

FOR RELEASE: March 12, 1996

CONTACT: Tom DeRocco (202) 208-3983

### MMS SELECTS CONTRACTOR TO STUDY TESTING INTERVALS FOR BLOWOUT PREVENTER EQUIPMENT

Following through on a commitment made to the offshore oil and gas industry last December, the U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service's (MMS) today announced selection of the engineering consulting firm Tetrahedron, of Baltimore, Maryland, to conduct a nine-month study on blowout preventer (BOP) equipment and the testing frequency the equipment requires.

"The study results will help us determine if changes should be made in testing requirements for BOP equipment," said MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman. The American Petroleum Institute, the Independent Petroleum Association of America, the International Association of Drilling Contractors, the National Ocean Industries Association and the Offshore Operators Committee are participating in the study and are underwriting half the \$100,000 cost.

"This is yet another instance where the offshore industry and MMS are working cooperatively in examining a significant regulatory issue," Quarterman said. "One of our primary concerns is ensuring safe, pollution-free offshore operations. BOP systems are vital in achieving that aim." MMS is the federal agency that manages the Nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf, and collects, accounts for, and disburses about \$4 billion yearly in revenues from offshore federal mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on federal and Indian lands.

-MMS-