

# Navarin Basin presale process still on for '88

The Interior Department's Minerals Management Service has announced it will continue the presale process leading to a scheduled 1988 oil and gas lease sale, Sale 107, in the Navarin Basin off Alaska's coast.

"In April, we asked the oil and gas industry to indicate their interest in leasing and exploring the proposed sale area," said William D. Bettenberg, Minerals Management Service director. "Eight of the 10 companies that responded indicated some degree of interest, so we will proceed with the presale steps."

The service will continue to prepare a draft Environmental Impact Statement scheduled for release in the spring of 1987.

Sale 107 is the second sale scheduled for the Navarin Basin. The first,

Sale 83, was held April 17, 1984, and resulted in the issuance of 163 leases.

Leaseholders have been enjoined from further drilling by court order, however, and all Navarin Basin leases have been suspended.

The court's action resulted from a lawsuit against the Interior Department brought by the Village of Gambell, which claimed that the lease sale violated a section of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act.

The lower court's decision will be reviewed by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1987.

"Depending on the Supreme Court's decision, some of the uncertainty surrounding exploration in the Navarin Basin may be removed," Bettenberg said.