BOEM-BSEE Liaison Committee Report

Houston, TX
Thursday, September 3, 2026

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I. BOEM/BSEE In The News

US Gulf lease Sale Generates $82.7 Million, 76% Higher than March Sale

Oil & Gas Journal, 8/17/2026

The most recent Gulf of Mexico lease sale brought in 69 bids submitted for 59 blocks, with Chevron, Anadarko, and Arena Energy emerging as winners.

The US Department of the Interior said Aug. 12 that the Marine Minerals Administration's (MMA) Lease Sale Big Beautiful Gulf 3 (BBG3) generated about $82.7 million in high bids for 59 blocks in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

Sixteen companies submitted 69 bids totaling over $99 million, with Chevron USA Inc., Arena Energy LLC, and Anadarko US Offshore LLC emerging as the sale's top winners.

While BBG3's preliminary sales revenues were about 76% higher than Lease Sale BBG2's $47 million in March, they were 72% below BBG1's $300 million in December 2025, held after a 2-year leasing pause.

Chevron and Anadarko, securing 13 and 8 winning bids, respectively, focused strategies on mostly competitive, deepwater blocks. In contrast, Arena's 10-winning-bid approach involved entirely uncontested shallow-water leases, mainly in Eugene Island (5 blocks) and Matagorda Island (3 blocks).

Chevron won 4 blocks in Green Canyon, 4 in Keathley Canyon, 3 in East Breaks, and 2 in Mississippi Canyon. Anadarko prevailed in Keathley Canyon (4 blocks), Mississippi Canyon (2 blocks), and Green Canyon and Walker Ridge (1 winning bid each).

Green Canyon received the most total bids, with a combined total of 13 bids placed across 12 different lease blocks. Keathley Canyon followed with 10 total bids across 5 blocks due to multi-bid competition on individual tracts.

While most blocks offered attracted a single bid, Keathley Canyon Blocks 258 and 430 received the most competition, with 4 bids and 3 bids, respectively. Anadarko won both blocks, outbidding BP, Chevron, and Shell for Keathley Canyon 258 and Chevron and Shell for Block 430.

MMA offered about 15,100 unleased blocks covering 80.4 million acres across the Western, Central, and portions of the Eastern Gulf Planning Areas. The blocks lie 3-231 miles offshore in water depths of 9-11,100 ft. The lease terms include a 12.5% royalty rate for blocks in all water depths.

National Ocean Industries Association president Erik Milito said the sale represents certainty for the offshore oil and gas industry. "Offshore energy is a long-term business," Milito said. "The energy Americans rely on depends on the leasing and investment decisions we make today."

Holly Hopkins, American Petroleum Institute vice-president of upstream policy, said the sale represented "another vote of confidence" in American energy. "At a time of global energy disruption, our industry is continuing to invest in the future supply [that] America and our allies will depend on for decades to come."

Agency Information Collection Activities; Application to Be Recognized as Qualified to Bid On, Hold, or Operate a Lease or Grant on the OCS in Accordance with the Requirements of 30 CFR 556, Subpart D

Federal Register

Published Date:	August 21, 2026
Agency:	Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Action Detail:	Notice of information collection; request for comment.
Date Description:	Comments must be received by BOEM no later than October 20, 2026.
Docket Number:	BOEM–2026–0958
Comment Period:	Open: August 21, 2026 - October 20, 2026

Summary

This Information Collection Request (ICR) seeks approval for a new form entitled Application to be Recognized as Qualified to Bid On, Own, Hold, or Operate a Lease or Grant on the OCS in Accordance with the Requirements of 30 CFR 556, Subpart D.

The form establishes a single, standardized method for applicants to submit the information required to obtain a BOEM qualification number under 30 CFR 556. Its purpose is to streamline both applicant submissions and BOEM's review process.

BOEM seeks to streamline its process for collecting information required under 30 CFR 556, Subpart D. Entities wishing to bid on, own, hold, or operate a lease or grant on the OCS must first obtain a qualification number from BOEM by submitting the evidence required under 30 CFR 556.402. Historically, BOEM has not provided a single standardized format for entities seeking qualification to bid on, own, hold, or operate an OCS lease or grant. Applicants were required to prepare and submit multiple certificates and resolutions to demonstrate eligibility under 30 CFR 556. The new form consolidates all required information into one submission, reducing administrative effort for applicants and enabling more efficient processing of qualification requests.

Send your comments on this ICR by either of the following methods listed below:

• Visit *http://www.regulations.gov*. In the Search box, enter BOEM–2026–0958 then click search. Follow the instructions to submit public comments and view all related materials.

• Email *regulatoryaffairs@boem.gov* or mail or hand-carry comments to the Department of the Interior; BOEM Information Collection Clearance Officer, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

For Further Information Contact

Karen Thundiyil by email at *regulatoryaffairs@boem.gov*, or by telephone at 202–742–0970.

Gulf Lawmakers Aim to Extend State Borders to 9 Miles Offshore

The Center Square, 7/15/2026

A bipartisan coalition of Gulf Coast lawmakers is pushing to change a 73-year-old law that limits their states' maritime boundaries to 3 miles offshore, potentially reshaping the regulation of local fisheries and generating billions of dollars in tax revenues from offshore energy and minerals leases.

Introduced by U.S. Rep. Mike Ezell, R-Miss., and a group of legislators that includes Reps. Troy Carter Sr., D-La., Clay Higgins, R-La., and Shomari Figures, D-Ala., the Offshore Parity Act would extend state waters from 3 nautical miles out to 9 – matching the long-held boundaries of Texas and Florida.

This change would provide Gulf states full economic control over new leases issued for traditional oil and gas drilling, seabed mineral mining, and permanent offshore carbon sequestration.

"For too long, Mississippi and our Gulf Coast neighbors have operated under an outdated and unequal system," Ezell said when introducing the legislation in April. "This bill is about fairness."

Under the Submerged Lands Act of 1953, coastal states were mostly restricted to 3 nautical miles of offshore territory. The law allowed Gulf states to claim up to 9 miles if those wider boundaries existed upon admission to the United States.

Florida and Texas successfully secured the wider 9-mile limits by proving their founding state constitutions and statutes had carried over historical Spanish maritime boundaries. A 1969 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in United States v. Louisiana rejected similar historic claims from Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, restricting those three states to the narrower 3-mile strip of state waters.

“This is a critical step toward equality, ensuring that Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama have the same authority over their waters as Texas and Florida,” said Carter, who represents a district in southeast Louisiana that includes New Orleans. “This bill will empower us to manage our energy resources, protect our coastal communities, and strengthen our fisheries – securing economic benefits for our states.”

Higgins, representing southwest Louisiana, noted the legislation would establish a uniform regulatory playing field across the Gulf.

"The expansion from 3 to 9 miles of state waters would provide Louisiana with greater control and economic benefit from its offshore resources,” Higgins added.

