

Title: 30 CFR Part 251, Geological and Geophysical (G&G) Explorations of the Outer Continental Shelf.

OMB Control Number: 1010-0048.

Abstract: The Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Lands Act, as amended (43 U.S.C. 1331 *et seq.* and 43 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*), authorizes the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) to prescribe rules and regulations to administer leasing of the OCS. Such rules and regulations will apply to all operations conducted under a lease. Operations on the OCS must preserve, protect, and develop oil and natural gas resources in a manner that is consistent with the need to make such resources available to meet the Nation's energy needs as rapidly as possible; to balance orderly energy resource development with protection of human, marine, and coastal environments; to ensure the public a fair and equitable return on the resources of the OCS; and to preserve and maintain free enterprise competition.

The OCS Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1340) also states that "any person authorized by the Secretary may conduct geological and geophysical explorations in the [O]uter Continental Shelf, which do not interfere with or endanger actual operations under any lease maintained or granted pursuant to this OCS Lands Act, and which are not unduly harmful to aquatic life in such area." The section

further requires that permits to conduct such activities may only be issued if it is determined that the applicant is qualified; the activities are not polluting, hazardous, or unsafe; they do not interfere with other users of the area; and do not disturb a site, structure, or object of historical or archaeological significance. Applicants for permits are required to submit form MMS-327 to provide the information necessary to evaluate their qualifications.

Regulations at 30 CFR part 251 implement these statutory requirements. We use the information to ensure there is no environmental degradation, personal harm or unsafe operations and conditions, damage to historical or archaeological sites, or interference with other uses; to analyze and evaluate preliminary or planned drilling activities; to monitor progress and activities in the OCS; to acquire G&G data and information collected under a Federal permit offshore; and to determine eligibility for reimbursement from the Government for certain costs. The information is necessary to determine if the applicants for permits or filers of notices meet the qualifications specified by the OCS Lands Act. The MMS uses information collected to understand the G&G characteristics of oil- and gas-bearing physiographic regions of the OCS. It

aids the Secretary in obtaining a proper balance among the potentials for environmental damage, the discovery of oil and gas, and adverse impacts on affected coastal States. Information from permittees is necessary to determine the propriety and amount of reimbursement.

We will protect information from respondents considered proprietary under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) and its implementing regulations (43 CFR part 2) and under regulations at 30 CFR parts 250, 251, and 252. No items of a sensitive nature are collected. Responses are mandatory or required to obtain or retain a benefit.

Frequency: On occasion, annually, or as specified in permits.

Estimated Number and Description of Respondents: Approximately 150 Federal OCS permittees or notice filers.

Estimated Reporting and Recordkeeping "Hour" Burden: The estimated annual "hour" burden for this information collection is a total of 8,272 hours. The following chart details the individual components and estimated hour burdens. In calculating the burdens, we assumed that respondents perform certain requirements in the normal course of their activities. We consider these to be usual and customary and took that into account in estimating the burden.

Citation 30 CFR 251	Reporting and recordkeeping requirement	Hour burden	Average number annual responses	Annual burden hours
251.4(a), (b); 251.5(a), (b), (d); 251.6; Permit Forms.	Apply for permits (form MMS-327) to conduct G&G exploration, including deep stratigraphic tests.	6	148 Applications	888
251.4(b); 251.5(c), (d); 251.6.	File notices to conduct scientific research activities, including notice to MMS prior to beginning and after concluding activities.	6	2 Notices	12
251.6(b); 251.7(b)(5)(iii)	Notify MMS if specific actions should occur; report archaeological resources. (No instances reported since 1982.)	1	1 Notice	1
251.7	Submit information on test drilling activities under a permit, including form MMS-123.	Burden included under 30 CFR 250.201, 250.203 and Form MMS-123 (1010-0049 and 1010-0044)		0
251.7(c)	Enter into agreement for group participation in test drilling, including publishing summary statement; provide MMS copy of notice/list of participants. (No agreements submitted since 1989.)	1	1 Agreement	1
251.7(d)	Submit bond on deep stratigraphic test	Burden included under 30 CFR part 256 (1010-0006)		0
251.8(a)	Request reimbursement for certain costs associated with MMS inspections. (No requests in many years. OCS Lands Act requires Government reimbursement.)	1	1 Request	1
251.8(b), (c)	Submit modifications to, and status/final reports on, activities conducted under a permit.	8	150 × 4 Reports = 600	4,800
251.9(c)	Notify MMS to relinquish a permit	1/2	8 Notices	4
251.10(c)	File appeals	Burden included under 1010-0121		0