



# U.S. Department of the Interior Minerals Management Service

**MMS**

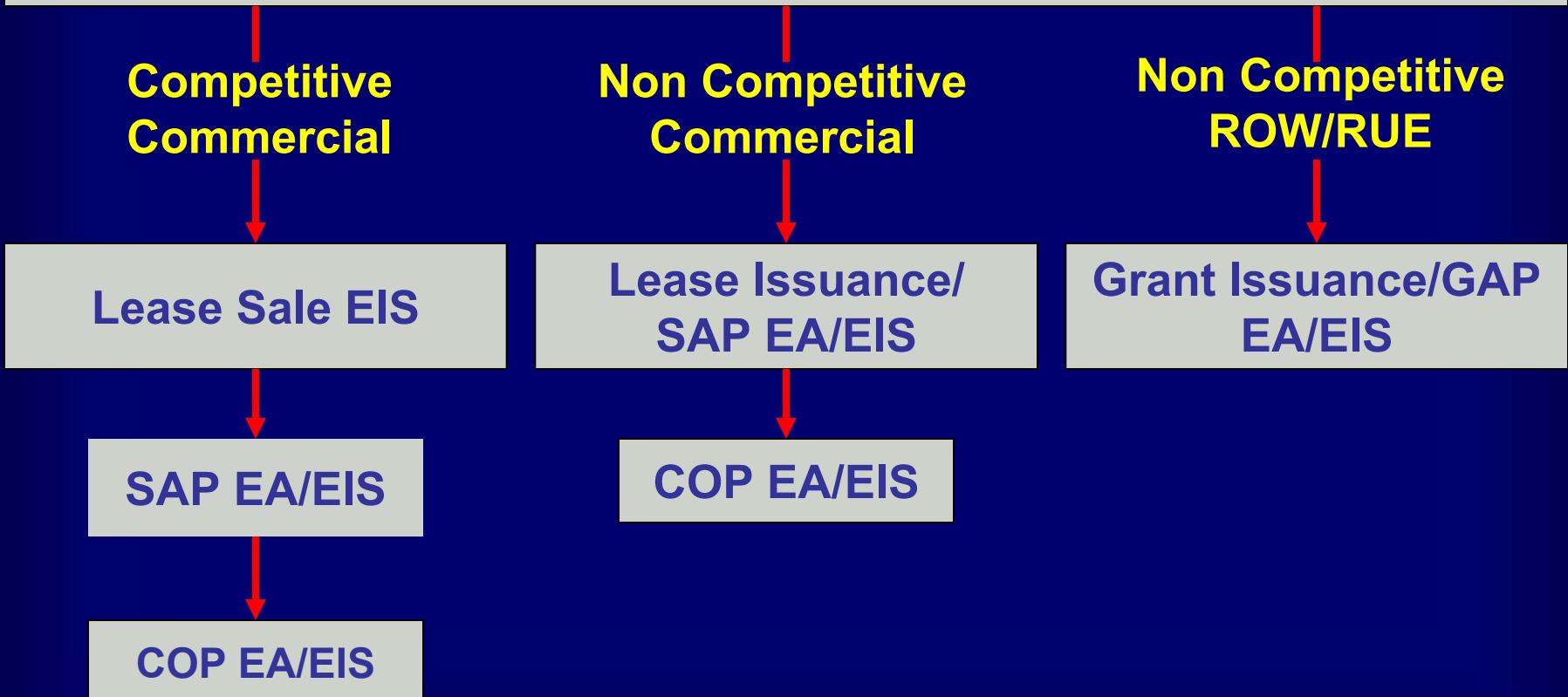
## Overview of MMS Environmental Review Process

Sally Valdes, Environmental Protection Specialist  
Branch of Environmental Assessment

