

organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Dated: September 21, 2003.

Aurene M. Martin,

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

Conservation Helium Sales

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Interior.

ACTION: Notice implementing second Conservation Helium sale.

SUMMARY: The purpose of this action is to continue implementation of the terms of the Helium Privatization Act (HPA) of 1996 dealing with the disposal of the Conservation Helium reserve. The Act requires the Department of the Interior to *offer for sale*, beginning no later than 2005, a portion of the Conservation Helium stored underground at the Cliffside Field, north of Amarillo, Texas. The Department of the Interior, in consultation with the private helium industry, has determined that private companies with refining capacity along the crude helium pipeline will need a supply of helium in excess of that available from their own storage accounts and that available from crude helium extractors in the region, and that given the current market, Conservation Helium sold in this Sale will likely minimize market disruption. The Bureau conducted a 30-day comment period prior to the first pilot sale of Conservation Helium in March 2003. Eight comments were received. The comments were generally supportive with mainly long-term concerns expressed. However, some of the comments expressed concern over the allocation process and pricing methodology. The Bureau made some modifications to address concerns expressed by those comments. Since the first sale was not fully subscribed, the appropriateness of the allocation percentage was not fully tested. The second sale will provide the Bureau with further information to assess the overall process.

DATES: Submit bids and other documentation as required in Notice on or before October 30, 2003.

ADDRESSES: You may submit your bids and other documentation as required in this Notice to the Bureau of Land Management, Amarillo Field Office, 810 S. Fillmore, Suite 500, Amarillo, TX 79101, Attention: Crude Helium Sale.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Timothy R. Spisak, (806) 356–1002.

Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1–800–877–8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1.01 What Is the Purpose of the Sale?

The purpose of this Sale is to continue implementation of the terms of the HPA dealing with the disposal of the Conservation Helium Reserve. The Act requires the Department of the Interior to *offer for sale*, beginning no later than 2005, a portion of the Conservation Helium stored underground at the Cliffside Field, north of Amarillo, Texas. The Department of the Interior, in consultation with the private helium industry, has determined that private companies with refining capacity along the crude helium pipeline will need a supply of helium in excess of that available from their own storage accounts and that available from crude helium extractors in the region. This is the second of 12 annual sales that the Department will conduct to dispose of the Conservation Helium stored underground at the Cliffside Field. The annual sales are being conducted in a manner intended to prevent pure helium market disruptions from occurring to end users; shortages of crude helium to pure helium refiners; and an oversupply of crude helium on the market for crude helium extractors. This second sale will be used to test the disposal process when the sales volume is expected to be fully subscribed. Subsequent sales may be adjusted as needed.

1.02 What Terms Do I Need To Know To Understand This Sale?

Allocated Sale—That portion of the annual sale volume of Conservation Helium that will be set aside for purchase by the Crude Helium Refiners.

Annual Conservation Helium Sale—The sale of a certain volume of Conservation Helium to private entities conducted annually beginning no later than 2005.

Bidder—Any entity or person who submits a request for purchase of a volume of the Annual Conservation Helium Sale and has met the qualifications contained in part 1.05 in this Notice.

BLM—The Bureau of Land Management.

Conservation Helium—The crude helium purchased by the U.S. Government under the authority of the Helium Act of 1960 and stored underground in the Cliffside Field.

Crude Helium—A partially refined gas containing about 70 percent helium and 30 percent nitrogen. However, the helium concentration may typically vary from 50 to 95 percent.

Crude Helium Refiners—Those entities with a capability of refining crude helium and having a connection point on the crude helium pipeline and a valid Helium Storage Contract as of the date of a Conservation Helium Sale.

Excess Volumes—Allocated sale volumes not requested by the Crude Helium Refiners.

Helium Storage Contract—A contract between the BLM and a private entity allowing the private entity to store crude helium in underground storage at the Cliffside Field.

HPA—The Helium Privatization Act of 1996.

In-Kind Crude Helium—Conservation Helium purchased by private refiners in exchange for like amounts of pure helium sold to Federal agencies and their contractors in accordance with the HPA.

MMcf—One million cubic feet of gas measured at standard conditions of 14.65 pounds per square inch (psi) and 60° F.

Mcf—One thousand cubic feet of gas measured at standard conditions of 14.65 psi and 60° F.

Non-Allocated Sale—That portion of the annual sale volume of Conservation Helium that will be offered to all qualified Bidders.

1.03 What Volume of Conservation Helium Will Be Offered in the Year 2004 Annual Conservation Helium Sale?

The volume of helium available for this Sale is 2,100 MMcf. In accordance with the HPA, this volume was determined by dividing the total volume of stored Conservation Helium less the statutory required reservation of 600 MMcf for Government purposes less estimated In-Kind Crude Helium transfers for 12 years divided by 12. The volume represents a straight-line basis for offering the helium for sale in accordance with the HPA.

1.04 At What Price Will the Conservation Helium Be Sold?

The Conservation Helium will be sold at the same price as In-Kind Crude Helium. In accordance with the HPA, this price covers helium debt repayment