



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Office of Communications**

NEWS RELEASE

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RELEASE:

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MMS CALLS FOR PUBLIC INPUT IN REVIEWING REGULATIONS

The Interior Department's Minerals Management Service (MMS) published in the April 24, 1997, *Federal Register* its annual notice requesting public comments on significant regulations.

"MMS has spent the last four years focusing on customer service by ensuring our regulations are necessary, effective, and are written in plain English. Since inviting the public to help with our regulatory review, we have received decreasing numbers of public comments and we have heard from a number of commentators appreciative of our streamlining efforts and our responsiveness," said MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman.

The notice gives the public an opportunity to comment on MMS regulations that should be eliminated or revised and updates the public on how MMS has acted on the 55 comments received in response to previous notices published in March 1994, March 1995, and May 1996.

The MMS director then cited some examples of comments received and actions taken. "When asked to allow less frequent and shorter tests of blowout preventers (BOP) we responded by issuing a Notice to Lessees allowing them to test BOP equipment on intervals up to 14 days rather than weekly. MMS based the decision to allow the extended timeframe on a recently completed study by an engineering consulting firm that found no statistical difference in failure rates between BOP's tested every 7 days and those tested between the 8- and 14-day interval."

Written comments must be received by June 23, 1997. Mail comments to the U.S. Department of the Interior; Minerals Management Service; Mail Stop 4013; 1849 C Street, NW; Washington, DC 20240; Attention: Bettine Montgomery, MMS regulatory coordinator, Policy and Management Improvement.

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 in revenues each year from federal offshore mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on federal and Indian lands.

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MMS Internet website address: <http://www.boem.gov>
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