



NEWS RELEASE

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Village of Kaktovik and MMS Sign Agreement on Outer Continental Shelf Activities

ANCHORAGE - The Native Village of Kaktovik and the Minerals Management Service (MMS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Kaktovik, Alaska that outlines how the MMS and the tribal government will work together to ensure that the Native Village is consulted whenever Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) activities may occur near the village or may potentially impact their traditional use of the area's natural resources. The MMS recognizes and is committed to working in a Government-to-Government relationship with federally recognized Alaska Native tribes.

"This MOU will help the Native Village of Kaktovik and MMS in matters dealing with offshore near Kaktovik. The MOU will be used to inform and consult with the village before activities and plans are made," said Isaac Akootchook, president of the Native Village of Kaktovik. "The Native Village of Kaktovik will be the conduit to MMS for traditional ecological knowledge that has been practiced by the Inupiat people for many thousands of years. We appreciate MMS working with NVK on the Government to Government coordination."

"MMS is aware how important subsistence is to the residents of Kaktovik and other villages on the North Slope," said MMS Alaska Regional Director John Goll. "This agreement, developed jointly with the Native Village, ensures that the process used by MMS and the Native Village of Kaktovik in working together on OCS issues will be conducted in a culturally sensitive manner respectful of tribal sovereignty."

The MOU facilitates continuing communication between both parties and ensures that the Inupiat Eskimos who live in Kaktovik will be consulted whenever potential OCS activities may affect them. It will be implemented in terms of the MMS mandate to provide access to public off shore lands for energy exploration in an environmentally safe and responsible manner. This consultation includes the early notification of the Kaktovik residents of any MMS activities that may have a direct, substantial effect on the village; consultation with tribal leaders throughout the decision-making process; and sharing of information.

The Native Village of Kaktovik is located on Barter Island, 90 miles west of the Canadian border and 278 miles southeast of Barrow, Alaska, on the northern edge of the 20.3 million acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The 284 residents are primarily Inupiat Eskimos who rely on a subsistence lifestyle that includes hunting caribou and the bowhead whale. Subsistence is an important part of the culture of the community.

MMS, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages offshore oil and gas exploration as well as renewable and alternative energy sources such as wind, wave, and solar on 1.76 billion acres of the Outer Continental Shelf while protecting the human, marine, and coastal environments.

MMS Main Website: www.mms.gov

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