

# Meeting Report: Western Gulf Coast Meeting, Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Information Program

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Houston, Texas  
16-17 January 1979

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## ABSTRACT

This report details the results of the Western Gulf Coast Meeting of the Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Information Program. This meeting was held as part of the implementation of regulations contained in 30 CFR 252.4, 30 CFR 252.5, and 43 CFR 3301.8. Suggestions were solicited from the attendees at the Meeting as to the contents, format, and timing of the Summary Reports and Indexes that will be provided by the U.S. Department of the Interior to states affected by OCS oil and gas exploration and development.

Any questions or comments regarding this Meeting Report, the Summary Reports, or the Indexes may be addressed to:

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It is requested that such comments be made within 30 days of the distribution of this Meeting Report.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The third of seven meetings pertaining to the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Information Program was conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) at the Quality Inn, Houston, Texas, on January 16 and 17, 1979. This meeting was held as part of the implementation by the U.S. Department of the Interior of regulations contained in 30 CFR 252.4, 30 CFR 252.5, and 43 CFR 3301.8. Through presentations and discussions, the proposed outlines of a set of Summary Reports and Indexes required by the regulations were introduced to representatives of state and local governments, as well as other interested parties, to solicit comments on the nature, scope, content, and timing of the Summary Reports and Indexes.

### 1.1 Legislative Background

The Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act Amendments of 1978 (Public Law 95-372) requires the Secretary of the Interior to make available to the affected states, and upon request, to any affected local government, a summary of data designed to assist them in planning for the onshore impacts of possible outer continental shelf oil and gas development and production. The Summary Report will include estimates of: (a) the oil and gas reserves in areas leased or to be leased; (b) the size and timing of development if and when oil and/or gas is found; (c) the location of pipelines; and (d) the general location and nature of onshore facilities.

The Act also states that the Secretary shall transmit to any affected state an Index of all relevant, actual or proposed programs, plans, reports, environmental impact statements, tract nominations, and other lease sale information, and any similar type of relevant information with all modifications and comments prepared or obtained by the Secretary pursuant to the Act.

The regulations contained in Section 252.4 of 30 CFR state that the Summary Reports shall be made available to the governors of the affected states and local governments with pertinent jurisdiction by the Director of the USGS, after analysis, interpretation, and compilation of oil and gas data and information developed by the USGS and furnished by lessees, permittees, or other government agencies. Preparation of the Indexes is the joint responsibility of the Director of the BLM (43 CFR 3301.8) and the Director of the USGS (30 CFR 252.5).

## 1.2 Input Into Summary Reports and Indexes

To implement the regulations, the USGS and the BLM are distributing outlines to and requesting comments from the affected areas and interested parties on the scope, content, format, and timing of the Summary Reports and Indexes. In addition to this opportunity for comment, meetings are being held in coastal areas to explain the proposed outlines (notice published in the Federal Register, August 24, 1978, 43 FR 37771). The Summary Reports and Indexes are to be used as tools, aiding state and local planning officials in preparing for potential nearshore and onshore impacts resulting from the exploration and development of oil and gas resources on the outer continental shelf.

It is expected that the Summary Reports and Indexes will vary in coverage and content according to regional needs and interests; however, the basic format will be consistent to allow for comparisons and national data aggregations.

A draft Description of the Proposed Summary Report was distributed at the Houston meeting, and the draft Atlantic Index will be sent to attendees of the meeting.

## 2.0 SUMMARY OF HOUSTON MEETING

Attendance at the Houston meeting was by invitation only. Several methods were used to secure an appropriate list of invitees to the meeting. The governors of Louisiana and Texas were contacted and asked to identify a principal contact for their state. Through this contact, a list of state and local officials was obtained. In addition, each organization or person that responded to the Federal Register request for comments was placed on the invitee list. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) assisted in identifying national environmental organizations and industries having a vested interest in the meeting. Also invited were representatives from selected citizen groups devoted to preserving the quality of the environment.

The 55 attendees at the meeting included 13 representatives from the state and local governments in Louisiana and Texas; 21 representatives of industry; 1 member of a Texas law firm; and 13 representatives of the Federal Government. A complete list of attendees is presented in Appendix A.

