

(iii) Disapprove any Mining Plan when the Director determines the existence of exceptional geological conditions in the lease area, exceptional resource values in the marine or coastal environment, or other exceptional circumstances, and that—

(A) Implementation of the activities described in the plan would probably cause serious harm and damage to life (including fish and other aquatic life), to property, to any mineral deposit (in areas leased or not leased), to the national security or defense, or to the marine, coastal, or human environments;

(B) That the threat of harm or damage will not disappear or decrease to an acceptable extent within a reasonable period of time; and

(C) The advantages of disapproving the Mining Plan outweigh the advantages of development and production of the OCS mineral resources.

(3) The Director shall notify the lessee in writing of the reason(s) for disapproving a Mining Plan or for requiring modification of a Mining Plan and the conditions that must be met for approval of the plan.

(e) The Director shall assure that a scheduled onsite compliance inspection of each facility which is subject to regulations in this part is conducted at least once a year. The inspection shall be to determine that the lessee is in compliance with the requirements of the law; provisions of the lease; the approved Delineation, Testing, or Mining Plan; and the regulations in this part. Additional unscheduled onsite inspections shall be conducted without advance notice to the lessee to assure compliance with the provisions of applicable law; the lease; the approved Delineation, Testing, or Mining Plan; and the regulations in this part.

(f)(1) The Director shall, after completion of the technical and environmental evaluations, approve, disapprove, or require modification of the lessee's requests, applications, plans, and notices submitted pursuant to the provisions of this part; issue orders to govern lease operations; and require compliance with applicable provisions of the law, the regulations, the lease, and the approved Delineation, Testing, or Mining Plans. The Director may

give oral orders or approvals whenever prior approval is required before the commencement of an operation or activity. Oral orders or approvals given in response to a written request shall be confirmed in writing within 3 working days after issuance of the order or granting of the oral approval.

(2) The Director shall, after completion of the technical and environmental evaluations, approve, disapprove, or require modification, as appropriate, of the design plan, fabrication plan, and installation plan for platforms, artificial islands, and other installations and devices permanently or temporarily attached to the seabed. The approval, disapproval, or requirement to modify such plans may take the form of a condition of granting a right of use and easement under paragraph (a) of this section or as authorized under any lease issued or maintained under the Act.

(g) The Director shall establish practices and procedures to govern the collection of all rents, royalties, and other payments due the Federal Government in accordance with terms of the leasing notice, the lease, and the applicable Royalty Management regulations listed in § 281.26(i) of this chapter.

(h) The Director may prescribe or approve, in writing or orally, departures from the operating requirements of the regulations of this part when such departures are necessary to facilitate the proper development of a lease; to conserve natural resources; or to protect life (including fish and other aquatic life), property, or the marine, coastal, or human environment.

**§ 282.13 Suspension of production or other operations.**

(a) The Director may direct the suspension or temporary prohibition of production or any other operation or activity on all or any part of a lease when it has been determined that such suspension or temporary prohibition is in the national interest to:

(1) Facilitate proper development of a lease including a reasonable time to develop a mine and construct necessary support facilities, or

(2) Allow for the construction or negotiation for use of transportation facilities.

(b) The Director may also direct or, at the request of the lessee, approve a suspension or temporary prohibition of production or any other operation or activity, if:

(1) The lessee failed to comply with a provision of applicable law, regulation, order, or the lease;

(2) There is a threat of serious, irreparable, or immediate harm or damage to life (including fish and other aquatic life), property, any mineral deposit, or the marine, coastal, or human environment;

(3) The suspension or temporary prohibition is in the interest of national security or defense;

(4) The suspension or temporary prohibition is necessary for the initiation and conduct of an environmental evaluation to define mitigation measures to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts.

(5) The suspension or temporary prohibition is necessary to facilitate the installation of equipment necessary for safety of operations and protection of the environment;

(6) The suspension or temporary prohibition is necessary to allow for undue delays encountered by the lessee in obtaining required permits or consents, including administrative or judicial challenges or appeals;

(7) The Director determines that continued operations would result in premature abandonment of a producing mine, resulting in the loss of otherwise recoverable OCS minerals;

(8) The Director determines that the lessee cannot successfully operate a producing mine due to market conditions that are either temporary in nature or require temporary shutdown and reinvestment in order for the lessee to adapt to the conditions; or

(9) The suspension or temporary prohibition is necessary to comply with judicial decrees prohibiting production or any other operation or activity, or the permitting of those activities, effective the date set by the court for that prohibition.

(c) When the Director orders or approves a suspension or a temporary prohibition of operation or activity including production on all of a lease pursuant to paragraph (a) or (b) of this section, the term of the lease shall be

extended for a period of time equal to the period of time that the suspension or temporary prohibition is in effect, except that no lease shall be so extended when the suspension or temporary prohibition is the result of the lessee's gross negligence or willful violation of a provision of the lease or governing regulations.

