

FOR RELEASE: August 12, 1996

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Central Gulf of Mexico Sale Nets \$511 Million in High Bids

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) announced today the completion of Lease Sale 157 offshore Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama by awarding \$511 million in high bids after completion of a two-phase evaluation process.

This record-breaking sale received 1,381 bids on 924 tracts, the largest number in both categories in the history of OCS leasing.

"We are very pleased with this lease sale. This signals a new era for the Gulf of Mexico," said Gulf of Mexico Regional Director Chris C. Oynes. The large number of tracts bid on and the Deepwater Royalty Relief Act, which provides for royalty suspensions, increased our normal workload approximately three times by the number of tracts requiring further evaluation."

On completion of the sale, MMS rejected 22 bids totaling \$9,387,076 as insufficient for fair market value.

Eleven bids in this sale were on tracts where MMS had previously rejected the bid as insufficient in a prior sale. Seven of these were accepted as sufficient; the bids on these tracts increased an additional \$3.5 million.

The top ten companies with winning bids on Sale 157:

Company Name	Tracts
Texaco Exploration & Production	125
Chevron U.S.A. Inc.	114
Zilkha Energy Company	111
BP Exploration & Oil Inc.	82
BHP Petroleum	64
Amoco Production Company	51
Shell Offshore Inc.	44
Vastar Resources, Inc.	42
Conoco Inc.	34
Exxon Corporation	32

The MMS is the Federal Agency that manages and regulates the Nation's natural gas, oil, and other mineral resources on the OCS, and collects, accounts for, and disburses about \$4 billion yearly in revenues from offshore Federal mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on Federal and Indian lands.