MMS Virginia Task Force  
December 8, 2009  
Virginia Beach Conference Center

# Multi-Step Environmental Review Process

## Programmatic AEAU EIS





# Environmental Analysis

## Environmental Studies

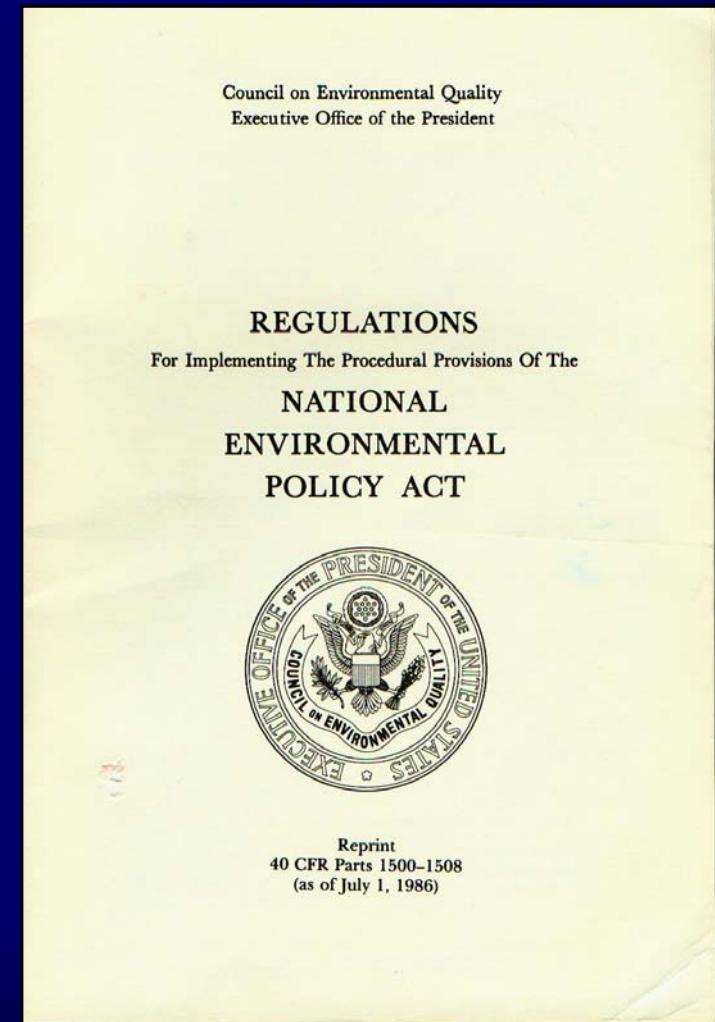
### MMS Mandate:

**Protect the environment and develop information necessary to assess and manage environmental impacts on the human, marine, and coastal environments.**



# The National Environmental Policy Act "NEPA"

- Disclose Plans
- Involve Public
- Identify and Evaluate Alternatives
- Avoid & Mitigate Negative Effects
- Integrate Environmental Analyses



# **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Assessment (EA)**

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## **Sections**

- I      Purpose and Need for Action
- II     Alternatives Including the Proposed Action
- III    Affected Environment
- IV    Environmental Consequences
  - Cumulative Effects

# Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

## Steps:

- Public Scoping Meetings and Comment Period
- Draft EIS
- Public Hearings and Comment Period
- Final EIS
- Record of Decision



# Environmental and Socioeconomic Resources and Issues

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- Air Quality
- Water Quality
- Marine Mammals
- Sea Turtles
- Birds
- Bats
- Seafloor Habitats



- Physical Oceanography
- Coastal Habitats
- Socioeconomics
- Cultural Resources
- Fisheries
- Multiple Use Conflicts

# Impact Producing Factors

- Visual and aesthetic interference
- Vessel traffic
- Air emissions
- Bottom disturbance
- Discharges
- Infrastructure (emplacement and presence)
- Noise
- Lighting



# Mitigation Measures

- MMS's primary mitigation strategy is avoidance
- Lease Stipulations
- Source of mitigation measures:
  - Subject matter experts through the NEPA process
  - Consultations
  - Renewable Energy Regulatory Framework
  - Best Management Practices in the Record of Decision on the AEAU Programmatic EIS
  - Applicable stipulations from OCS oil and gas leases
  - Input from Task Force

# Major Federal Agencies Involved in OCS Activities



Minerals Management Service

U.S. Coast Guard

Environmental Protection Agency

Fish and Wildlife Service

National Marine Fisheries Service

Army Corps of Engineers

Federal Aviation Administration

U.S. Geological Survey

# **State, Tribal & Local Stakeholders Involved in OCS Activities for Virginia**

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- Tribal Governments
- State Historic Preservation Offices
- VA Marine Resources Commission
- Department of Environmental Quality
- Air Resources Boards
- Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy
- Departments of Historical Resources
- Local Governments

Magnuson-  
Stevens  
FCMA

E.O. 13186:  
Protection of  
Migratory Birds

Endangered  
Species Act

E.O. 12898:  
Environmental  
Justice

National  
Historic  
Preservation  
Act

Federal Water  
Pollution  
Control Act

Marine Mammal  
Protection Act

Clean  
Air Act

Coastal Zone  
Management  
Act

**NEPA  
Analysis**

# **Environmental Consultation Processes: Required for MMS Lease Issuance or Plan Approval**

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- Consultations:
  - Coastal Zone Management Act
  - Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Essential Fish Habitat)
  - National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106)
  - Endangered Species Act (Section 7)
- Clean Air Act General Conformity Determination
- Migratory Birds Treaty Act/Executive Order Analysis