(d) The Director may, at any time within the period prescribed for a suspension or temporary prohibition issued pursuant to paragraph (b)(2) of this section, require the lessee to submit a Delineation, Testing, or Mining Plan for approval in accordance with the requirements for the approval of such plans in this part.

(e)(1) When the Director orders or issues a suspension or a temporary prohibition pursuant to paragraph (b)(2) of this section, the Director may require the lessee to conduct site-specific studies to identify and evaluate the cause(s) of the hazard(s) generating the suspension or temporary prohibition, the potential for damage from the hazard(s), and the measures available for mitigating the hazard(s). The nature, scope, and content of any study shall be subject to approval by the Director. The lessee shall furnish copies and all results of any such study to the Director. The cost of the study shall be borne by the lessee unless the Director arranges for the cost of the study to be borne by a party other than the lessee. The Director shall make results of any such study available to interested parties and to the public as soon as practicable after the completion of the study and submission of the results thereof.

(2) When the Director determines that measures are necessary, on the basis of the results of the studies conducted in accordance with paragraph (e)(1) of this section and other information available to and identified by the Director, the lessee shall be required to take appropriate measures to mitigate, avoid, or minimize the damage or potential damage on which the suspension or temporary prohibition is based. When deemed appropriate by the Director, the lessee shall submit a revised Delineation, Testing, or Mining Plan to incorporate the mitigation measures required by the Director. In choosing

between alternative mitigation measures, the Director shall balance the cost of the required measures against the reduction or potential reduction in damage or threat of damage or harm to life (including fish and other aquatic life), to property, to any mineral deposits (in areas leased or not leased), to the national security or defense, or to the marine, coastal, or human environment.

(f)(1) If under the provisions of paragraphs (b) (2), (3), and (4) of this section, the Director, with respect to any lease, directs the suspension of production or other operations on the entire leasehold, no payment of rental or minimum royalty shall be due for or during the period of the directed suspension and the time for the lessee specify royalty free period of a period of reduced royalty pursuant to §281.28(b) of this subchapter will be extended for the period of directed suspension. If under the provisions of paragraphs (b) (2), (3), and (4) of this section the Director, with respect to a lease on which there has been no production, directs the suspension of operations on the entire leasehold, no payment of rental shall be due during the period of the directed suspension.

(2) If under the provisions of this section, the Director grants the request of a lessee for a suspension of production or other operations, the lessee's obligations to pay rental, minimum royalty, or royalty shall continue to apply during the period of the approved suspension, unless the Director's approval of the lessee's request for suspension authorizes the payment of a lesser amount during the period of approved suspension. If under the provision of this section, the Director grants a lessee's request for a suspension of production or other operations for a lease which includes provisions for a time period which the lessee may specify during which production from the leasehold would be royalty free or subject to a reduced royalty obligation pursuant to §281.28(b) of this subchapter, the time during which production from a leasehold may be royalty free or subject to a reduced royalty obligation shall not be extended unless the Director's approval of the suspension specifies otherwise.

(3) If the lease anniversary date falls within a period of suspension for which no rental or minimum royalty payments are required under paragraph (a) of this section, the prorated rentals or minimum royalties are due and payable as of the date the suspension period terminates. These amounts shall be computed and notice thereof given the lessee. The lessee shall pay the amount due within 30 days after receipt of such notice. The anniversary date of a lease shall not change by reason of any period of lease suspension or rental or royalty relief resulting therefrom.

**§ 282.14 Noncompliance, remedies, and penalties.**

(a)(1) If the Director determines that a lessee has failed to comply with applicable provisions of law; the regulations in this part; other applicable regulations; the lease; the approved Delineation, Testing, or Mining Plan; or the Director's orders or instructions, and the Director determines that such noncompliance poses a threat of immediate, serious, or irreparable damage to the environment, the mine or the deposit being mined, or other valuable mineral deposits or other resources, the Director shall order the lessee to take immediate and appropriate remedial action to alleviate the threat. Any oral orders shall be followed up by service of a notice of noncompliance upon the lessee by delivery in person to the lessee or agent, or by certified or registered mail addressed to the lessee at the last known address.

(2) If the Director determines that the lessee has failed to comply with applicable provisions of law; the regulations in this part; other applicable regulations; the lease; the requirements of an approved Delineation, Testing, or Mining Plan; or the Director's orders or instructions, and such noncompliance does not pose a threat of immediate, serious, or irreparable damage to the environment, the mine or the deposit being mined, or other valuable mineral deposits or other resources, the Director shall serve a notice of noncompliance upon the lessee by delivery in person to the lessee or agent