While existing federal leases inside the expanded state waters would continue to generate revenues allocated by a formula to the U.S. Treasury and state and local governments, the distributions would change for future tracts. Upon the bill’s enactment, all rental fees, bonuses and production royalties generated by these new leases would be paid directly to Louisiana, Mississippi or Alabama rather than the federal government.

In neighboring Texas, the General Land Office recently executed a 271,000-acre lease with ExxonMobil for carbon storage in state water. The land office withheld the contract's financial terms and duration following a formal request from ExxonMobil to protect the proprietary data under the Texas Public Information Act.

At a June subcommittee hearing, the U.S. Department of the Interior submitted a formal statement opposing the legislation, citing complex administrative, jurisdictional and fiscal challenges to transferring federal offshore authority to the states. Interior Department officials also warned that redrawing the boundaries would divert significant energy and minerals leasing revenues away from the federal treasury.

Mississippi Department of Marine Resources Executive Director Joe Spraggins told federal lawmakers that increased access to abundant shrimping territories in the north-central water of the gulf would benefit the state's commercial fishing fleet.

"Our local shrimpers need to be able to go out 9 miles so they can be able to shrimp and not have a federal permit to do that," Spraggins said. "This would allow us to be able to have shrimp and fish on our docks with us almost year-round."

The bill awaits an official date for a full committee markup, which advocates hope to secure before the end of the summer work period.

On Monday, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management set an Aug. 12 date for the third offshore oil and gas lease sale mandated in July 2025 by the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. The sale will open approximately 80.4 million acres in the Gulf of America to bidding.

Rescinding the Definition of ''Harm'' Under the Endangered Species Act

Federal Register

Published Date:	July 14, 2026
Agency:	National Marine Fisheries Service, Fish & Wildlife Service
Action Detail:	Final Rule
Effective Date:	September 14, 2026
Date Description:	This final rule is effective September 14, 2026.
Docket Number:	FWS–HQ–ES–2025–0034; FXES11160900000–267–FF09E23000; NMFS–250411–0064
Comment Period:	None

Summary

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS; collectively referred to as the ''Services'') rescind the regulatory definition of ''harm'' in our Endangered Species Act (ESA or the Act) regulations. This rescission removes the regulatory definition of ''harm'' from the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) in Title 50 parts 17 and 222.

Address

Public comments and materials received, as well as supporting documentation used in the preparation of this final rule, are available online at *https://www.regulations.gov* in Docket No. FWS–HQ–ES–2025–0034.

For Further Information Contact

John Tirpak, Acting Assistant Director, Ecological Services, at 703–358–2171 or *ADEcologicalServices@fws.gov* with a subject line of ''1018–BI38.''

Civil Monetary Penalties Inflation Adjustments for 2026

Federal Register

Published Date: July 15, 2026

Agency: Department of Justice

Action Detail: Notice

Effective Date: July 15, 2026

Docket Number: OLP183

Comment Period: None

Summary

The Department of Justice (DOJ) is notifying the public that its civil monetary penalty amounts will not increase for the 2026 calendar year. DOJ is generally required by statute to amend its regulations annually to adjust for inflation the civil monetary penalties assessed or enforced by components of the Department. However, in accordance with guidance from the Office of Management and Budget, DOJ will continue to use the 2025 civil monetary penalty levels because there will be no cost-of-living adjustment for 2026.

For Further Information Contact

Robert Hinchman, Senior Counsel, Office of Legal Policy, U.S. Department of Justice, Room 4252 RFK Building, 950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20530, telephone (202) 514–8059 (not a toll-free number).

BOEM Initiates First Step to Explore Potential for Outer Continental Shelf Space Launch & Recovery

BOEM, 7/7/2026

Supporting the Trump Administration's bold vision to strengthen U.S. space leadership, launch capacity, re-entry, and recovery infrastructure, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management today announced the publication of a Request for Information to explore the potential use of the Outer Continental Shelf for offshore space launch and re-entry activities.

The request, scheduled for publication in the *Federal Register* on July 8, opens a 30-day comment period for the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to gather technical, environmental, and operational information from industry, researchers and other stakeholders that will help inform potential future activities, interagency coordination, and planning for offshore space launches and recovery.

The Request for Information supports implementation of President Trump's December 2025 Executive Order, Ensuring American Space Superiority, which calls on federal agencies to identify and advance policies that enable the growth of the U.S. commercial space sector.

"The Outer Continental Shelf presents a significant opportunity to support the future of America's space economy. Offshore launch, re-entry, and recovery infrastructure could expand operational flexibility, increase capacity, reduce constraints on growing launch demand, and strengthen the nation's commercial and national security space capabilities. With approximately 3.2 billion acres under federal jurisdiction, BOEM is uniquely positioned to help evaluate this emerging opportunity," **said Acting BOEM Director Matt Giacona**. "This Request for Information is an important first step in assessing how offshore development could support the next era of U.S. space leadership."

The Request for Information seeks information on operational practices, technical and safety standards, environmental considerations, and best practices for offshore space launch and re-entry facilities. It also seeks insight into emerging domestic and international guidelines or voluntary standards relevant to offshore space launch and re-entry. Feedback will help ensure the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management has a comprehensive understanding of current technologies, practices and research trends in this growing industry.

How to Participate

The Request for Information will be published in the Federal Register, opening a 30-day public comment period which will end at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Aug. 7, 2026.

Comments may be submitted at www.regulations.gov by searching for docket number BOEM-2026-0232 and following the instructions to submit comments.

Trump Administration Approved $5 Billion Oil Drilling Project in The Gulf of America

TheDePauw, 4/23/2026

On March 14, the Trump administration approved another massive oil drilling plan. Owned entirely by British Petroleum, one of the largest oil companies, the $5 billion project will extract oil in ultra-deep waters of the Gulf of America, formerly Mexico.

What is BP's Kaskida project?

Kaskida is the sixth operated hub in the U.S. Gulf of America by British Petroleum (BP), located in ultra-deep water 250 miles off the coast of New Orleans. Expected to start operations in 2029, it is estimated to produce 80,000 barrels of oil per day, which will eventually unlock 10 billion barrels of discovered resources.

BP Executive Vice President of Production and Operations Gordon Birrell said, "Developing Kaskida will unlock the potential of the Paleogene in the Gulf of Mexico for BP, building on our decades of experience in the region."

Furthermore, BP Senior Vice President for the Gulf of America and Canada Andy Krieger emphasized its safety, saying, "By employing an industry-led design solution, Kaskida will be simpler to construct and simpler to operate, enhancing safety and delivering greater value for BP."

Concerns for safety and the environment

However, some organizations have raised concerns about the project because the company was responsible for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010 in the Gulf of America. It was the worst oil spill in U.S. history, killing 11 people and causing $70 billion in damages.

Earthjustice, an environmental advocacy and protection organization, pointed out that the project has a higher risk of spilling than Deepwater Horizon. They said its operation in ultra-deepwater drilling would require it to withstand extreme pressure and temperature conditions, relying on still-emerging technology.

