



MMS

MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Contact:

Lisa Dunn (202)343-3983

AREA IDENTIFICATION FACT SHEET

Proposed Lease Sale 111--Mid-Atlantic

The Department of the Interior recently identified the area to be analyzed as the Federal proposal in an environmental impact statement (EIS) for Proposed Lease Sale 111--Mid-Atlantic. This action constitutes the pre-lease administrative step referred to as Area Identification. This FACT SHEET contains a description of the area subject to environmental analysis, background information relevant to Sale 111, and the past lease sales within this planning area. A description of the prelease process for the lease sale is also provided.

Action

The area to be studied in the EIS includes approximately 20.3 million acres offshore the states of Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. Identification of the Federal proposal for this sale was made after considering indications of industry interest, comments from the States of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, and other commenters. These comments were received in response to the Call for Information.

Issue Identification

The process of identifying subjects to be covered in an EIS for the proposed action (scoping) was formally initiated with the publication of a Call for Information in the October 20, 1983, Federal Register. The staff of the Minerals Management Service reviewed information provided throughout the leasing processes for the past Mid- and pertinent South Atlantic sales and comments provided in response to the Call for Information. The following list of subjects emerged from this review and is likely to be considered for coverage in the EIS on the proposed action:

- NASA and Defense Department Operations
- Fish and Fisheries
- Marine Mammals
- Endangered and Threatened Species
- Birds

(more)

- Oilspill Effects
- Community Infrastructure and Services
- Special Biological Areas
- Cumulative Effects
- Cultural Resources
- Onshore Oil/Gas Facilities

Governors of affected States will be asked for recommendations on the size, timing, and location of the proposed lease sale. Only after considering the Governors' comments will the Secretary make his final decision.

A final Notice of Sale will be issued at least 30 days before bids are opened.

Events Leading to the Area Identification

- On the 5-Year Schedule, approved in July 1982, this sale is to be held in June 1985.
- A Call for Information was published in the Federal Register on October 20, 1983. It identified the area believed by the Minerals Management Service to be geologically favorable for hydrocarbons and requested industry to outline areas within the Call which they believe have sufficient hydrocarbon potential to warrant a lease sale. Comments were also solicited from all interested parties on possible environmental effects and use conflicts in the Call area.
- The Call covered the Mid-Atlantic Planning Area.
- Six companies responded to the Call; five submitted indications of interest in areas for leasing. Interest was indicated in the entire Western portion of the Call area.
- Comments were also received from the States of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc.

Area Identified

- Approximately 20.3 million acres are included in the Federal proposal which will be analyzed in an environmental impact statement.
- Water depth ranges from 38 to 3250 meters.
- Distance from shore ranges from 50 to 140 miles.
- See attached map

(more)

Future Actions Regarding the Lease Sale

Leasing of the area identified will undergo extensive environmental analysis in the EIS. Comments received on the Call and through the EIS scoping process, as well as the information contained in the existing environmental data bank, will be used to develop alternatives to the proposed action and to design appropriate mitigating measures.

- After a draft EIS is issued in Autumn 1984, a public hearing will be held. Comments submitted will be used to complete the final EIS.
- A proposed Notice of Sale will be issued identifying the Secretary's proposed decision about which blocks to offer, what special mitigating measures will be used to protect coastal and marine resources in the area offered, and what other conditions and terms will apply. Alternatives analyzed in the EIS concerning deferral of specific areas will be carefully considered in developing a decision, as will comments on the draft EIS.

Background

- This will be the eighth Federal sale in the Mid-Atlantic.
- Lease Sale 40, the first to offer Mid-Atlantic acreage for lease, was held in August 1976. High bids of \$1.1 billion were accepted for 93 of the 154 tracts offered. This sale encompassed 877,000 acres.
- In 1979, the offering of 621 thousand acres in Sale 49 resulted in the award of 39 leases for high bids of \$40 million.
- Lease Sale 59, held December 8, 1981, included 1.4 million acres available for lease. 51 tracts were leased (290,352 acres) for \$323.7 million in high bids.
- The reoffering sale held in August 1982 resulted in 19 additional tracts in this area being leased.
- The first areawide lease sale in the Mid-Atlantic was held on April 26, 1983, and included 22.7 million acres (4,050 blocks). High bids of \$68.4 million were accepted for the 37 blocks which received bids.
- The mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic Planning Areas were redefined in 1982. Lease Sales 56 and 78, both offering acreage in the then defined South Atlantic resulted in leases being issued in the currently configured mid-Atlantic. 24 mid-Atlantic leases resulted from Sale 56 and 9 resulted from Sale 78.

- The Department of the Interior's environmental studies program has to date expended approximately \$11.2 million for Mid-Atlantic studies. These break down as follows:
 - \$1.4 million on physical oceanography
 - \$5.5 million on baseline
 - \$2.8 million on hazards
 - \$1.3 million on biology
 - \$0.2 million on other
 - \$15.2 million has been spent on studies including but not limited to the Mid-Atlantic.

