

RESOLUTION OF THE OCS POLICY COMMITTEE REGARDING THE STREAMLINING OF THE 5 YEAR PLANNING PROCESS

WHEREAS the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Policy Committee has been formed to provide advice to the Secretary of the Interior through the Director of the Minerals Management Service (MMS) related to discretionary functions of the Bureau under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA); and

WHEREAS Section 18 of the OCSLA, as amended, provides a comprehensive process for developing the 5 – Year OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program (Program), including the guiding principals and factors upon which consideration of the preparation and approval of the Program must be based; and

WHEREAS the steps in preparing a new Program under Section 18 of the OCSLA and section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) are 1) Request for Comments and Suggestions published followed by 45 day comment period, 2) Draft Proposed Program published followed by 60 day comment period, 3) Proposed Program and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) published followed by 90 day comment period, 4) Proposed Final Program and Final EIS submitted to President and Congress and 5) 60 days after submittal of the Proposed Final Program and Final EIS the Secretary of the Interior may approve the Final Program; and

WHEREAS these steps presently provide for the preparation and publishing of three (3) separate drafts of the Proposed Program for the review of Governors, heads of interested federal agencies and interested and affected parties; and

WHEREAS consistent with Section 18 of the OCSLA, securing the broadest possible range of information and input on all areas of the OCS in the preparation of a Program may be more efficiently and cost effectively accomplished by eliminating redundant public review drafts; and

WHEREAS, the review of comments and public response from the Request for Comments and Suggestions, conducting environmental and geological analyses, gathering data and conducting analyses for the Draft EIS and any updating of required analyses (social/economic, environmental, domestic energy needs) should be combined into one step resulting in the preparation of a Proposed Program and Draft EIS.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the OCS Policy Committee on this 5th day of March, 2008, recommends that the Department of the Interior:

Introduce, or cause to be introduced, legislation amending Section 18 of the OCS Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1344) to reduce the process for preparing and developing a 5 – Year OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program from five steps to four steps by eliminating the requirement to prepare the Draft Proposed Program.

Resolution passed with 14 votes in favor and 3 opposed.