### 2.1 Format of the Meeting

The agenda for the Western Gulf Coast OCS Oil and Gas Information Program meeting is presented in Figure 1. Formal presentations were made by representatives of the U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of Land Management. The presentations dealt with a number of OCS-related topics ranging from a brief overview of the OCS Oil and Gas Information Program to a detailed discussion of the Summary Reports and Indexes. The purpose of the presentations was to inform state and local government representatives of the specific relationship of the Summary Reports and Indexes to the Federal OCS oil and gas leasing process and to describe the tentative format, content, and timing as proposed for these documents.

The meeting was presented in four general parts. The first consisted of a brief overview of the regulations that mandate the OCS Oil and Gas Information Program, a description of the meeting objectives, and a description of the proposed format, content, and timing of the Indexes and Summary Reports. An informal session followed in which the attendees participated in discussions on Proprietary Non-proprietary Data Concerns and on OCS Exploration, Production, and Development Process and the States' Planning Process.

At the start of the second day, a detailed description of the proposed format, content, and timing of the Summary Report was presented. Following this presentation, the attendees divided into working groups, in which prepared questions on the Summary Reports



AGENDA  
OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF (OCS)  
OIL AND GAS INFORMATION PROGRAM  
WESTERN GULF COAST  
JANUARY 16-17, 1979

JANUARY 16

11:00 - 12:00 noon	REGISTRATION
12:00 - 1:30 p.m.	LUNCH AND OPENING REMARKS BY FEDERAL AND HOST STATE PERSONNEL
1:45 - 2:00 p.m.	STATES' MEETING OVERVIEW
2:00 - 2:30 p.m.	FORMAT, CONTENT, AND TIMING OF INDEXES
2:30 - 3:00 p.m.	STATES REACTIONS TO THE INDEX PROPOSALS
3:00 - 3:15 p.m.	BREAK
3:15 - 5:30 p.m.	SPECIAL INTEREST DISCUSSIONS (Concurrent)

- A. PROPRIETARY NONPROPRIETARY DATA CONCERNS
- B. OCS EXPLORATION, PRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT  
PROCESS AND THE STATES' PLANNING PROCESSES

3:15 - 4:15 p.m.	SESSION 1
4:15 - 4:30 p.m.	BREAK
4:30 - 5:30 p.m.	SESSION 2

FIGURE 1  
AGENDA FOR WESTERN GULF COAST OCS MEETING

AGENDA (Continued)

JANUARY 17

8:00 - 8:30 a.m.	COFFEE AND DANISH
8:30 - 8:45 a.m.	RECAP OF FIRST DAY
8:45 - 9:45 a.m.	SUMMARY REPORT TECHNICAL PRESENTATION
	A. SCOPE, FORMAT, AND TIMING OF SUMMARY REPORTS
	B. GEOLOGICAL AND GEOPHYSICAL DATA AND OIL AND GAS RESOURCES
	C. MAGNITUDE AND TIMING OF DEVELOPMENT
	D. TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES
	E. ONSHORE FACILITIES AND IMPACTS
	F. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
9:45 - 12:00 noon	STATE REACTION TO SUMMARY REPORT PROPOSALS (SMALL WORKING GROUPS)
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.	LUNCH
1:00 - 2:00 p.m.	REPORTS FROM SMALL WORKING GROUPS
2:00 - 3:00 p.m.	PANEL DISCUSSIONS
3:00 - 3:15 p.m.	SUM-UP AND ADJOURNMENT

FIGURE 1  
AGENDA FOR WESTERN GULF COAST OCS MEETING  
(CONCLUDED)

and Indexes were discussed. A representative of each group then summarized his group's findings and participated in a panel discussion moderated by Mr. Joseph E. Bodovitz. Mr. Bodovitz concluded by summarizing the findings of the meeting.

## 2.2 Summaries of Presentations

The following sections summarize the information included in the formal presentations.

### 2.2.1 Opening Remarks--Hillary A. Oden, U.S. Geological Survey

An introduction to the meeting was presented by Mr. Hillary A. Oden, Associate Chief of the Conservation Division of the U.S. Geological Survey. This address included a summary of the Federal Regulations that mandate the OCS Oil and Gas Information Program and the requirements that pertain to the preparation of an Index and a Summary Report.

Of particular note was the impending issuance the following day of proposed regulations concerning the OCS Oil and Gas Information Program (30 CFR Part 252, Federal Register, Vol. 44, No. 12, pp. 3524-3527, January 17, 1979).

