

FOR RELEASE: August 17, 1994

CONTACT: Lee Scurry

202-208-3983

or

Barney Congdon

504-736-2595

HIGH BIDS TOTAL \$60 MILLION
IN WESTERN GULF OF MEXICO LEASE SALE 150 (#40058)

High bids totaling \$60,399,786 were offered today in a federal offshore natural gas and oil lease sale in the Western Gulf of Mexico. A total of 57 companies participated in Sale 150, held in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) received 266 bids on 210 tracts, comprising approximately 1.09 million acres located offshore Texas and Louisiana. The total of all bids submitted was \$73,633,488.

"This amounts to the largest number of bids received in a Western Gulf of Mexico sale in four years," said MMS Acting Director Cynthia Quarterman.

"It's an outstanding example of balancing environmental protection with energy resource development," said Quarterman. "The 35.9 million acres in this planning area contain not only natural gas and oil, but also the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, which is managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

"Working with all interested parties to successfully integrate environmental values into our mission is one of our top priorities," she said.

The Department's Five-Year Plan selects offshore areas with the highest potential for recovery of hydrocarbon resources while balancing environmental concerns and providing protection for marine and coastal habitats. Estimated recoverable hydrocarbons expected to be developed through Sale 150 are about 40 million barrels of oil and 0.65 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

The highest bid received was \$2,104,704, submitted by Enron Oil and Gas Company for Matagorda Island block 586, located approximately 30 miles offshore Texas in Federal waters. The greatest number of bids received on a single block was four --

received on both Mustang Island block 810 and High Island block 94.

On blocks receiving less than three bids, the highest bid will go through an evaluation process before a lease is awarded to assure that taxpayers receive fair market value. If a block receives three or more bids it is assumed the high bid represents fair market value. Each block is approximately nine square miles.

-MMS-

Subject: PR-8/17/94 Sale 150/High Bids Total \$60 Million in Western GOM Sale 150 (#40058)