**Run concurrently with NEPA process**

# **Other Environmental Processes: Required by Other Federal Agencies or Responsibility of Applicant**

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- Marine Mammal Protection Act
- Federal Aviation Act
- USCG Ports and Waterways Safety Act, Maritime Transportation Act
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permitting under Section 404, Clean Water Act, Section 10 Rivers and Harbors Act
- EPA NPDES/VGP Permitting
- FERC Licensing and Coordination
- DOD Coordination

**MMS Environmental  
Review Process  
for OCS Wind Energy  
Offshore Virginia**

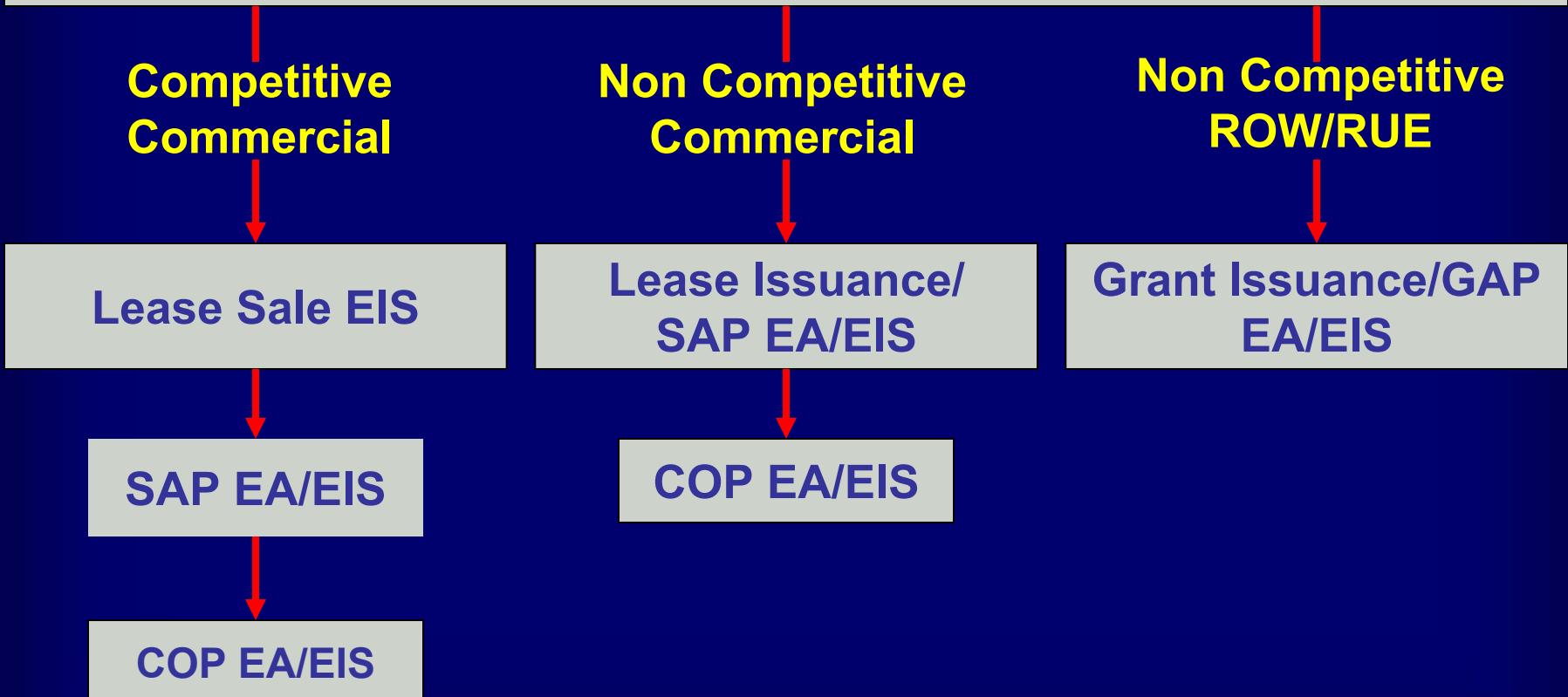


# When will the NEPA Analysis begin?

- MMS will coordinate closely with federal, tribal, state and local stakeholders in order to help states meet their goals and determine timelines for leasing.
- An important factor in determining the start of NEPA analysis is the issuance of the Request for Interest (RFI).
- MMS expects the NEPA analysis to begin within 6 to 12 months after an RFI is issued.

# Multi-Step Environmental Review Process

## Programmatic AEAU EIS



# More Information...

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