

appropriations Acts containing leasing moratoria. Because of the limited geological and geophysical data available to industry and the limited environmental review for this area, the MMS has decided that it would be premature to offer this area in proposed Lease Sale 206. Before the area is offered for lease, the MMS will conduct a separate NEPA review to reevaluate the expanded CPA sale area.

This EA for proposed Lease Sale 206 reexamined the potential environmental effects of the proposed lease sale and its alternatives excluding the unleased blocks near biologically sensitive topographic features; excluding the unleased blocks within 15 miles of the Baldwin County, Alabama Coast; and no action based on any new information regarding potential impacts and issues that were not available at the time the Multisale EIS was prepared. No new significant impacts were identified for proposed Lease Sale 206 that were not already assessed in the Multisale EIS. As a result, the MMS determined that a Supplemental EIS is not required and prepared a Finding of No New Significant Impact (FONNSI).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Dennis Chew, Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, Mail Stop 5410, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394. You may also contact Mr. Chew by telephone at (504) 736-2793.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In April 2007, the MMS published a Multisale EIS that addressed 11 proposed Federal actions that would offer for lease areas on the GOM OCS that may contain economically recoverable oil and gas resources. Federal regulations allow for several related or similar proposals to be analyzed in one EIS (40 CFR 1502.4). Since each proposed lease sale and its projected activities are very similar each year for each planning area, a single EIS was prepared for the 11 Western Planning Area (WPA) and CPA lease sales scheduled in the proposed *OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program: 2007-2012* (5-Year Program). The Multisale EIS addressed WPA Lease Sale 204 in 2007, Sale 207 in 2008, Sale 210 in 2009, Sale 215 in 2010, and Sale 218 in 2011; and CPA Lease Sale 205 in 2007, Sale 206 in 2008, Sale 208 in 2009, Sale 213 in 2010, Sale 216 in 2011, and Sale 222 in 2012. Although the Multisale EIS addresses 11 proposed lease sales, at the completion of the EIS process, Records of Decision were published in July and August 2007 for only proposed WPA Lease Sale 204 and proposed CPA Lease Sale 205, respectively. An additional NEPA review (an EA) was conducted for

proposed Lease Sale 206 to address any new information relevant to the proposed lease sale. Additional NEPA reviews will also be conducted prior to decisions on each of the eight subsequent proposed lease sales. The purpose of these EA's is to determine whether to prepare a FONNSI or a Supplemental EIS. For each proposed lease sale, MMS prepares a Consistency Determination (CD) to determine whether the lease sale is consistent with each affected State's federally-approved coastal zone management program. Finally, MMS solicits comments via the Proposed Notice of Sale (PNOS) from the governors of the affected States on the size, timing, and location of the lease sale. The tentative schedule for the prelease decision process for Lease Sale 206 is as follows: CD's sent to affected States, October 2007; PNOS sent to governors of the affected States, October 2007; Final Notice of Sale published in the **Federal Register**, February 2008; and Lease Sale 206, March 2008.

**Public Comments:** Interested parties are requested to send comments on this EA/FONNSI by November 29, 2007. Comments may be submitted in one of the following two ways:

1. In written form enclosed in an envelope labeled "Comments on CPA Lease Sale 206 EA" and mailed (or hand carried) to the Regional Supervisor, Leasing and Environment (MS5410), Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394.

2. Electronically to the MMS e-mail address: [environment@mms.gov](mailto:environment@mms.gov).

All comments received will be considered in the decisionmaking process for proposed Lease Sale 206.

**EA Availability:** To obtain a copy of this EA, you may contact the MMS, GOM OCS Region, Attention: Public Information Office (MS 5034), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, Room 114, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394 (1-800-200-GULF). You may also view this EA on the MMS Web site at <http://www.gomr.mms.gov/homepg/regulate/enviro/nepa/nepaprocess.html>.

Dated: October 1, 2007.

**Chris C. Oynes,**

*Associate Director for Offshore Minerals Management.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Minerals Management Service

#### Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), Eastern Gulf of Mexico (GOM) Planning Area, Proposed Oil and Gas Lease Sale 224, March 2008

**AGENCY:** Minerals Management Service (MMS), Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS).

**SUMMARY:** The MMS has prepared a Final SEIS on a tentatively scheduled 2008 oil and gas leasing proposal (Sale 224) in the Eastern GOM Planning Area, off the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. As mandated in the recently enacted Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) of 2006 (Pub. L. 109-432, December 20, 2006), MMS shall offer a portion of the "181 Area," located in the Eastern Planning Area, more than 125 miles from Florida for oil and gas leasing.

