

Secretary Salazar Names Liz Birnbaum Director of the Minerals Management Service

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today appointed Liz Birnbaum, an attorney with two decades of Federal Government and private sector experience in energy and environmental policy, as Director of the Department’s Minerals Management Service. The appointment does not require Senate confirmation.

“As a former Associate Solicitor here at Interior with extensive experience as counsel and staff director for congressional committees, Liz brings a number of strengths to this key position at Interior,” Secretary Salazar said. “Her in-depth knowledge of energy issues, natural resource policy and environmental law as well as her managerial expertise and work in coalition building will be especially important as we advance President Obama’s new energy frontier and lay the foundation for a clean energy economy.”

As Director of the Minerals Management Service, Birnbaum administers programs that ensure the effective management of renewable and traditional energy and mineral resources on the nation’s Outer Continental Shelf, including the environmentally safe exploration, development, and production of oil and natural gas, and the collection and distribution of revenues for minerals developed on federal and American Indian lands.

Since 2007, Birnbaum has been staff director of the Committee on House Administration, where she oversees strategy development, budget management and staff activities for the committee that manages legislative branch agencies. Before that she was Vice President for Government Affairs and General Counsel for American Rivers, where she directed advocacy programs for the nation’s leading river conservation organization from 2001 to 2007. She coordinated staff work, built coalitions with other national and grassroots conservation organizations and represented the organization before congressional committees and executive branch agencies.

At Interior, Birnbaum was Associate Solicitor for Minerals Resources from 2000 to 2001, supervising and managing a staff of attorneys that provided legal advice, developed regulations and conducted litigation on minerals issues for the Minerals Management Service, Bureau of Land Management and Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation.

Before that she was a special assistant to the Interior Solicitor, from 1999 to 2000, overseeing legal policy on a range of natural resource issues, including mining law, public land management and hydropower licensing. From 1991 to 1999 she was counsel to the House Committee on Natural Resources, where she handled legislative and oversight activities for the Department of the Interior, U.S. Forest Service and electric power marketing administrations. From 1987 to 1991 she was counsel for the Water Resources Program of the National Wildlife Federation.

Birnbaum has been an officer and member of numerous boards and commissions, including the National Capital Section of the American Water Resources Association; Arlington County Environment and Energy Conservation Commission; and the Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Section of the District of Columbia Bar.

Birnbaum received her Juris Doctor degree from Harvard University in 1984 and her A.B. degree, magna cum laude, from Brown University in 1979. She was Editor in Chief of the Harvard Environmental Law Review, Vol. 8.

The Minerals Management Service manages the nation's offshore Renewable Energy Program as well as the development of natural gas, oil and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf. The agency also collects, accounts for and disburses more than \$13 billion per year in revenues from Federal offshore mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on Federal and American Indian lands. The agency administers two major programs, Offshore Energy and Minerals Management and Minerals Revenue Management. The Offshore program, which manages the mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf, comprises three regions: Alaska, Gulf of Mexico, and the Pacific. The Minerals Revenue Management program is headquartered in Washington, D.C., but operationally based in Denver, Colorado.

###

June 25, 2009
Contact: Frank Quimby
(202) 208-6416