



Agriculture Energy Alliance

Representing agriculture as a producer and consumer of energy

March 23, 2009

Ms. Renee Orr
Mr. James F. Bennett
Minerals Management Service
381 Elden Street
Herndon, VA 20170

RE: Comments on Draft Proposed 5-Year Program for 2010–2015

Dear Ms. Orr and Mr. Bennett:

The Agriculture Energy Alliance appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed plan for the 2010-2015 Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) leasing program. Expanded access to our offshore resources is vitally important to American energy independence and to the American economy. In addition, this plan is critically important to U.S. agriculture.

The Agriculture Energy Alliance represents more than 100 growers and agribusinesses that face a looming crisis because of public policies that create demand for natural gas while restricting access to supply sources. The farm sector depends on significant use of natural gas for food processing, irrigation, crop drying, heating farm buildings and homes, crop protection chemicals, and nitrogen fertilizer production. Therefore, the Agriculture Energy Alliance has a direct and a strong interest in the development of the next offshore leasing program.

The Agriculture Energy Alliance strongly supports the 5-Year Plan's Draft Program (PDP) proposed by the U.S. Minerals Management Service (MMS) for 2010 to 2015 leasing in the OCS. By opening up new offshore areas in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans to natural gas development and allowing for the possibility of offshore alternative energy development, the PDP will provide us with the opportunity to responsibly produce our own energy - significantly benefiting our nation's economy by creating domestic jobs, decreasing our dependence on foreign energy and increasing a much needed revenue stream for U.S. federal and state governments during these trying times.

In today's economic climate, it is more important than ever that the federal government allow access to all offshore energy supplies made available in the PDP, as soon as all necessary environmental protections have been put in place. By offering new leasing opportunities in the

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NORTH-, Mid- and South-Atlantic, as well as areas offshore California, the PDP is appropriately expansive and provides the new administration with maximum flexibility to properly utilize our domestic resources.

As you know, the MMS conservatively estimates that there are 420 trillion cubic feet of natural gas technically recoverable from all federal offshore areas. That is almost six times the natural gas resources of Canada and Mexico combined and enough to maintain current natural gas production for more than 70 years. The U.S. Government should not withhold this vital resource from the American people and American agriculture.

Providing for a sensible yet effective energy policy that safely develops U.S. resources now will help industries that rely on natural gas, strengthen national security and supply much needed jobs as we open new areas to development and spur economic growth.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to comment on the proposed plan for the 2010-2015 OCS leasing program. Please consider the views expressed in this letter as you prepare the final 5-Year Program.

Sincerely,

**Agribusiness Association of Iowa
Agribusiness Council of Indiana
Agricultural Council of California
Agrium Inc.
Alabama Crop Management Assn.
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Plant Food Corporation
Arkansas Plant Food Assn.
Ben-Trei Ltd.
Brandt Consolidated
CF Industries
CHS Inc.
California League of Food Processors
Chemical Industry Council of Illinois
CoBank (CO)
Colorado Farm Bureau
Colorado Grain & Feed Assn.
Crop Production Services
CropLife America
D.B. Western, Inc.—Texas
DeBruce Fertilizer, Inc.
Delaware Maryland Agribusiness Assn.
Diamond of California
Fairfield Index Inc.
Far West Agribusiness Assn. (WA)
Florida Chamber of Commerce
Florida Fertilizer & Agrichemical Assn.
Florida Strawberry Growers Assn.
Georgia Agribusiness Council, Inc.
Georgia Feed & Grain Assn., Inc.
GROWMARK, Inc.
Hardee County Farm Bureau (FL)**

**Hartung Brothers, Inc.
Hawaiian Alliance for Responsible
Technology & Science
Helena Chemical Company
Hillsborough County Agriculture Economic
Development Council (FL)
Hillsborough County Farm Bureau (FL)
Illinois Fertilizer & Chemical Assn.
Indiana Grain & Feed Association
Indiana Plant Food & Ag Chemicals Assn.
Intermountain Farmers Assn.
International Chemical Corporation
International Commodities Export Corp.
International Raw Materials Ltd.
Iowa Institute for Cooperatives
JR Simplot Company
Jim Hicks & Company
Johnston Enterprises
Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Assn.
Kansas Grain and Feed Assn.
Land O' Lakes, Inc.
Louisiana Ammonia Producers
MFA Incorporated
Mayo Fertilizer Inc.
Minnesota Agri-Growth Council
Minnesota Crop Production Retailers
Missouri Agribusiness Association
Monsanto Company
Montana Agricultural Business Assn.
Natal Association of Wheat Growers**

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National Chicken Council
National Corn Growers Assn.
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Grange
National Renderers Association, Inc.
National Turkey Federation
Nebraska Agri-Business Assn.
North Dakota Agricultural Assn.
Northern Ag Suppliers, Inc.
Oklahoma Ag Retailers
Oregon Farm Bureau
Oregon Wheat Growers League
Pennsylvania Assn. of Milk Dealers
Plant Food Association of North
Carolina, Inc.
Polk County Farm Bureau (FL)
PotashCorp
Rocky Mountain Agri-Business Assn. (CO)
Sarasota County Farm Bureau (FL)
Society of American Florists
South Carolina Fertilizer and
Agrichemical Assn.
South Dakota Agri-Business Assn.
South Dakota Feed & Grain Assn.
Southern Crop Production Assn. (GA)
Southern States Cooperative, Inc.
Tennessee Agricultural Production Assn.
Tennessee Farmers Cooperative
Terra Industries
Texas Ag Industries Assn.
Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council
Texas Grain & Feed Assn.
The Andersons, Inc.
The Fertilizer Institute
The McGregor Company
The Mosaic Company
3-D Fertilizer
USA Rice Federation
United Suppliers, Inc.
Virginia Crop Production Assn.
Virginia Poultry Federation, Inc.
Washington Association of Wheat Growers
Washington State Council of Farmer
Cooperatives
West Central Inc.
Western Peanut Growers Assn. (TX)
Western Plant Health Association (CA)
Wheeler Bros. Grain and Fertilizer Co.
Willard Agri-Service of Frederick, Inc.
Wisconsin Crop Production Association