The Summary Report was defined by Mr. Oden as a compilation of data and information prepared by the Department of the Interior to assist states and local jurisdictions in planning for potential near-shore and onshore impacts resulting from oil and gas exploration, development, and production on the Outer Continental Shelf. The Index was defined as a list of relevant, actual or proposed programs, plans, reports, environmental impact statements, and other lease sale information that the Federal government uses in its decisionmaking process. Both documents are to be made available on a timely basis and are to be updated as significant changes occur.

Two objectives of the meeting were identified. The first was to provide to the state and local governments the opportunity to discuss the tentative outline of the Summary Reports to ensure the usefulness of the documents in planning for the long-term consequences of OCS oil and gas development. The second objective was to provide state and local government representatives with the opportunity to comment on the content, format, and timing of the Index.

Mr. Oden concluded his remarks with a brief discussion of information exchange and regulatory coordination among the Federal, state and local governments. Specific to this discussion were comments on proprietary data and the policy and regulations that protect the confidentiality of geologic and geophysical information provided by industry. Mr. Oden stressed that cooperation among

Federal, state and local agencies was necessary to balance requirements for protection of proprietary information with the information needs of state and local governments.

#### 2.2.2 Meeting Overview--Ethan T. Smith, U.S. Geological Survey

An overview of the objectives and agenda of the meeting was presented by Dr. Ethan T. Smith of the U.S. Geological Survey Resource and Land Investigations (RALI) Program. In addition to providing an opportunity for representatives of the Department of the Interior to consult with meeting participants on the scope, format, timing, and content of the Summary Reports and Indexes, Dr. Smith stated that the meeting was intended to serve as a forum for discussion of procedures for the compilation and interpretation of information necessary for the assessment of onshore impacts of oil and gas exploration, development, and production on the outer continental shelf.

The next part of the presentation comprised a detailed review of the meeting agenda (Figure 1). Dr. Smith explained the purpose of each segment of the meeting, noting that the general plan was to devote the first part of each day to scheduled presentations and the second part to open discussion. The culmination of the meeting was described as the presentation of the findings of the small working groups, followed by panel discussions of key issues.

Background information on the concept of the Summary Report was offered in a brief slide presentation. Overall, the Summary Report was defined as an information bridge between the Federal OCS development process and the state and local planning processes. Key features of the report were described as the inclusion of previously unreleased aggregated resource estimates and summaries and synthesis of the numerous reports and plans used in decisionmaking. The reports would be concise, using a four-chapter format, with the portrayal of mapped information at a scale of 1:1,000,000.

In concluding, Dr. Smith summarized events to follow the meeting, including the distribution of copies of the proceedings of the meeting and a subsequent period of review and comment. Finally, it was noted that through further contact with state government representatives, a series of cooperative agreements would be formulated to facilitate the information exchange program.

#### 2.2.3 Proposed Format, Content, and Timing of Indexes--Olaf Kays, U.S. Geological Survey

Mr. Olaf Kays of the U.S. Geological Survey RALI Program discussed the format, content, and timing of the Indexes proposed by

the Department of the Interior. The purpose of the presentation was to provide the participants with an opportunity to comment on the Index and to suggest changes. To assist the participants, copies of a Draft Sample Index were distributed at the meeting. Four separate Indexes will be issued, each of which will describe those documents and reports used by the Federal government in the pre-lease and post-lease sale activities within one of the four OCS regions: Atlantic, Pacific, Gulf of Mexico, and Alaska.

Mr. Kays described the Index as essentially a bibliographic reference document that should be particularly helpful to decision-makers in state and local areas affected by OCS oil and gas exploration and development. He noted that it could help to bring them up to date quickly by showing where and how to locate Federal documents important to the OCS oil and gas exploration and development process. Further, the information will be arranged to reflect the sequence of events in the OCS process, allowing the reader to follow the decisionmaking process and to identify modifications in planning activities.

