

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Minerals Management Service  
Office of Communications**

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**MMS Issues Final Notice of Sale for Western Gulf of Mexico Sale 161**

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) will publish in the August 16 issue of the Federal Register a final Notice of Sale for Sale 161 in the Western Gulf of Mexico (GOM). The sale will be held September 25, 1996, at 9 a.m., at the Royal Sonesta Hotel, 300 Bourbon Street, New Orleans, Louisiana.

"This is the first sale in the Western Gulf of Mexico, and only the second sale overall, in which tracts receiving bids in water depths of 200 meters or more are eligible for consideration under provisions of the Deepwater Royalty Relief Act signed by President Clinton this past November," said MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman. "The Act authorizes MMS to modify the terms of certain existing leases and to establish new terms for leases in water depths of 200 meters or deeper in parts of the Central and Western Gulf of Mexico. We're looking forward with anticipation to this sale, especially given the tremendous response and record bids MMS received in the Central Gulf of Mexico Sale last April."

The final Notice of Sale covers 5,168 available blocks encompassing about 28.4 million acres in the Western GOM Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Planning Area offshore Texas and Louisiana. Blocks in this sale are located from 9 to 223 miles offshore in water depths ranging from 8 meters to more than 3,000 meters. In Sale 161, there are 3,585 tracts in water depths of 200 meters or more. The [final Notice of Sale](#) was issued after completion of a final Environmental Impact Statement covering Sales 161 and 157.

Copies of the final Notice of Sale are available from MMS's Gulf of Mexico Regional Office, Public Information Unit, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123 (504) 736-2519; toll free (1-800-200-GULF). Supplemental documents may also be obtained from that office. The Final Notice of Sale will also be posted on the World Wide Web (see address at end of this release).

MMS is the federal agency that manages 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 mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on federal and Indian lands.

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