



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

NEWS RELEASE

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**MMS and COAST GUARD SEEK COMMENTS
ON UPDATED MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service is requesting public comments on a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the agency and the United States Coast Guard. The MOU updates existing responsibilities and identifies new policy issues governing oil and natural gas facilities on the Outer Continental Shelf. It specifies jurisdictional issues associated with both fixed and floating offshore facilities, the Oil Pollution Act, and violations that may result in civil penalties. The notice appears in the January 5 Federal Register. Comments will be accepted from the public for 60 days .

"MMS is pleased to work with the Coast Guard as we develop this memorandum of understanding together. Both agencies want to ensure that the responsibilities governing oil and gas facilities are clearly defined," stated MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman. "The new MOU clearly identifies a number of issues which will promote safe, efficient, and consistent regulation of offshore facilities."

Officials from both agencies agreed that several emerging issues such as the use of floating facilities, certain provisions of the Oil Pollution Act, and improved internal guidelines for processing violations provided a need to update a 1989 MOU between the MMS and the Coast Guard. The updated MOU also incorporates provisions of a 1971 agreement between the Department of the Interior and the Department of Transportation concerning the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan.

MMS is the federal agency that manages the Nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral resources on the OCS, 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.

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