Mr. Kays stated that the proposed Index will include, in addition to the information required by the regulations, the recent leasing schedule and maps, which would locate such features as major shore facilities and major sedimentary basins where oil and gas exploration is likely. Moreover, the following items contained in the Draft Sample Index were identified by Mr. Kays as a partial listing of the types of reports, permits, and related information to be included in the final Indexes:

- Proposed OCS Planning Schedule
- Resource Reports
- Call for Nominations and Comments
- Tentative Tract Selection Notice and State Briefing
- Pre-Sale Environmental Impact Statement
- Hazards Report
- Secretarial Issue Document
- Proposed Notice of Sale
- Final Tract Listing and Public Notice of Sale
- Bid Acceptance/Rejection Recommendation of State Briefing
- Lease Sale Notice
- Exploration Plan with Environmental Report
- Environmental Impact Statement for Exploration (if necessary)
- Exploratory Drilling Permit
- Development and Production Plan and Environmental Report
- Environmental Assessment and Impact Statement for Development and Production (if necessary)
- Drilling Permit for Each Well
- Pipeline Permit

Transportation Management Plan  
Regional Environmental Studies Plan  
Summary Reports

A general description of each of these documents will be presented in the Indexes. These descriptive sections will be followed by a listing of the individual documents and reports, including for each document the title, date of publication, authors, number of pages, availability, cost, and National Technical Information Service (NTIS) number if the document is available through that agency.

The documents will be listed by lease tracts within each section of an Index. If a number of documents in the lease sale process are similar, a single generic description will be used, followed by a listing of the applicable reports. Generally, state and local studies will be excluded from the Index unless they are of special significance.

Mr. Kays also noted that any changes, such as the Council on Environmental Quality's new regulations on environmental impact statements, that affect the contents or production schedule of a document will be indicated in the general description along with a notation of when such changes first occurred.

The Index for the Atlantic region is scheduled for production in late March 1979.\* The Pacific, Alaska, and Gulf Indexes are to follow at intervals of approximately one month. Mr. Kays stated that the frontier areas are to be indexed first. It is proposed that the Index for the Atlantic region will include information beginning with lease sale number 40 (Baltimore Canyon, October 1976), the Pacific region Index with lease sale number 35 (December 1975), and the Alaskan region Index with lease sale number 39 (Gulf of Alaska, April 1976). Mr. Kays solicited advice on which lease sales should begin Gulf Coast Indexing and suggested number 32 (December 1973) and 33 (March 1974) in the Eastern Gulf; and number 47 (June 1977) in the Western Gulf, was mentioned. Updating is planned to occur at six-month intervals; however, this is still subject to change.\*\*

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\*This date is now considered overly optimistic; actual production may not occur until May 1979.

\*\*Based upon later discussions, revisions may be issued when significant events occur, rather than following a fixed time schedule for updating.

#### 2.2.4 Proposed Format, Content, and Timing of Summary Reports--Louis G. Hecht, Jr., U.S. Geological Survey

Mr. Louis G. Hecht, Jr., U.S. Geological Survey RALI Program, discussed in detail the proposed scope, format, content, and timing of the Summary Reports. To assist attendees in their review, a document entitled Description of the Proposed Summary Report was included in the meeting information packet. It was explained that following the morning session, participants would reassemble in small working groups to discuss the concepts presented. Additionally, attendees were encouraged to review this material with their staffs and to submit in writing any further comments by April 15, 1979.

Mr. Hecht defined a Summary Report as a compilation of data and information designed to assist state and local governments in planning for nearshore and onshore impacts of OCS oil and gas development and production. Sources of information would include analyses and compilation of data developed by the U.S. Geological Survey of oil and gas data furnished by other government agencies, lessees, and permittees. It was noted that the production schedule for Summary Reports favors the frontier areas. Mr. Hecht stated that, since the Louisiana and Texas portions of the Gulf are relatively well developed, the Summary Report for this region would be prepared later in the process and would be especially designed to address past as well as present and future leasing activities.

In outlining the scope of a Summary Report, Mr. Hecht noted that two general categories of information will be addressed. The first category will include information on the resource region and the lease sale area. Specific types of information will include geologic and geophysical data, oil and gas resource estimates, any reserve data for oil and gas structures, and the anticipated magnitude and timing of development. The second general information category will concern the affected states and any specifically affected regions within the states. Accordingly, relevant topics that will be addressed include transportation strategies and the nature and location of onshore and nearshore facilities. Mr. Hecht noted that the format of the Summary Reports will reflect the dynamic nature of the information program, since new information is frequently added during the process from lease sale through commercial production. Since a major objective of the information program is to inform state and local agencies in a timely fashion, it was proposed that the Summary Reports be produced in a looseleaf form with a map pocket.\* This format would allow for periodic modification as new information becomes available.

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\*Present thinking favors a bound document.