Brettny Hardy, senior attorney for Earthjustice's Ocean Program, said, "It's deeply disturbing that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management approved a proposal littered with legal and regulatory flaws, especially given BP's history in the Gulf."

Irene Gutierrez, senior attorney at the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), an environmental advocacy group, said, "BP's Kaskida project is a reckless gamble that repeats the same dangerous playbook as Deepwater Horizon — only this time in even deeper waters, posing even greater well control challenges."

Administration plans to call the Endangered Species Committee

In regard to this project, the Trump administration gathered the Endangered Species Committee on March 31 for the first time in over 30 years.

The committee possesses the authority to make an exemption for the Endangered Species Act, which requires all federal agencies to ensure their actions do not jeopardize the existence of endangered species.

In the meeting, the committee voted unanimously to grant an exemption for oil and gas drilling in the Gulf of America, pushing the Kaskida project forward.

Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, who requested the exemption, said, "It is essential to our national security to exempt all Gulf oil and gas activities."

However, the decision can threaten some endangered species in the Gulf, including Rice's whale, with fewer than 100 remaining.

The approval from the administration and the exemption of the project from the Endangered Species Act will move the project forward, but the pushback from local and environmental groups regarding its safety and environmental destruction continues to remain.

Speaker Johnson: House Republicans are Cutting Red Tape, Burdensome Regulations to Reestablish American Energy Dominance

House.gov, 4/23/2026

WASHINGTON — This morning, at the weekly House GOP Leadership press conference, Speaker Johnson highlighted House Republicans' legislation this week to continue cutting red tape and dismantling burdensome energy regulations. Speaker Johnson also discussed the path forward to bring an end the Democrat DHS Shutdown and to reauthorize FISA Sec. 702.

"The production of American energy is now directly related to national security. The need and the demand for energy is rising dramatically because of AI and all of these other necessities that we have in the economy. And we've got to provide for it," **Speaker Johnson said**.

Watch Speaker Johnson's full remarks here.

On House Republicans' efforts to cut regulations and reestablish American energy dominance:

We're going to pass two pieces of legislation that are going to build specifically on President Trump's work to restore America's energy dominance. The Reliable Federal Infrastructure Act rolls back an outdated and inefficient green energy mandate on federal buildings and military installations, which will allow agencies to pursue efficient, cost-effective energy solutions that meet their needs. What a concept. The second one, the HEATS Act, is going to help unlock American geothermal production. This is reliable renewable energy that has huge potential for diversifying America's energy supply. This legislation will remove unnecessary permitting hurdles and help deliver on Republicans' commitment to an all-the-above approach to affordable American energy. And we've got to provide for it. So, it's an all-the-above and that's what this legislation reflects. Finally, as Leader Scalise was noting the FIRE Act and the ESA Amendments Act will streamline and clarify environmental regulations, encouraging responsible fire management and the protection of America's diverse wildlife, while removing costly and unclear mandates that unfairly penalize good faith actors. It's common sense. That is the theme here. We're going to cut red tape and do the right thing, and the Congress is leading on this.

On ending the Democrat DHS Shutdown:

And that's why through a targeted and narrow reconciliation process, we will fully fund the agency, including ICE and CBP, for three years into the future. This is great news for every American who supports secure borders and safe communities and chaos free airports. In the coming days, the House will be working closely with the Senate as they commence on that reconciliation process. And it should not be forgotten that Democrats have shut down this, the third largest department of the federal government with all of its 10 agencies charged with keeping everybody safe. And they did that for political purposes.

They've kept it shut down for over two months. Now we're on day 65. It's the longest in history because they'd rather reopen the border than pay our hardworking men and women of our law enforcement. They would rather defund the police than pay our TSA workers at the airport. They would rather endanger the American homeland than fund basic immigration enforcement. I've said it before; I'll say it again. You heard the theme here this morning. You'll hear it all the way through the election cycle. Our politics have now entered a new era. It's called common sense versus crazy. Republicans return to common sense versus Democrats just madness. This shutdown is a shameful episode in the history of the Democrat Party. This is not our father's Democrat Party. Watch what happens. We administered the oath to a Member last night who has some, some pretty Far-Left positions. We expect more of that to come from that party, and it's not where the American people are. And it's yet another example of their preference for open borders and dangerous communities over the safety and security of American citizens.

On reauthorizing FISA Sec. 702:

The House will pick up where we left off on reauthorizing FISA, Section 702. It's must-pass legislation. We've talked about it here before. It preserves the Trump Administration's ability to kill terrorists and to prevent attacks on our homeland. This provision of law was created after 9/11. And frankly, one of the reasons we've not had another 9/11 on our shores is because we have this important tool. Congress was able to pass a short-term extension of Section 702 last week, and we're going to continue to work out a longer-term extension. We're confident that we'll be able to find strong, bipartisan consensus that builds off of the really meaningful reforms that we included in the legislation the last time we authorized it. We did that in 2024. 56 reforms, and they're working just as we planned.

Those were successful because that was a sensible set of changes. Countries like Russia and China are waging new forms of cyber and intelligence warfare. And of course, as Iran and its proxies threaten the US and our allies, it just bears repeating that this is no time to degrade in any way our ability to protect the homeland and our people. And this is an essential piece of that, an essential component, and failure on it is just simply not an option.

Department of the Interior Begins Transition to Marine Minerals Administration

BOEM, 4/4/2026

The Department of the Interior today announced the start of a phased plan to establish the Marine Minerals Administration, bringing together the functions of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement. This action is intended to improve coordination and increase efficiencies across offshore leasing, permitting, inspections and environmental oversight, while maintaining all existing regulatory protections and rigorous safety standards.

This streamlined approach reflects the evolution of offshore energy development and the need for a more integrated approach to managing conventional and emerging resources such as critical minerals. By aligning planning, leasing and oversight functions, the Department is positioning the agency to better meet current and future energy demands.

"President Trump has been laser focused on making the government work efficiently and effectively for the American people. This is about building an agency that reflects where we are today and where we need to go," said **Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum**. "The Department is applying what we've learned over the past decade to deliver clearer coordination, better service to the public and stronger, more integrated oversight of offshore energy development."

The establishment of the Marine Minerals Administration marks a strategic step toward a more modern, coordinated approach to offshore resource management. The agency will better align resource planning, leasing decisions and operational oversight under a unified structure, reducing duplication and improving decision-making across the full lifecycle of offshore development.

All statutory authorities and protections will remain in place throughout the transition. For more information, visit www.doi.gov/mma-transition.

Trump Administration Exempts Gulf of America Drilling From Endangered Species Protections

SPE, 4/3/2026

In a move tied to national security, a Trump-appointed committee voted to exempt oil and gas drilling in the Gulf of America from Endangered Species Act requirements, marking the first such exemption in 3 decades.

A committee of six senior Trump administration officials met 31 March to vote on whether the oil and gas industry could receive an exemption from requirements of the Endangered Species Act to drill for oil in the Gulf of Mexico. The committee voted unanimously to secure the exemption.

