



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region**

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**MMS Extends Time Period to Accept or Reject Bids
On Offshore Natural Gas And Oil Tracts**

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) today announced a decision extending the 90-day time period within which the Agency must accept or reject high bids received on Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Sale 166. The notice, which appears in the [May 30, 1997, Federal Register](#), extends the time period 45 working days, from June 3, 1997, to July 18, 1997.

In the Central Gulf of Mexico Sale 166, held March 5, 1997, MMS received 1,790 bids on 1,032 tracts, with 799 tracts requiring detailed reviews. Because of the increased workload—a result of the record breaking sale—MMS is unable to conduct and complete the entire bid review process for this sale within the 90 days.

MMS implemented a rule change last year which authorized the extension of evaluation periods, under certain circumstances. Agency officials noted that the existing 90-day time frame, established in 1982, was too rigid and did not provide enough time to complete the review process given the complexities in evaluating certain tracts.

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 distributes about \$4 billion in revenues from Federal offshore mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on Federal and Indian lands.

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