



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

NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: [Anne-Berry Wade](#)
(202) 208-3985

**MMS EXTENDS SUSPENSIONS ON UNDEVELOPED OFFSHORE
CALIFORNIA OIL LEASES TO FACILITATE ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW**

The Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) today announced it has extended the current Directed Suspension of Operations until August 16, 1999 to permit the agency more time to evaluate individual operator requests for longer-term suspensions. MMS had been scheduled to make decisions on the requests by June 30, the date the current suspensions end for the 40 undeveloped leases off the central California coast.

"Because of the complexity of the operators' requests, MMS will need additional time to facilitate a thorough review of the submissions to ensure that they meet the due diligence requirements of the law. This necessitates a short-term extension of the current Directed Suspension of Operations," said MMS Director Walt Rosenbusch.

The leases lie offshore three coastal counties: Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo. In 1993, all of the leases were placed under a Directed Suspension of Operations by MMS, pending the completion of a joint federal, county, and industry study known as the California Offshore Oil and Gas Energy Report (COOGER). The study, which assesses the onshore constraints to development of the 40 leases, is due to be finished later this summer.

MMS is the federal agency that manages and regulates the Nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf; and collects, accounts for, and last year disbursed about \$6 billion in revenues from offshore Federal mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on Federal and Indian

lands.

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MMS Internet website address: <http://www.boem.gov>
24 hour Fax-on-Demand Service:(202) 219-1703