US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth requested the meeting 2 weeks ago, citing the need for an increased US-based energy supply due to the Iran War, which he deemed a "national security" matter.

"To be secure as a nation we need a steady, affordable supply of our own energy … This is not just about gas prices; it's about our ability to power our military and protect our nation," Hegseth said during the committee meeting.

The meeting was the first time the committee had met in 3 decades and the first time it convened under matters of "national security."

The committee comprised Interior Secretary Doug Burgum, Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins, White House Council of Economic Advisers Acting Chair Pierre Yared, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee Zeldin, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Administrator Neil Jacobs, and Secretary of the Army Dan Driscoll.

The Endangered Species Act was enacted in 1973. It requires federal agencies to act in consultation with the with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and/or the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service. This consultation ensures that actions they authorize, fund, or carry out are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat of such species.

The Gulf is home to several species of whales, sea turtles and Gulf sturgeon, all of which have been identified by NOAA Fisheries as susceptible to potential danger from ship strikes, oil spills, noise pollution, or other incidents.

One particular whale species, known as Rice's whale, resides exclusively year-round in the Gulf. These whales were first recognized as a unique species in 2021. Scientists have reported there are around 50 Rice's whales in existence. Following the 2010 *Deepwater Horizon* blowout, its population declined by 22%.

"Once an exemption is issued, it is sweeping. It applies not only to the one species that had a jeopardy finding, Rice's whale—it applies to every other listed species in the Gulf in relation to oil and gas operations, which will go on for decades," Brian Segee, a senior attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity, told *NPR*.

Hegseth and other Trump officials argued that lawsuits and environmental protections for endangered species create uncertainty for oil and gas companies, making it more difficult to plan and carry out drilling operations and, in turn, posing a risk to US national security.

"These legal battles waste critical government resources and make it impossible for energy companies to plan and invest in new projects," Hegseth said. "When development in the Gulf is chilled, we are prevented from producing the energy we need as a country."

The Gulf of Mexico produces about 2 million BOPD and is the US's primary offshore source for oil and natural gas, according to the US Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.

Interior Highlights Record U.S. Energy Production Under President Trump's American Energy Dominance Agenda

BOEM, 4/1/2026

The Department of the Interior today announced that U.S. energy production reached record levels in 2025, with offshore oil production totaling over 714 million barrels, the highest annual output on record.

"President Trump has made it clear that America should fully develop its abundant energy resources in a way that strengthens our economy and benefits American families," said **Secretary of the Interior Doug**

Burgum. "By providing regulatory certainty, streamlining processes and encouraging responsible development, this administration is unlocking the full potential of our domestic energy resources—supporting job creation, lowering energy prices, strengthening energy security and maintaining strong safety and environmental protections."

Since the start of President Trump's second term, the administration has focused on strengthening America's Energy Dominance and economic competitiveness by encouraging responsible production of domestic resources on federal lands and waters.

Interior officials note that policy changes aimed at improving regulatory efficiency and providing greater certainty for energy developers have helped accelerate investment in offshore projects, particularly in the Gulf of America, while maintaining strong environmental safeguards and operational oversight.

The Department oversees offshore energy development through agencies including the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, which manages leasing and planning, and the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, which enforces safety and environmental standards.

Recent offshore developments and new projects entering production have driven record output levels, particularly in deepwater areas in the Gulf of America. The 2025 total surpasses all previous annual production levels, reinforcing the United States' position as a global energy leader.

Continued investment in advanced technologies and modern offshore infrastructure is expected to support sustained production.

"American energy leadership is a cornerstone of our economic strength and national security," said **Secretary Burgum.** "This record production reflects the hard work of American energy workers and the strength of our offshore resources, helping drive economic growth, support good-paying jobs and deliver affordable, reliable energy to families and businesses."

BOEM Highlights Role of Offshore Leasing and Planning in Supporting Record Energy Production

BOEM, 4/1/2026

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management announced today the critical role of offshore leasing, resource assessment and long-term planning in supporting record oil production on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf, which reached more than 714 million barrels in 2025.

"America's offshore energy strength is built years in advance through deliberate planning, leasing, and resource evaluation," **said Acting BOEM Director Matt Giacona**. "BOEM's work lays the foundation for responsible development of the Outer Continental Shelf by combining science-based analysis, rigorous environmental review, and a transparent leasing process to support energy security, economic growth, and environmental stewardship."

BOEM manages access to offshore energy resources through lease sales, resource evaluations and environmental analyses that guide development across the Outer Continental Shelf. Recent production increases, particularly in the Gulf of America, reflect years of planning, investment and coordination among federal agencies, industry partners and stakeholders.

Under the Trump Administration's energy agenda, BOEM has worked to provide greater regulatory certainty and efficiency in the leasing process, helping facilitate investment in offshore projects while maintaining strong environmental safeguards. The Bureau conducts extensive environmental reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act and works closely with other federal and state partners to minimize impacts to marine ecosystems, fisheries and coastal communities.

Offshore energy development continues to generate significant economic benefits, including revenues from lease sales, rents and royalties that support the U.S. Treasury and conservation programs such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

BOEM also supports informed decision-making through the collection and analysis of geological and geophysical data, ensuring that offshore development is guided by the best available science. These efforts help balance responsible energy production with the protection of ocean resources and multiple uses of the Outer Continental Shelf.

As offshore production reaches record levels, BOEM remains committed to managing the nation's offshore energy resources in a manner that promotes energy reliability, supports economic opportunity and upholds environmental stewardship for current and future generations.

-- BOEM --

BOEM Releases 2026 National Assessment of Undiscovered Oil and Gas Resources on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf

BOEM, 3/10/2026

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management today released the 2026 National Assessment of Undiscovered Oil and Gas Resources, an estimate of the undiscovered, technically and economically recoverable oil and natural gas resources outside of known oil and gas fields on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf. The National Assessment, published every five years, represents BOEM's current understanding of the distribution of undiscovered oil and gas resources on the OCS, and helps unleash American energy by identifying opportunities for additional oil and gas exploration and development on the OCS—supporting economic prosperity and energy security.

Using a play-based assessment methodology, the National Assessment estimates a mean Undiscovered Technically Recoverable Resource of 65.80 billion barrels of oil and 218.43 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in the Outer Continental Shelf. Based on current production trends, these undiscovered resources represent the potential for 100 or more years of energy production from the shelf, supporting lower energy costs and job creation.

"The Outer Continental Shelf holds tremendous resource potential," said **BOEM Acting Director Matt Giacona**. "This report provides the foundation for decisions that will ensure affordable energy and robust energy security for generations of Americans."

The findings are derived from analyzing each geologic play across the Outer Continental Shelf and assigning a probability for the existence of undiscovered oil and gas resources for individual plays. Play results are then aggregated up to regional results and ultimately, a total Outer Continental Shelf estimate. Any changes from previous assessments reflect additional data and information acquired up to the data cutoff of Jan. 1, 2024.

