



**National Conference of State Legislatures
Office of State-Federal Relations**

**Department of Interior Releases Draft Proposed Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas
Leasing Program for 2019-2024**

Jan. 5, 2017

On Jan. 4, 2017, the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) announced its draft proposed program (DPP) for developing the National Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program ([National OCS Program](#)) for 2019-2024. This draft, if finalized, would replace [2017-2022 final plan](#) developed by the previous administration.

The draft proposes to make more than 90 percent of the total OCS acreage and more than 98 percent of undiscovered, possibly recoverable, oil and gas resources in federal offshore areas available for future exploration and development. This is a significant change from the [current plan](#) in which 94 percent of the OCS is unavailable for recovery activities. The opening of more than 90 percent of the OCS would be accomplished through 47 potential lease sales in 25 of the 26 planning areas—19 off the coast of Alaska, seven in the Pacific, 12 in the Gulf of Mexico, and nine in the Atlantic, the largest number of lease sales in U.S. history. Lease sales in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans have not been offered in more than 30 years.

It is the second step following the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) July 2017 request for information on what should be included in the program and follows up on both an [executive order](#) (EO) from the president, and a [secretarial order](#) (SO) from DOI Secretary Ryan Zinke. The former lifted bans on offshore oil and gas exploration and production in the Arctic and the Atlantic. The latter called for enhanced OCS energy exploration, leasing and development, regulatory certainty for OCS activities, and enhanced conservation stewardship.

DOI simultaneously announced that it will be hosting public meetings to receive comments on the draft plan in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act. Comment is requested on all the available OCS to better inform future decisions on the National OCS Program. The program will not go into effect until after a Proposed Program and subsequent Proposed Final Program (PFP) are published. As of now, the 2017-2022 Five Year Program will continue.

Under the OCS Lands Act, the Department of Interior secretary is required to prepare and maintain a five-year program of potential oil and gas lease sales in federal waters, indicating the

size, timing and location of leasing activity as determined to best meet national energy needs, while considering potential economic, environmental and social impacts.

For more information on the draft proposed plan or future steps, please contact NCSL Staff, [Kristen Hildreth](#), or [Ben Husch](#).