

KAWERAK INC News Release

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For Immediate Release

Kawerak Opposes Oil and Gas Leasing in the Waters of the Bering Strait Region

NOME, Alaska - Today the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) released its Oil and Gas Leasing Draft Proposed Program, potentially opening offshore Oil and Gas Leasing/Exploration in various parts of Alaska that were previously not included in previous lease sales.

Kawerak, Inc. opposes oil and gas leasing / exploration in the Hope, Navarin, St. Mathew Hall, and Norton Basins. These basins are where tribes from our region have harvested subsistence resources for millennia and where local people from our region fish and crab commercially. With the proposed draft, these basins will be exposed and open to oil and gas leasing/exploration in 2023. These basins are vitally important to our survival and oil and gas activities pose a serious threat to marine life and safety in these areas.

Kawerak encourages individuals from the Bering Strait region to review and comment on BOEM's Draft Proposed Program. You may learn more about the draft proposed program and access links to submit comments at <https://www.boem.gov/National-Program/>. Online commenting at regulations.gov begins on Monday, January 8, 2018. There will be a public meeting in Anchorage at the Dena'ina Center on January 23rd from 7pm-10pm.

For additional questions and information please feel free to reach out to the Kawerak Marine Program at (907) 443-4368 or email aahmasuk@kawerak.org.

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Kawerak Inc's organizational goal is to assist Alaska Native people and their governing bodies to take control of their future. With programs ranging from education to transportation, and natural resource management to economic development, Kawerak seeks to improve the Region's social, economic, educational, cultural and political conditions.

Kawerak's position regarding oil and gas leasing/exploration was determined by a resolution passed by Kawerak Board of Directors, comprised of Tribal Leaders from our region.

Kawerak's mission is to advance the capacity of our people and our tribes for the benefit of the region.

The **Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)** develops the Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program (National OCS Program) for oil and gas development in accordance with the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCS Lands Act). This National OCS Program establishes a five-year schedule of oil and gas lease sales proposed for the U.S. [OCS](#). The National OCS Program specifies the size, timing, and location of potential leasing activity that the Secretary of the Interior determines will best meet national energy needs for the five-year period under consideration.

Currently, BOEM is working under the approved 2017–2022 Program. However, as directed in [Executive Order 13795](#) (April 28, 2017) and [Secretary's Order 3350](#) (May 1, 2017), BOEM is initiating a process to develop a new National OCS Program for 2019–2024 that, if approved, will supersede the 2017–2022 Program. The first of three proposals for 2019–2024, the [Draft Proposed Program](#), was released on January 4, 2018.