The 2026 National Assessment represents a comprehensive appraisal through rigorous analysis of the best scientific data and information available and builds upon previous Outer Continental Shelf resource assessments. It is a critical tool for shaping the nation's energy future—providing the data and insights needed to guide responsible development and ensure that America remains a global energy leader.

See this link for the reports: https://www.boem.gov/oil-gas-energy/resource-evaluation/2026-assessment-undiscovered-oil-and-gas-resources-united-states

US Interior Department Announces 'Rollback' of Supplemental Financial Assurance Rule

Offshore Magazine, 3/9/2026

The change is expected to save industry about $484 million annually in compliance costs.

The Department of the Interior is proposing updates to reduce "costly regulations" on the offshore oil and gas industry, a move that is expected to free up billions of dollars for investment, exploration, production and job growth.

The proposal would roll back requirements from a 2024 rule that forced companies to set aside about $6.9 billion in supplemental financial assurance. Roughly $6 billion of that burden would have fallen on small businesses, which make up most of the operators on the Outer Continental Shelf. The change is expected to save industry about $484 million each year in compliance costs.

"For too long, Washington red tape has strangled American energy producers and held back small businesses," said Interior Secretary Doug Burgum. "President Trump is delivering on his promise to put American workers first, cut burdensome regulations and unleash our vast energy potential. These updates will free up billions of dollars for exploration and development, create good-paying jobs and unlock domestic energy production so we are never forced to rely on foreign adversaries for the resources that power our economy."

The DOI said that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is acting in response to President Trump's Executive Order 14154, "Unleashing American Energy." Department officials said that the new proposal would modernize how BOEM evaluates financial risks and lower the amounts companies must set aside for future decommissioning.

By using updated risk metrics and data from the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, BOEM says that it will ensure that taxpayer protections remain in place while allowing companies to invest more capital in new projects.

DOI says that the proposal maintains strong accountability for lessees and grant holders under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act but reduces "excessive financial barriers" that have slowed growth.

The proposed changes will be published in the Federal Register with a 60-day public comment period. Further information is available at BOEM's financial assurance webpage.

The Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA) issued a statement supporting the change. IPAA EVP and Chief Policy Officer Dan Naatz said: "We applaud the Trump Administration for taking steps to roll back the flawed financial assurance rule promulgated during the Biden Administration. Had it been fully implemented, the Biden rule would have disproportionately affected independent offshore oil and gas producers and had them bear most of the associated costs. The Biden financial assurance rule was misguided from the start, and we applaud the Trump Administration for acting on this important issue and listening to the concerns of independent producers. We look forward to further reviewing the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in more detail and plan to provide robust comments to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management in the coming weeks."

Regulatory Agenda

Federal Register

Published Date: August 14, 2026

Agency: Department of the Interior

Action Detail: Regulatory agenda.

Docket Number: 256D0102DM; DS6CS00000; DLSN00000.00000; DX6CS25

Comment Period: None

Summary

This notice provides the Department of the Interior's (Department) Unified Agenda of Federal Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions (Agenda). The Regulatory Flexibility Act and Executive Order 12866 require publication of the Agenda.

Consistent with Executive Order 12866, the Agenda includes rules that the Department issued since the spring 2025 semiannual Agenda and expects to issue between December 2025 and November 2026. The Agenda also includes a list of currently effective rules scheduled for review during that period.

Address

Unless otherwise indicated, all agency contacts are located at the Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

For Further Information Contact

Please direct all comments and inquiries about these rules to the appropriate agency contact. Please direct general comments relating to the Agenda to the Office of Executive Secretariat and Regulatory Affairs, Department of the Interior, at the address above or at (202) 513–0357.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary

25 CFR Ch. I

30 CFR Chs. II and VII

36 CFR Ch. I

43 CFR Subtitle A and Subtitle B, Chs. I and II

48 CFR Ch. 14

50 CFR Chs. I and IV

[256D0102DM; DS6CS00000; DLSN00000.00000; DX6CS25]

Regulatory Agenda

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, Interior.

ACTION: Regulatory agenda.

SUMMARY: This notice provides the Department of the Interior's (Department) Unified Agenda of Federal Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions (Agenda). The Regulatory Flexibility Act and Executive Order 12866 require publication of the Agenda.

ADDRESSES: Unless otherwise indicated, all agency contacts are located at the Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Please direct all comments and inquiries about these rules to the appropriate agency contact. Please direct general comments relating to the Agenda to the Office of Executive Secretariat and Regulatory Affairs, Department of the Interior, at the address above or at (202) 513–0357.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Consistent with Executive Order 12866, the Agenda includes rules that the Department issued since the spring 2025semiannual Agenda and expects to issue between December 2025 and November 2026. The Agenda also includes a list of currently effective rules scheduled for review during that period.

Simultaneously, the Department meets the requirement of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) to publish an Agenda in April and October of each year identifying rules that will have significant economic effects on a substantial number of small entities. The Department specifically has identified such rules in the Agenda. The complete Agenda will be published at *www.reginfo.gov,* in a format that offers users enhanced ability to obtain information from the Agenda database. Agenda information is also available at *www.regulations.gov,* the government-wide website for submission of comments on proposed regulations.

In some cases, the Department has withdrawn rules that were placed on previous Agendas for which there has been no publication activity or for which a proposed or interim rule was published. There is no legal significance to the omission of an item from this Agenda. Withdrawal of a rule does not necessarily mean that the Department will not proceed with the rulemaking. Withdrawal allows the Department to assess the action further and determine whether rulemaking is appropriate. Following such an assessment, the Department may determine that certain rules listed as withdrawn under this Agenda are appropriate for promulgation.

Bivan R. Patnaik,

Director, Office of the Executive Secretariat and Regulatory Affairs.

BUREAU OF SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT—LONG-TERM ACTIONS

Sequence No.	Title	Regulation Identifier No.
269	Revisions to Decommissioning Requirements on the OCS	1014–AA53

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR LAND AND MINERALS MANAGEMENT—PROPOSED RULE STAGE

Sequence No.	Title	Regulation Identifier No.
270	Revisions to the Requirements for Exploratory Drilling on the Arctic Outer Continental Shelf	1082–AA05

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE—PROPOSED RULE STAGE

Sequence No.	Title	Regulation Identifier No.
271	Importation, Exportation, and Transportation of Wildlife; Updates to the Regulations	1018–BF16

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE—FINAL RULE STAGE

Sequence No.	Title	Regulation Identifier No.
272	Rescinding the Definition of "Harm" Under the Endangered Species Act	1018–BI38

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE—COMPLETED ACTIONS

Sequence No.	Title	Regulation Identifier No.
273	Migratory Bird Hunting; 2025–26 Migratory Game Bird Hunting Regulations	1018–BH65
274	Migratory Bird Hunting; 2026–27 Migratory Game Bird Hunting Regulations	1018–BI69

BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT—PROPOSED RULE STAGE

Sequence No.	Title	Regulation Identifier No.
275	Risk Management and Financial Assurance for Outer Continental Shelf Lease and Grant Obligations	1010–AE26