Concerning the issue of timing, Mr. Hecht identified two major objectives for the formulation of the report production schedule. The first was to ensure that the Summary Reports would be available to the states prior to making Federal consistency determinations; and the second was to ensure that the frequency of updating would meet state and local planning needs. In accordance with these objectives, it was proposed that the Summary Report for the Louisiana and Texas

portion of the Gulf of Mexico be prepared by the end of fiscal year 1980, with updating every six months following that.\* In addition, a Summary Report will be prepared following the occurrence of a major event, such as the preparation of a development plan and an environmental report by a lessee or the designation of any new pipeline corridors or alternative methods of transporting oil and gas.

The final segment of Mr. Hecht's presentation consisted of a review of proposals concerning the content of a Summary Report. Generally, it was proposed that the document will consist of four chapters, plus supporting appendices. The main body of the report will be preceded by a brief (two pages) introduction, identifying the purpose of the report and providing background information, and a one page abstract.

The first of the four chapters will address geological and geophysical data and will provide oil and gas resource and reserve estimates. It was emphasized that resource and reserve estimates for geological structures will be based on aggregated data, using the "probabilistic resource estimates-OCS" (PRESTO) computer model. It is believed that processing data in this fashion will yield useful estimates, while protecting any proprietary data.

The second chapter, "Magnitude and Timing of Offshore Activities," will provide an information base for the prediction of nearshore and onshore impacts of OCS resource development and will include an accounting of current exploration and/or development activities. In areas where development has not yet occurred, anticipated production schedules will be extrapolated from the resource and reserve estimates provided in the first chapter. Finally, for areas in the production phase, current production figures and estimates of future production rates will be provided.

The third chapter, "Oil and Gas Transportation Strategies," will be based on the four-phase study process of the Intergovernmental

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\*Based upon later discussions, revisions may be issued when significant events occur, rather than following a fixed time schedule for updating.



Planning Program (IPP) for Leasing and Transportation of OCS Oil and Gas. With regard to the first phase, pre-lease sale coordination, the Summary Report will identify possible transportation corridors. Pertaining to the second phase, the report will provide a preliminary review of the pipeline corridors and supporting regional and site-specific studies. Where there has been a discovery of marketable oil or gas, the results of detailed analyses will be provided. Finally, where a Regional Transportation Management Plan has been formulated, key information will be extracted for presentation in the Summary Report.

Chapter four, "Nature and Location of Nearshore and Onshore Facilities," will describe and assess the impact of existing and proposed facilities associated with OCS development. It will include cumulative regional impact assessments for each multi-state region. It was noted that the report entitled Methodologies for OCS-Related Facilities Planning, jointly prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey and the New England River Basins Commission, describes the types of analyses that can be expected.

Mr. Hecht concluded his presentation by noting that the Geological Survey may be able to make available special analytical software and hardware to agencies for use in planning for development resulting from offshore activities. Additionally, it was noted that financial assistance may become available from the USGS to help state agencies obtain data and to develop analytical procedures. Mr. Hecht stated that public officials interested in pursuing opportunities for technical assistance should consult Onshore Impacts of Offshore Oil: A User's Guide to Assessment Methods, issued by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

### 3.0 SPECIAL INTEREST DISCUSSIONS

Concurrent presentations were given on the topics of Proprietary/Nonproprietary Data and The OCS Exploration, Production, and Development Process and the States' Planning Processes. Each topic was presented twice so that each participant could have the opportunity to attend both topics. The following summaries combine both sessions of each topic.

#### 3.1 Proprietary Nonproprietary Data--Chaired by Gordon D. Burton and Henry L. Berryhill, Jr., U.S. Geological Survey

Mr. Gordon D. Burton of the Conservation Division, USGS, Reston, Virginia, reviewed the techniques of geophysical (primarily seismic) prospecting on the Outer Continental Shelf. His presentation had two main objectives: (1) to inform state and local government representatives of the kinds of data the USGS retains and of data the USGS is permitted to divulge; and (2) to ask these representatives what their agencies want and need to know for planning purposes and for evaluating the impact of OCS exploration and development. Mr. Burton acknowledged that the Gulf Region has had more experience with oil and gas exploration and development than other coastal areas, so its representatives' needs are quite different from those of frontier areas.

Mr. Burton reviewed the techniques of geophysical exploration that are used both by prospectors to guide them as to where and whether or not they should seek a lease for oil and gas exploration and/or development and by the Federal Government in various stages of its leasing program.