#

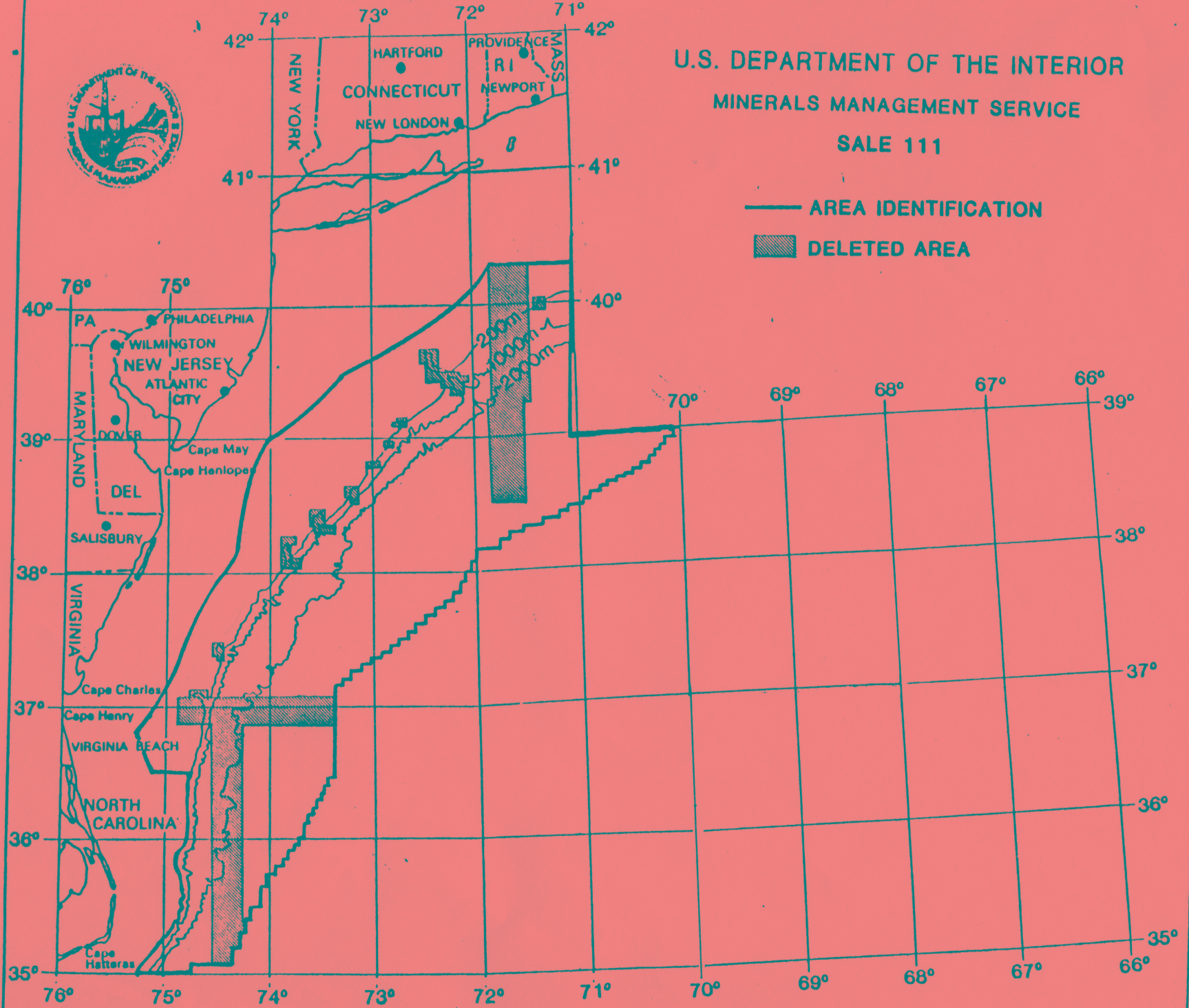
Background

- This will be the eighth federal sale in the Mid-Atlantic.
 - Lease Sale 40, the first to offer Mid-Atlantic acreage for lease, was held in August 1976. High bids of \$1.1 billion were accepted for 99 of the 104 tracts offered. This sale encompassed 877,000 acres.
 - In 1979, the offering of 651 thousand acres in Sale 49 resulted in the award of 39 leases for high bids of \$40 million.
 - Lease Sale 50, held December 8, 1981, included 1.4 million acres available for lease. 51 tracts were leased (290,382 acres) for \$383.7 million in high bids.
 - The reoffering sale held in August 1982 resulted in 19 additional tracts in this area being leased.
 - The first statewide lease sale in the Mid-Atlantic was held on April 26, 1983, and included 22.7 million acres (4,050 blocks). High bids of \$68.4 million were accepted for the 37 blocks which received bids.
- March 1984
- The mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic Planning Areas were redefined in 1982. Lease Sales 56 and 58, both offering acreage in the then defined South Atlantic resulted in leases being issued in the currently defined mid-Atlantic. 54 mid-Atlantic leases resulted from Sale 56 and 9 resulted from Sale 58.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE
SALE 111

— AREA IDENTIFICATION
▨ DELETED AREA



SCALE 1:4,500,000
0 10 20 30 40 50 STATUTE MILES

ATTACHMENT