

February 12, 2001

Mr. Chris Oynes, Regional Director
Mineral Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region
1201 Elmwood Park Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70123-2394

RE: Proposed Lease Sale 181

Dear Mr. Oynes:

Expanding the safe and reasonable development of resources in the Gulf of Mexico provides an opportunity to meet the domestic demand for natural gas and oil. Currently the Gulf of Mexico supplies approximately thirty percent of the U.S. Domestic gas supply and about twenty percent of America's domestic oil production.

As demand for natural resources continues to grow, we must remain cautious that mining and drilling activities do not negatively impact our nation's coastline and the fragile Gulf of Mexico. Therefore, it is essential that we maintain a balance between the development of our natural resources and the environmental impact through adequate oversight of operations.

The State of Mississippi supports a balanced and reasonable leasing program that leads to exploration, development, and production within the full oversight of the coastal states and the Department of Interior.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed Eastern Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 181 and look forward to working cooperatively with the Minerals Management Service in the successful and safe development of the Outer Continental Shelf.

Very truly yours,

RONNIE MUSGROVE