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT—PROPOSED RULE STAGE

Sequence No.	Title	Regulation Identifier No.
276	Broadband and Rights-of-Way Under 43 CFR 2800	1004–AF32
277	Royalty for Oil and Gas Lost from Onshore Federal and Indian Leases, Venting and Flaring Rule	1004–AF33

Department of the Interior (DOI)	Long-Term Actions
Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE)	

269. REVISIONS TO DECOMMISSIONING REQUIREMENTS ON THE OCS

Legal Authority: Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, 43 U.S.C. 1331 to 1356a

Relevant Executive Orders: 14154

Abstract: This rule proposes to set ‘‘topple in place’’ as the default decommissioning standard, on the condition that such circumstances meet U.S. Coast Guard navigational requirements. This proposed rule would also address issues that may include to (1) idle iron by adding a definition of this term to clarify that it applies to idle wells and structures on active leases; (2) abandonment in place of subsea infrastructure by adding regulations addressing when BSEE may approve decommissioning-in-place instead of removal of certain subsea equipment; (3) BSEE approval for platform or facility toppling in place; and (4) other operational considerations.

Timetable:

Action	Date	FR Cite
NPRM	07/00/27	
NPRM Comment Period End.	10/00/27	

Regulatory Flexibility Analysis Required: Yes

Agency Contact: Kirk Malstrom, Chief, Regulations and Standards Branch, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, 45600 Woodland Road, Sterling, VA 20166

Phone: 703 787–1751

Fax: 703 787–1555

Email: *kirk.malstrom@bsee.gov*

RIN: 1014–AA53

Department of the Interior (DOI)	Proposed Rule Stage
Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management (ASLM)	

270. • REVISIONS TO THE REQUIREMENTS FOR EXPLORATORY DRILLING ON THE ARCTIC OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF

Legal Authority: 43 U.S.C. 1331–1356a; 33 U.S.C. 2701 ch. 40

Relevant Executive Orders: 14153; 14154; 14219

Abstract: This joint BSEE/BOEM rulemaking would revise specific provisions of the joint BSEE/BOEM final Arctic Rule 81 FR 46478 (July 15, 2016) that established a regulatory framework for exploratory drilling and related operations on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) of Alaska. This proposed rule would take a similar approach to the 2020 proposed rule titled, Revisions to the Requirements for Exploratory Drilling on the Arctic Outer Continental Shelf 85 FR 79266 (December 9, 2020; RIN 1082–AA01). The revisions would be based on stakeholder input from the 2016 final rule and 2020 proposed rule in accordance with Executive Order 14153, Unleashing Alaska’s Extraordinary Resource Potential 90 FR 8347 (January 20, 2025) and accompanying Secretarial Order 3422.

Timetable:

Action	Date	FR Cite
NPRM	07/00/26	
NPRM Comment Period End.	09/00/26	

Regulatory Flexibility Analysis Required: Yes

Agency Contact: Kirk Malstrom, Chief, Regulations and Standards Branch, Department of the Interior, Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, 45600 Woodland Road, Sterling, VA 20166

Phone: 703 787–1751

Fax: 703 787–1555

Email: *kirk.malstrom@bsee.gov*

RIN: 1082–AA05

Department of the Interior (DOI)	Proposed Rule Stage
United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)	

271. IMPORTATION, EXPORTATION, AND TRANSPORTATION OF WILDLIFE; UPDATES TO THE REGULATIONS

Legal Authority: 16 U.S.C. 668; 16 U.S.C. 704; 16 U.S.C. 712; 16 U.S.C. 1382; 16 U.S.C. 1538(d)–(f); 16 U.S.C. 1540(f); 16 U.S.C. 3371 to 3378; 16 U.S.C. 4223 to 4244; 16 U.S.C. 4901 to 4916; 18 U.S.C. 42; 31 U.S.C. 42; 31 U.S.C. 9701; . . .

Relevant Executive Orders: 13773; 14276; 14294

Abstract: This proposed rule would revise the FWS regulations governing the importation and exportation of wildlife. In conducting this rulemaking, FWS will review all sections of 50 CFR part 14 and propose necessary revisions. Some substantive changes that FWS is considering include clarifying and adding definitions; codifying our approach to compliance with the Freedom of Information Act; streamlining the import and export process through a unified government filing system; extending permit validity; expanding import options beyond designated ports; adding sections related to requirements for urine, feces, and synthetically derived DNA, exempt species, and international mail; clarifying language related to declaration and clearance requirements; streamlining marking requirements; and enhancing monitoring of certain wildlife shipments.

Timetable:

Action	Date	FR Cite
NPRM	07/00/26	

Regulatory Flexibility Analysis Required: Yes

Agency Contact: Doug Ault, Assistant Director, Office of Law Enforcement, Department of the Interior, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: LEO, Falls Church, VA 22041–3803

Phone: 703 358–2290

Fax: 703 358–1947

Email: *douglas_ault@fws.gov*

RIN: 1018–BF16

Department of the Interior (DOI) — United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)	Final Rule Stage

272. RESCINDING THE DEFINITION OF ''HARM'' UNDER THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Legal Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*

Abstract: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service (we) are proposing to rescind the regulatory definition of ''harm'' in our Endangered Species Act (ESA) regulations. The existing regulatory definition of ''harm,'' which includes habitat modification, runs contrary to the best meaning of the statutory term ''take.'' We are undertaking this change to adhere to the single, best meaning of the ESA.

Timetable:

Action	Date	FR Cite
NPRM	04/17/25	90 FR 16102
NPRM Comment Period End.	05/19/25	
Final Action	07/00/26	

Regulatory Flexibility Analysis Required: Yes

Agency Contact: Gina Shultz, Acting Assistant Director, Ecological Services, Department of the Interior, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, MS: ES, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041

Phone: 703 358–2171

Email: *adecologicalservices@fws.gov*

RIN: 1018–BI38

Department of the Interior (DOI) — United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)	Completed Actions

273. MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING; 2025–26 MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING REGULATIONS

Legal Authority: 16 U.S.C. 703 *et seq.;* 16 U.S.C. 742a–j

Abstract: This rulemaking action establishes annual hunting regulations for certain migratory game birds. FWS annually prescribes the frameworks, or outside limits, for season lengths, bag limits, and areas for migratory game bird hunting. After these frameworks are established, States and Tribes may select season dates, bag limits, and other regulatory options for their hunting seasons. Migratory bird management is a cooperative effort of Federal, State, and Tribal governments.

