
MMS Alaska OCS Region

News Release

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MMS ISSUES FINAL NOTICE OF SALE FOR BEAUFORT SEA SALE 144

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) issued on August 16 a Final Notice of Sale for Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Lease Sale 144 in the Beaufort Sea off Alaska. The Final Notice of Sale outlines the terms and conditions of the lease sale. Bids will be opened at 9:00 a.m. September 18, 1996, at the Z.J. Loussac Public Library in Anchorage, Alaska.

The sale area, which is believed to hold substantial oil reserves, is located off Alaska's Arctic coast. The area being offered for lease includes about 1,364 whole and partial blocks extending over 7.3 million acres. MMS expects to receive bids on only a small part of the area offered. "We expect limited bidding concentrated on those nearshore blocks close to existing infrastructure at Prudhoe Bay," said MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman.

A key issue for the sale has been concern over possible interference with subsistence hunting by the Native communities. "We deferred the area east of Barter Island at the request of the State of Alaska, the North Slope Borough, and other Native groups," explained Quarterman. "The North Slope Borough and the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission believe this area is a prime feeding ground for the bowhead whale. We will continue working with local residents to determine the extent of the bowheads' feeding area."

The final environmental impact statement was published in May 1996. While evaluating the sale area, MMS worked closely with local communities, whalers, industry, and the State of Alaska to help minimize conflicts between subsistence hunting and industry activity. In cooperation with the state and other affected parties, MMS developed mitigation measures and monitoring programs that will apply to any leases from the sale.

Copies of the Final Notice of Sale may be obtained by writing to the Alaska OCS Region, Minerals Management Service, Suite 300, 949 E 36th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99508-4302; by telephone at (907) 271-6691 or 1-800-764-2627; or by sending an e-mail message to akwebmaster@mms.gov.

MMS is the federal agency that manages and regulates the nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf, and collects and disburses revenues from offshore federal mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on federal and Indian lands.

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