**Authority:** The NOA is published pursuant to the regulations (40 CFR 1503) under the authority of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); the Environmental Quality Improvement Act of 1970, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4371 et seq.).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The recently enacted GOMESA of 2006 (Pub. L. 109-432, December 20, 2006) mandated MMS to offer a portion of the "181 Area" located in the newly defined Eastern Planning Area, more than 125 miles from Florida and west of the Military Mission Line (86 degrees, 41 minutes 30 seconds West longitude) for oil and gas leasing "as soon as practicable, but not later than 1 year, after the date of enactment of this Act." The Act mandates offering this area "notwithstanding the omission of the 181 Area \* \* \* from any Outer Continental Shelf leasing program under section 18 of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1344)." However, this action is not exempted from other legal requirements, such as NEPA or the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). The MMS has prepared a SEIS to the original Sale 181 EIS (2001) in order to address these requirements. The earliest MMS would be able to meet these requirements and offer this area for leasing would be approximately March 2008. To meet the 1-year requirement of GOMESA, this sale should be held no later than December 2007; however, MMS feels that it is in the best interests of all parties, including the American public as owners of these resources, that MMS take the time necessary to fully comply

with all pertinent laws, rules, and regulations, and to allow the public an opportunity to participate in the NEPA process. It also is more economical and efficient for the Government and industry to hold this sale in conjunction with Central Planning Area Sale 206 at the same time and location. The area to be offered in Sale 224 is small, approximately 118 tracts, whereas recent Central Planning Area sales have offered over 4,000 tracts. The logistics of holding a sale are intensive and relatively costly; therefore, it makes sense to hold the smaller sale in conjunction with a larger sale. Additionally, holding Sale 224 in conjunction with Sale 206 would help ensure that a sufficient number of companies would be represented in bidding, which may enhance the number of bids and possibly the revenue generated by more competitive bidding.

The final SEIS associated with this NOA updated the environmental and socioeconomic analyses in the *Gulf of Mexico OCS Oil and Gas Lease Sale 181, Eastern Planning Area Final EIS* (OCS EIS/EA MMS 2001-051), which addressed the original "Sale 181 Area."

**SEIS Availability:** To obtain a single, printed or CD-ROM copy of the final SEIS, you may contact the MMS, GOM OCS Region, Public Information Office (MS 5034), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, Room 114, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394 (1-800-200-GULF). An electronic copy of the final SEIS is available at the MMS Internet Web site at <http://www.gomr.mms.gov/homepg/regulate/environ/nepa/nepaprocess.html>. Many libraries along the Gulf Coast have been sent copies of the final SEIS. To find out which libraries, and their locations, have copies of the final SEIS for review, you may contact the MMS Public Information Office or visit the MMS Internet Web site at <http://www.gomr.mms.gov/homepg/regulate/environ/libraries.html>.

**Comments:** Federal, State, and local government agencies, and other interested parties are requested to send their written comments on the final SEIS in one of the following two ways:

1. In written form enclosed in an envelope labeled "Comments on the Lease Sale 224 SEIS" 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.

2. Electronically to the MMS e-mail address: [environment@mms.gov](mailto:environment@mms.gov).

Comments should be submitted no later than 30 days from the publication of this NOA.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Dennis Chew, Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394, or by phone at (504) 736-2793.

Dated: October 12, 2007.

**Chris C. Oynes,**

*Associate Director for Offshore Minerals Management.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Minerals Management Service

#### **Notice of Availability of the Proposed Notice of Sale for Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Lease Sale 206 in the Central Planning Area (CPA) in the Gulf of Mexico**

**AGENCY:** Minerals Management Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of the proposed Notice of Sale for proposed Sale 206.

**SUMMARY:** The MMS announces the availability of the proposed Notice of Sale for proposed Sale 206 in the CPA. This notice is published pursuant to 30 CFR 256.29(c) as a matter of information to the public. With regard to oil and gas leasing on the OCS, the Secretary of the Interior, pursuant to section 19 of the OCS Lands Act, provides the affected States the opportunity to review the proposed Notice. The proposed Notice sets forth the proposed terms and conditions of the sale, including minimum bids, royalty rates, and rentals.

**DATES:** Comments on the size, timing, or location of proposed Sale 206 are due from the affected States within 60 days following their receipt of the proposed Notice. The final Notice of Sale will be published in the **Federal Register** at least 30 days prior to the date of bid opening. Bid opening is currently scheduled for March 19, 2008.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The proposed Notice of Sale for Sale 206 and a "Proposed Sale Notice Package" containing information essential to potential bidders may be obtained from the Public Information Unit, Gulf of Mexico Region, Minerals Management Service, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394. Telephone: (504) 736-2519.

Dated: October 23, 2007.

**Randall B. Luthi,**

*Director, Minerals Management Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Minerals Management Service

#### **Notice of Availability of the Proposed Notice of Sale for Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Lease Sale 224 in the Eastern Planning Area (EPA) in the Gulf of Mexico**

**AGENCY:** Minerals Management Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of the proposed Notice of Sale for proposed sale 224.

**SUMMARY:** The MMS announces the availability of the proposed Notice of Sale for proposed Sale 224 in the EPA. This notice is published pursuant to 30 CFR 256.29(c) as a matter of information to the public. With regard to oil and gas leasing on the OCS, the Secretary of the Interior, pursuant to section 19 of the OCS Lands Act, provides the affected States the opportunity to review the proposed Notice. The proposed Notice sets forth the proposed terms and conditions of the sale, including minimum bids, royalty rates, and rentals.

**DATES:** Comments on the size, timing, or location of proposed Sale 224 are due from the affected States within 60 days following their receipt of the proposed Notice. The final Notice of Sale will be published in the **Federal Register** at least 30 days prior to the date of bid opening. Bid opening is currently scheduled for March 19, 2008.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The proposed Notice of Sale for Sale 224 and a "Proposed Sale Notice Package" containing information essential to potential bidders may be obtained from the Public Information Unit, Gulf of Mexico Region, Minerals Management Service, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394. Telephone: (504) 736-2519.

Dated: October 23, 2007.

**Randall B. Luthi,**

*Director, Minerals Management Service.*

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