Timetable:

Action	Date	FR Cite
NPRM (Preliminary).	01/21/25	90 FR 7056
NPRM Comment Period End.	02/20/25	
Proposed Frameworks.	04/23/25	90 FR 17300
Proposed Frameworks; Comment Period End.	05/27/25	
Final Frameworks	08/18/25	90 FR 40178
Final Frameworks Effective.	08/18/25	
Season Selections.	08/25/25	90 FR 41306
Season Selections Effective.	08/22/25	

Regulatory Flexibility Analysis Required: Yes

Agency Contact: Jerome Ford, Assistant Director—Migratory Bird Program, Department of the Interior, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS–MB, Falls Church, VA 22041–3803

Phone: 202 208–1050

Email: *jerome_ford@fws.gov*

RIN: 1018–BH65

274. MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING; 2026–27 MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING REGULATIONS

Legal Authority: 16 U.S.C. 703 *et seq.*; 16 U.S.C. 742a–j

Abstract: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife (FWS) is withdrawing RIN 1018–BI69 as the rulemaking under RIN 1018–BI04 will establish a new process for setting annual hunting season frameworks.

Timetable:

Action	Date	FR Cite
Withdrawn	03/23/26	

Regulatory Flexibility Analysis Required: Yes

Agency Contact: Jerome Ford, Assistant Director—Migratory Bird Program, Department of the Interior, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS–MB, Falls Church, VA 22041–3803

Phone: 202 208–1050

Email: *jerome_ford@fws.gov*

RIN: 1018–BI69

Department of the Interior (DOI) — Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)	Proposed Rule Stage

275. RISK MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL ASSURANCE FOR OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF LEASE AND GRANT OBLIGATIONS

Legal Authority: 43 U.S.C. 1331

Relevant Executive Orders: 14154; 14267

Abstract: This proposed rule would rescind BOEM's final rule ''Risk Management and Financial Assurance for OCS Lease and Grant Obligations.'' The proposed rule would revise the criteria for determining whether oil, gas, and sulfur lessees, right-of-use and easement grant holders, and pipeline right-of-way grant holders are required to provide financial assurance above the current minimum bonding levels to ensure compliance with their Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Lands Act obligations. This rule, if finalized, would reduce the amount of supplemental financial assurance required from oil gas, and sulfur lessees operating on the OCS and would support the goals of E.O. 14154.

Timetable:

Action	Date	FR Cite
NPRM	03/09/26	91 FR 11212
NPRM Comment Period End.	05/08/26	

Regulatory Flexibility Analysis Required: Yes

Agency Contact: Karen Thundiyil, Director, Office of Regulatory Affairs, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240

Phone: 202 742–0970

Email: *karen.thundiyil@boem.gov*

RIN: 1010–AE26

Department of the Interior (DOI)	Proposed Rule Stage
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)	

276. BROADBAND AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY UNDER 43 CFR 2800

Legal Authority: 43 U.S.C. 1733; 43 U.S.C. 1740; 43 U.S. 1763; Public Law 116–260

Abstract: The BLM is proposing to update its regulations in 43 CFR Subpart 2800 to encourage broadband development/deployment and create other program efficiencies affecting Rights-of-Way administration.

Timetable:

Action	Date	FR Cite
NPRM	07/00/26	
Final Action	12/00/26	

Regulatory Flexibility Analysis Required: Yes

Agency Contact: Motunrayo Kemiki, Chief, Division of Renewable Energy, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, 1849 C Street Northwest, Washington, DC 20240

Phone: 202 834–2701

Email: *mkemiki@blm.gov*

RIN: 1004–AF32

277. ROYALTY FOR OIL AND GAS LOST FROM ONSHORE FEDERAL AND INDIAN LEASES, VENTING AND FLARING RULE

Legal Authority: 30 U.S.C. 181 *et seq.*; 30 U.S.C. 351 *et seq.*; 30 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*; 43 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*; 25 U.S.C. 396a *et seq.*; 25 U.S.C. 2102 *et seq*; 25 U.S.C. 396; 30 U.S.C. 301–306; . . .

Abstract: This proposed rule would rescind BLM's final rule ''Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation,'' consistent with the priorities identified in E.O. 14154 and SO 3418. The rule would reduce operator burdens.

Timetable:

Action	Date	FR Cite
NPRM	07/00/26	
Final Action	08/00/26	

Regulatory Flexibility Analysis Required: Yes

Agency Contact: John Ajak, Deputy Division Chief, Division of Fluid Minerals, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, 1849 C Street Northwest, Washington, DC 20240

Phone: 505 549–9654

Email: *jajak@blm.gov*

RIN: 1004–AF33

[FR Doc. 2026–16598 Filed 8–13–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4334–63–P

II. Offshore Access – Leasing

You Might Recall The Bleak Future..

- On Sept. 29th, 2023, DOI announced its 5 year offshore leasing plan as required by the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act… starting on July 1 2024 through June 20, 2029.
- The Plan calls for a maximum of 3 offshore sales in the Gulf of Mexico, one in 2025, and 2027 and 2029.
- No lease sales scheduled for the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans or Alaska.
- In prior plans and historically, the Interior Department offers approximately 11 lease sales in the five-year period.

Under Trump …

Legislative:

- The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBB) was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives through a dramatic 218-214 vote on July 3, 2025. President Donald Trump signed the legislation into law on the afternoon of July 4.
- Specifically, Section 50102 of the legislation outlines new law for offshore oil and gas leasing.
- The bill requires BOEM to hold no fewer than two lease sales every year for 15 years in the Central and Western planning areas of the Gulf of America (GOA), comprising at least 80 million acres for each lease sale or all unleased acres if there are fewer than

80 million acres that are unleased and available, including at least one lease sale by Dec. 15, 2025, with all lease sales being conducted pursuant to the terms and conditions of Lease Sale 254 (85 Fed. Reg. 8010 (Feb. 12, 2020)) (as amended by the bill).

- The bill requires BOEM to hold at least six offshore oil and gas lease sales in the Cook Inlet Planning Area in Alaska, with a minimum of one lease sale in each calendar year from 2026 to 2032, with each sale offering at least 1 million acres. The offshore lease sales in Alaska are required to be conducted in accordance with the terms and conditions of Lease Sale 244 (82 Fed. Reg. 23291).

- The bill proscribes the royalty rate for GOA to be 12.5 percent and not greater than 16.67 percent.

- The bill directs BSEE to allow comingling or pooling of offshore leases unless the comingling will reduce safety or result in a decline in production, with the aim of increasing the value of future tracks offered in lease sales.

BOEM Action:

- Recently, BOEM announced the leasing schedule of these 30 leases as prescribed by the OBBB. The first sale under the new law — Gulf of America Lease Sale titled "Big Beautiful Gulf 1" — was held Dec. 10, 2025.

- The 2nd OBBB lease sale was held on Aug 12, 2026 and generated $82MM in high bids for 59 blocks with 16 companies submitting.

- BOEM will publish the final notice at least 30 days before the sale. Essentially, there will be two lease sales held in the Gulf in March and August of every year until 2039.

- As far as the 5-Year-Program for 2024-2029 is concerned:

    - BOEM is in the process of developing the 11th National Offshore Leasing Program.
    - The last major action occurred in late January, when the comment period closed for the Draft Proposed Program.
    - The next step—the announcement of the Proposed Program—remains pending. It will be announced in the Federal Register, and another comment period will open for interested parties to provide feedback.