The seismic data obtained falls into two broad categories based on the frequency of the energy used and on the type of information desired. The first category is obtained by deep penetration with low frequency seismic energy and is used to infer such features as stratigraphy and geologic structures; such information is needed to estimate oil and gas resources. These data, however, are not of high resolution. Therefore, in order for the USGS to assess the safety of tracts nominated for sale, it uses the second category of data to determine shallow geologic hazards, such as seeps, faults, and unstable sediments. The high frequency energy technique used to obtain these data yields minimal penetration but high resolution (detailed) information on seabottom sediments and near-surface structure.

Mr. Burton stated that the USGS acquires its data by three methods. First, USGS permits are needed for anyone to carry out exploration on the OCS. These permits stipulate that the USGS is to have access to the data produced, which are considered proprietary.

In essence, proprietary data's secrecy is guaranteed (here by the Federal Government) since its disclosure may jeopardize the commercial well-being or competitiveness of the firm that purchased or collected it. It was stated that for data obtained by permit a proprietary status means that geophysical data will not be released for ten years and geological data will not be released for two years or, in either case, until the termination of the lease. Second, under an arrangement with private companies, the USGS may buy exploration data. Under the terms of the contract, such data are proprietary. Third, the Geological Survey may exclusively contract with a private geophysical contractor for data. All data so acquired are nonproprietary and available to the general public.

One attendee, Mr. Richard L. Conroy of Geophysical Services, Inc., estimated that greater than 95 percent of all Common Depth Point data are proprietary. Shallow penetration data are usually obtained by the USGS under exclusive contract and, therefore, are nonproprietary. Mr. Burton noted that although a lot of nonproprietary data exist, the public has rarely requested any of them.

The proprietary computer-processed deep seismic data currently cost approximately \$700 per mile. An individual oil company may require 10,000 miles of such data in a given instance. Ordinarily, if several oil companies identify a need for a substantial quantity of such data, they may form a consortium to fulfill their mutual interest and share the financial burden. These data are not ordinarily collected by the oil companies directly but by geophysical contracting companies.

Under an arrangement with the oil companies, since 1968 the USGS has purchased approximately 437,000 miles of the Common Depth Point data for approximately \$18 million. If the USGS had purchased the data at full cost in order to avoid the proprietary restriction, the cost would have been \$262 million. Therefore, the present arrangement entails some restriction on the data's use but results in a substantial saving to the taxpayer.

During a question and answer session following Mr. Burton's presentation, Mr. Douglas A. Cochrane, Jr., of OECS Corporation, questioned the need for both the private companies and the Federal Government separately surveying a tract for safety, particularly when the private companies' surveys are much more detailed. The response noted that both industry needs for protection of its large investment and the environmental need for sound pre-lease information have to be satisfied. Although the private firm's overwhelming incentive to protect its structures and capital investment strongly mitigate against its falsifying information or doing poor work, it is doubtful that the Federal Government could base its decisions regarding

OCS lease sales on this source, just as one private oil company would not base its investments upon another firm's data and analyses.

It was further questioned whether or not the Geological Survey's negative recommendations on the oil companies' bids for tracts are based on the relatively small amount of Common Depth Point data it has purchased. It was pointed out that all industry data are acquired by the Survey.

The remainder of the queries on Mr. Burton's presentation concerned whether proprietary data will be used in either the Indexes or the Summary Reports. Assurances were given that although some of these documents' information may be derivatives of proprietary data, such as estimates of oil and gas resources, no proprietary information will be disclosed. It was pointed out that only regional estimates will be given and one could not relate the information that is to be released to specific coordinates or geographic data.

Following Mr. Burton's presentation, Mr. J. Frank Rollins of the Society of Exploration Geophysicists presented the Society's position paper on proprietary data. This paper was originally written in response to a request for comments published in the Federal Register, Vol. 43, page 37771, August 24, 1978. The Society expressed strong concern for protecting the proprietary nature of sensitive information published in the Summary Reports, however aggregated or general it might be.

Mr. Henry L. Berryhill, of the Corpus Christi, Texas, Office of the U.S. Geological Survey, discussed a series of maps on the offshore environment geared to assist officials responsible for state and local decisions on OCS development. The maps are the result of a BLM environmental studies program involving eight principal participants, many at the state and university level. The six main maps in this series are:

- (1) "Water Circulation and Rates of Sedimentation"
- (2) "Trace Metals Content and Texture of Surficial Bottom Sediments"
- (3) "Shallow Surface Setting and Biogeology"
- (4) "Wisconsin Sedimentation Patterns and Tectonism"
- (5) "Paleogeography and Depositional Environments, Late Pleistocene and Holocene"
- (6) "Structure of the Continental Terrace"

Also included in the series is a petroleum infrastructure overlay, which is a plot of all supportive industries, such as pipelines, landfalls, and shipwrecks.

