



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT

New Orleans Office  
1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard  
New Orleans, LA 70123-2394

In Reply Refer To: GM 623E

Mr. Joe Spraggins, Executive Director  
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources  
1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 101  
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

Dear Mr. Spraggins:

Enclosed for your review and comment is a Consistency Determination (CD) that evaluates Gulf of Mexico Oil and Gas Lease Sale 261 (GOM Lease Sale 261) in connection with the Mississippi Coastal Management Program (CMP). The GOM Lease Sale 261 is tentatively scheduled for September 27, 2023. Based on the analyses in the enclosed CD and the environmental impact statements prepared for this lease sale, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has determined that GOM Lease Sale 261 will be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the policies of the CMP that the State of Mississippi has identified as enforceable.

BOEM has prepared the CD in accordance with the requirements of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) (16 U.S.C. §§ 1451-1464). BOEM is required to determine whether GOM Lease Sale 261 will be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of Mississippi's approved coastal management program (16 U.S.C. § 1456(c)(1)(A)). While BOEM reviewed and made a consistency determination on the policies that Mississippi identified as being enforceable in its submission for CZMA Section 306 approval, neither the Department of the Interior nor BOEM make a judgment on, nor imply that, such policies are enforceable or can be enforced under the laws of the State of Mississippi.

As part of its National Environmental Policy Act responsibilities, BOEM analyzed the potential environmental impacts of this lease sale in the *Gulf of Mexico OCS Oil and Gas Lease Sales: 2017-2022; Gulf of Mexico Lease Sales 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 256, 257, 259, and 261 – Final Multisale Environmental Impact Statement* (2017-2022 GOM Multisale EIS), *Gulf of Mexico OCS Lease Sale: Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement 2018* (2018 GOM Supplemental EIS), and *Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Lease Sales 259 and 261: Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* (GOM Lease Sales 259 and 261 Supplemental EIS). The 2017-2022 GOM Multisale EIS, 2018 GOM Supplemental EIS, and GOM Lease Sales 259 and 261 Supplemental EIS are referred to and, where appropriate, are incorporated by reference in the attached CD. The 2017-2022 GOM

Multisale EIS, 2018 GOM Supplemental EIS, and GOM Lease Sales 259 and 261 Supplemental EIS are available at <https://www.boem.gov/nepaprocess>.

BOEM requests that any comments on the CD be submitted within 60 days of receipt of this letter, pursuant to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's regulation at 15 CFR § 930.41(a). Please send your comments to Ms. Helen Rucker, Chief, Environmental Assessment Section, Office of Environment (GM 623E), Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, New Orleans Office, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394.

Thank you for your assistance in this important matter. BOEM appreciates having a cooperative working relationship with the State of Mississippi in planning and conducting offshore oil and gas activities.

Sincerely,

Arie Kaller, PhD  
Regional Supervisor, Office of Environment

Enclosure

cc: Honorable Tate Reeves  
Governor of Mississippi  
Jackson, Mississippi 39201