    - As a reminder, once the 11th Five-Year Program is finalized, it will replace the 10th Program, which included only three lease sales in the Gulf.
    - By contrast, Interior's current proposal for the 11th Program includes 34 lease sales: 21 in Alaska, seven in the Gulf, and six offshore California.

- Continuing to develop a 5-year-Program is important in the event the lease sales included in the OBBB get rescinded in a future Congress?

III. Rice Whales Update

- The federal government invoked the Endangered Species Committee—colloquially known as the "God Squad"—to consider a broad exemption of Gulf oil and gas activities from ESA requirements. (See Holland & Knight's alert, "Invoking the 'God Squad' in a National Energy Emergency," March 30, 2026.)
- The God Squad convened on March 31, 2026, and invoked Section 7(j) of the ESA for the first time in history, voting unanimously to exempt all oil and gas activities in the Gulf from ESA requirements on national security grounds (the ESA Exemption).
- This includes an exemption from the prohibition on jeopardy, consultation requirements, and take prohibitions under the ESA
- Importantly does *not* include an exemption from requirements under the ESA's sister statute, the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), which protects marine mammal species such as the Rice's whale and governs Gulf operations outside of the ESA context.
- The ESA Exemption became effective immediately and covers Gulf oil and gas activities "associated with" BOEM's and BSEE's Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Program. Though this is quite broad, the scope should not be assumed.
- It is possible that there may be future litigation over the extent of the activities that are covered as environmental groups seek to limit its application as much as possible.

IV. <u>Update / Developments Concerning Sale 259</u>

- The saga of this case continues, although the plaintiffs appear to be on increasingly narrow footing.
- At a high level, the court agreed that BOEM's original environmental review for Lease Sale 259 violated NEPA, but it did not stop or invalidate the leases. Instead, the court remanded the matter to BOEM while allowing the sale and related leases to remain in effect.
- For now, Lease Sale 259 may proceed, although further litigation and appeals remain possible. Leaseholders may continue moving forward with exploration and development activities, subject to BOEM approvals and applicable environmental restrictions.
- On May 21, 2026, Judge Mehta issued his remedy ruling. He rejected arguments that the case had become moot after BOEM completed additional environmental analysis and issued a new Record of Decision (ROD) reaffirming Lease Sale 259.
- Judge Mehta's analysis indicates that BOEM's updated EIS and ROD showed a strong likelihood that the agency could justify the sale after correcting the identified deficiencies.
- He declined to vacate or suspend the leases. Instead, the court remanded the matter to BOEM without vacatur, meaning the leases remain in effect while BOEM continues addressing the issues identified by the court.

V. **<u>Rigs To Reef Excitement</u>**

- H.R. 5745, the Marine Fisheries Habitat Protection Act, was introduced last October.

- It is a bipartisan bill intended to streamline and expand the Rigs-to-Reefs program by converting retired offshore oil and gas platforms and pipelines into permanent artificial reefs.

- This bill in the 119th Congress is similar to the bill introduced in the 118th Congress.

- The House Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on the legislation in January, and the Committee is expected to mark up the bill this fall, depending on whether the U.S. House is in session.

VI. **BOEM / BSEE April 2026 Meeting**

- Do we want to target Tuesday April, 13^{th} 2027?

- Target same time as always? 930 – 1130am EDT @ DOI

- 'In Person' Meeting

- Robust Board Participation

- Draft Agenda Process

VII. **Trump Executive Orders Impacting US Energy**

As a reminder, when President Trump took office, he issued several executive orders that impact the offshore oil and gas industry. See summary of those EOs below.

1) *Unleashing American Energy*: This EO seeks to establish American energy dominance through a combination of new policy actions and the rescission of executive orders from the previous Biden Administration.

2) *Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions:* This EO revokes 78 actions and orders rolled out during the Biden Administration on climate and energy.

3) *Regulatory Freeze Pending Review:* This EO establishes a regulatory freeze to allow for review of pending and existing laws and regulations.

4) *Declaring a National Energy Emergency:* This EO seeks to address the energy crisis caused by the inadequate energy supply and infrastructure by creating an affordable and reliable domestic supply of energy.

5) *Temporary Withdrawal of All Areas on the Outer Continental Shelf from Offshore Wind Leasing and Review of the Federal Government's Leasing and Permitting Practices for Wind Projects (No oil and gas impact):* Temporarily halts all offshore wind energy leasing on the OCS until further notice.

6) *Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential (No Gulf impact, except market):*

   Facilitates the development and production of natural resources on Federal and State lands in Alaska, including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and prioritizes the development of liquified natural gas (LNG) and its transport from Alaska to other regions of the United States.

7) *Establishing and Implementing the President's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE)*

   Renames the U.S. Digital Service (USDS) as the U.S. DOGE Service, established within the Executive Office of the President (EOP). This office is established to carry out President Trump's 18-month DOGE agenda and will terminate on July 4, 2026.

VIII. Marine Minerals Administration ("MMA") Staffing and Leadership Changes

- **BOEM**
  - Open –Acting Director

    Unfortunately, Matt Giacona is leaving the administration early September for Halliburton. He has been very supportive of our industry and will be missed.
  - Laura Robbins – Acting Regional Director, Gulf of America
  - Douglas Boren – Regional Director, Pacific
  - Mick Bradway – Acting Regional Director, Alaska
  - James Anderson – Associate Director, Budget & Administration & CFO
  - Stephen Boutwell – Office Director, Congressional Affairs
  - Lisa Broadway – Office Director, Diversity, Inclusion & Civil Rights
  - Jill Lewandowski – Associate Director, Environmental Programs
  - Karen Thundiyil – Office Director, Office of Regulatory Affairs
  - Tracey Moriarty – Office Director, Office of Communications
  - Dr. Megan Carr – Associate Director, Strategic Resources

- **<u>BSEE</u>**
  - ***Kenneth C. “Kenny” Stevens – Principal Deputy Director***
  - Michael “Mike” Idziorek – Deputy Assistant Director, Offshore Regulatory Programs
  - Gerard Moore– Assistant Director, Renewable Energy and Regulatory Compliance Program
  - Cheri Hunter – Director, Renewable Energy Operations
  - Wes James - Assistant Director, Staff
  - Seong Kim - Assistant Director, Strategic Engagement
  - Ramona Sanders – Deputy Assistant Director, Environmental Compliance
  - Ross Laidig – Deputy Assistant Director, Safety & Incident Investigation
  - Janine Tobias – Deputy Assistant Director, Safety Enforcement
  - Eric Miller – Deputy Assistant Director, Oil Spill Preparedness
  - Eric Modrow - Deputy Assistant Director for Budget
  - Molly Madden - Deputy Assistant Director for Policy and Analysis
  - Bryan Domangue – Regional Director, Gulf of America OCS
  - Justin Miller – Regional Director, Alaska OCS
  - Bobby Kurtz – Acting Regional Director, Pacific OCS