These maps will be published, possibly in six months, and it is anticipated that other areas will be similarly mapped, the South Atlantic probably being the next area. Now, however, only a small section of the Gulf has been completed and other sections of the Gulf are under study. Future studies will continue in a different form; they will move to the outer shelf, and slopes will be limited to a Quaternary history and seafloor stability study. No baseline data maps will be produced in the future.

During the ensuing question and answer period Mr. Berryhill emphasized that no proprietary data were used in the preparation of these maps. Copies of these maps are available from Mr. Berryhill for those who are willing to submit critical evaluations of them.

The final presentation of the session on proprietary/nonproprietary data concerns was given by Mr. Charles F. Darden, President of the International Association of Geophysical Contractors. His main point was that the volume of data generated by private industry's prospecting is too great for state and local governments to digest. An example of a typical Gulf prospect was given. Usually 20,000 reels of computer tape and one year's staffing of 200 geologists and others are used in a prospect. This represents about 213,000 miles of data collection at a cost of \$83 million. In addition, \$45 million was spent for processing and over \$3 million for interpretation. These costs exclude material, storage, and reproduction.

Mr. Darden concluded that the Summary Reports, as described, will give state and local agencies very definitive information and will meet their needs better than raw data would.

3.2 OCS Exploration, Production, and Development Process and the States' Planning Processes--Chaired by Harold P. Sieverding, Bureau of Land Management, and Lowell G. Hammons, U.S. Geological Survey

The special interest discussions on the OCS process provided a general overview of the exploration, development, and production phases of oil and gas discovery on the Outer Continental Shelf. Mr. Harold P. Sieverding of the New Orleans OCS Office, Bureau of Land Management, presented a slide-audio tape program that included a description of the various types of rigs used during exploration and development drilling and the environmental safeguards employed on

these rigs; a review of the Federal inspection and monitoring requirements for offshore drilling activities was also shown. Following this presentation, a question and discussion session was held during which specific steps in the process were discussed and comments were made on the scope, content, and timing of the Summary Reports and Indexes.

Several participants stressed that the Western Gulf Region is unlike other OCS regions in having a relatively long history of oil and gas development activity. Consequently, major issues include improving existing coordination and information exchange mechanisms. For instance, it was noted that impact assessment reports tend to be unnecessarily voluminous and repetitive, making it difficult for state and local authorities to use the information.

As an extension of this discussion, the point was made that a major problem for Louisiana and Texas authorities is the prediction of the socioeconomic impacts of OCS oil and gas development. Such predictions are necessary for sound planning and are also essential for meaningful administration of the Coastal Energy Impact Program (CEIP). It was also noted that Louisiana and Texas should be considered for receipt of "retroactive" CEIP monies, and that the impacts on these states of OCS development in other regions should be considered in the allocation of funds.

Although Texas and Louisiana do not yet have approved Coastal Zone Management Plans, the issue of Federal consistency was considered important. One state representative noted that coordination was especially important with regard to the identification of transportation corridors and onshore siting of support facilities. Another state representative emphasized that the people of Texas and Louisiana are accustomed to OCS development and are concerned only that the Federal Government and private industry conduct their activities properly.

#### 4.0 COMMENTS BY STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

##### 4.1 Summary Reports

Meeting attendees were encouraged to question speakers about formal presentations, but the bulk of their input resulted from the small group discussions held on the second day. Their comments on the Summary Report were in response to questionnaires contained in the meeting handout packet. A synopsis of these comment is given below.

##### 4.1.1 Format

- o The Summary Report is a good synthesis and conceptually is fine as long as it remains a living document.
- o Summary Reports may be used in a variety of ways by state and local officials in evaluating and planning for the impact of OCS oil and gas exploration and development. However, a very important function is a system of feedback to see how it is being used by planners.
- o The lease sale area is an adequate size for the Summary Report and Index.
- o There was not a consensus on whether the Report should be loose-leaf or bound. Some felt a bound format would eliminate problems of inefficient filing of updated reports and avoid confusion as to whether or not the report is current.

