



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

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**Central Gulf of Mexico Sale 166 Nets \$812 Million in High Bids**

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) announced today the completion of Lease Sale 166 offshore Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama by awarding \$812 million in high bids after completion of a two-phase evaluation process.

This record-breaking sale held March 5 received 1,790 bids on 1,032 tracts, the largest number in both categories in the history of OCS leasing.

"We were very pleased with this lease sale. This signals a continued era of growth for the Gulf of Mexico," said Gulf of Mexico Regional Director Chris C. Oynes. "We were surprised by the large number of bids in 6,000 to 8,000 feet of water. The large number of tracts bid on increased our normal workload approximately three times by the number of tracts requiring further evaluation."

On completion of the sale, MMS rejected 28 bids totaling \$12,122,151 as insufficient for fair market value.

Twenty-two high bids in this sale were on tracts where MMS had previously rejected the bid in a prior sale as insufficient. Twenty of these were accepted as sufficient. The number of bids on these 20 tracts increased from 27 bids in prior lease sales to 73 in Sale 166, and the amount of money bid on these tracts increased from \$8.6 million to \$50.9 million. This represents an increase of \$42.3 million.

The top ten companies with winning bids on Sale 166:

<b>Company Name</b>	<b>Tracts</b>	<b>Company Name</b>	<b>Tracts</b>
Shell Offshore Inc	113	Texaco Exploration and Production Inc.	52
Chevron U.S.A. Inc	75	Vastar Resources, Inc	47
Union Oil Company of California	72	The Louisiana Land and Exploration Co.	44
Zilkha Energy Company	67	Statoil Exploration (US) Inc.	40
Conoco Inc.	55	Exxon Corporation	38

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.

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