they are submitted in response to "RIN 2900-AJ73." All written comments will be available for public inspection at the above address in the Office of Regulations Management, Room 1158, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday (except holidays).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Steven L. Keller, Senior Deputy Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, (202) 565-5978.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Initial decisions on claims for veterans' benefits are made at VA field offices throughout the nation. Claimants may appeal those decisions to the Board.

Most of the proceedings before the Board involve only one party, a claimant for VA benefits who is dissatisfied with the VA field office decision in his or her case. However, there are a few multiparty proceedings before the Board known as "simultaneously contested claims." These contested claims arise out of situations where "the allowance of one claim results in the disallowance of another claim involving the same benefit or the allowance of one claim results in the payment of a lesser benefit to another claimant." 38 CFR 20.3(o). Typical examples might be cases in which two different parties are each seeking recognition as the beneficiary of the same life insurance proceeds or status recognition as a veteran's lawful spouse in order to qualify for a variety of survivor's benefits.

38 U.S.C. 7105A(b) provides that when one contesting party files his or her "formal appeal," the "substance" of the formal appeal will be communicated to the other contesting parties who then have 30 days to file an answering brief or argument.

This statutory provision is currently implemented in two regulations. The first, 38 CFR 19.102, describes VA's duties to furnish other contesting parties

with the content of the "Substantive Appeal" (the regulatory equivalent of the statutory "formal appeal") "to the extent that it contains information which could directly affect the payment or potential payment of the benefit which is the subject of the contested claim." The second, a Rule of Practice at 38 CFR 20.502 that tells other contesting parties how long they have to respond, incorrectly indicates that the responding contesting parties are given copies of the Substantive Appeal, rather than its relevant substance. In this document, VA proposes to revise § 20.502 to make it consistent with § 19.102. The presumption concerning the date of furnishing this information has also been modified to remove its tie to mailing, inasmuch as neither 38 U.S.C. 7105A(b) nor 38 CFR 19.102 limits the means of delivery to mailing.

The Secretary hereby certifies that this proposed rule would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities as they are defined in the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. 601-612, inasmuch as this rule applies to individual claimants for veterans' benefits and does not affect such entities. Therefore, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 605(b), this proposed rule is exempt from the initial and final regulatory flexibility analyses requirement of sections 603 and 604.

There is no Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number for this final rule.

#### List of Subjects in 38 CFR Part 20

Administrative practice and procedure, Claims, Lawyers, Legal services, Veterans, Authority delegations (Government agencies).

Approved: September 22, 1999

**Togo D. West, Jr.,**

*Secretary of Veterans Affairs.*

For the reasons set out in the preamble, the Department of Veterans Affairs proposes to amend 38 CFR part 20 as follows:

#### PART 20—BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS: RULES OF PRACTICE

1. The authority citation for part 20 continues to read as follows:

**Authority:** 38 U.S.C. 501(a).

2. Section 20.502 is revised to read as follows:

**§ 20.502 Rule 502. Time limit for response to appeal by another contesting party in a simultaneously contested claim.**

A party to a simultaneously contested claim may file a brief or argument in answer to a Substantive Appeal filed by

another contesting party. Any such brief or argument must be filed with the agency of original jurisdiction within 30 days from the date the content of the Substantive Appeal is furnished as provided in § 19.102 of this chapter. Such content will be presumed to have been furnished on the date of the letter which accompanies the content.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7105A(b))

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#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

##### 40 CFR Part 52

[FRL-6450-4]

#### Assessment of Visibility Impairment at the Grand Canyon National Park:

#### Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking; Extension of Public Comment Period

**AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency.

**ACTION:** Advance notice of proposed rulemaking; extension of public comment period.

**SUMMARY:** The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is extending the comment period for an advance notice of proposed rulemaking, published June 17, 1999 (64 FR 32458), regarding visibility impairment at the Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP) and the possibility that the Mohave Generating Station (MGS) in Laughlin, Nevada may contribute to that impairment. In the June 17 notice, EPA requests information that it should consider in determining whether visibility problems at the GCNP can be reasonably attributed to MGS, and if so, what, if any, pollution control requirements should be applied.

The public comment period for the advance notice of proposed rulemaking was originally due to expire on August 16, 1999. On August 6, 1999, at the request of Southern California Edison Company, EPA published a notice extending the public comment period for 30 days (64 FR 42891). On September 14, 1999, at the request of the Grand Canyon Trust, EPA published a notice extending the public comment period for an additional 15 days (64 FR 49756). At the request of both Southern California Edison and the Grand Canyon Trust, EPA is now extending the public comment period for an additional 21 days.