##### 4.1.2 Content

- o In the Gulf, oil and gas development and the accompanying environmental monitoring and study have a lengthy history. Therefore, recent reports from the Department of the Interior have tended to be too voluminous and duplicative.
- o Since Louisiana and Texas industries support the supply and manufacturing needs of much overseas oil and gas development, onshore impacts in these states also result from worldwide activity. Information on the nature and timing of this activity would be helpful, although likely beyond the scope of the BLM/USGS project.
- o Regardless of how much information is gathered, governments tend to be immobile until the impact occurs. It was, therefore, suggested that rather than trying to get communities to act on anticipated problems help be given with those already created.

- o It was also noted that local governments will use information if it can attract other sources of funds.
- o Socioeconomic data including that from other areas, and projected production schedules and information are more useful to this region than basic environmental data or resource estimates.
- o Basic geologic and geophysical data are not needed by state and local governments. Some agencies, though, may use such data in academic research or in work concerning common pools, subsidence, and storage in salt domes.
- o For state and local planning, the available information is adequate. However, the problems of sorting, compilation, and knowing how and where to get it remain.
- o One group added that a historical summary may be helpful.

#### 4.1.3 Timing

- o Updating of the reports should occur when something significant has happened within the previous half year. Otherwise, a statement that nothing significant has occurred would suffice as the six-month update.

### 4.2 Indexes

Few comments were made on the scope, content, and timing of the Indexes by state and local officials present at the Western Gulf Coast OCS meeting. The comments that were made are briefly summarized in the following paragraphs.

#### 4.2.1 Format

- o It was noted that the regional boundaries proposed for the Indexes differ from boundary designations used in some of the reports that would be addressed in the Indexes.
- o It was suggested that the mailing list for the Indexes should consist of titles of state offices, rather than specific individuals. Additionally, to aid in disseminating the information to local agencies, it was suggested that copies of the Indexes be sent to associations such as Councils of Governments.



#### 4.2.2 Content

- o In answer to a question on the inclusion of state and local reports in the Indexes, Mr. Olaf Kays (U.S. Geological Survey) noted that only documents related to Federal decisionmaking processes would be addressed.
- o It was asked if the Indexes would address all phases of the OCS. The response was that all phases would be considered, including post-sale activities.
- o It was suggested that the Indexes include a list of key officials, including telephone numbers, who could be contacted for further information.

#### 4.2.3 Timing

- o Several state officials requested that the Indexes be prepared as soon as possible, noting that any information that could assist in planning processes was welcome.

## 5.0 MONITORING CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY STATE AND LOCAL PLANNERS

At the Houston meeting, personnel of The MITRE Corporation distributed questionnaires and sought individual comment from state and local planners and representatives of environmental groups regarding environmental monitoring needs and programs. Along with input obtained from small group discussions, this will be incorporated into a report to be prepared by MITRE for the Council on Environmental Quality. The report will address the area of environmental data needs related to OCS oil and gas exploration and development. The questionnaire is keyed to the objectives of the report, which are to identify present or anticipated impacts and environmental problems in OCS regions or states, existing and planned environmental monitoring programs, and significant unmet environmental monitoring needs and data gaps.

Participants at the Houston meeting generally felt that sufficient baseline data and monitoring programs exist to address the nearshore and coastal environment of Texas and Louisiana. The principal impacts, in the view of participants, were socioeconomic. It was felt that there has not been very much impact to the physical or biological environment in consequence of offshore petroleum related activity to this time.

Mr. Robert P. Hannah (Manager, National Space Technology Laboratory, Office of Science Technology Environmental Planning, NSTL Station, Mississippi) commented that "loss of wetlands" is probably the most significant impact that may occur in Louisiana, which has 20 percent of the nation's wetlands. However, it was noted that the environment and ecology of the wetlands of Louisiana have been extensively investigated.

The general viewpoint appeared to be that environmental baseline and monitoring data available were adequate and that impact to the physical and biological environment in consequence of OCS exploration, development, and production would be minimal. However, Dr. Alfred J. D'Arezzo of the Texas Department of Water Resources noted that hydrographic modeling of estuaries is a challenging area that requires continued work. In particular, the overall hydrologic budget of estuaries is very sensitive to man's activities. Furthermore, attention must be given to the interrelationships and cumulative nature of impacts in the nearshore environment.

APPENDIX A  
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