

## 2. Offshore Leasing Activity and Status

The OCSLA as amended authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to lease OCS lands for mineral development. Leasing activity in 1996 and 1997 included 2 sales in the Gulf of Mexico (GOM) Region and 1 sale in the Alaska Region in each year. Sales were not held in other OCS regions.

Through 1998, the U.S. Department of the Interior has offered more than 1.29 billion OCS acres (523.14 million ha) for lease in 125 lease sales. In those 122 lease sales the oil and gas industry paid about \$62.7 billion in bonuses to lease 101.2 million acres (40.92 million ha). Table 2-1 shows the OCS leasing history by year.

In 1996 and 1997, sales 157 and 166, in the Central GOM, and sales 161 and 168 in the Western GOM, attracted 5,324 bids, which resulted in 3,286 leases covering 17.7 million acres (7.16 million ha). This acreage leased represents 15.8 percent of the acreage offered for lease in the four GOM sales. Total bonuses accepted for these four sales amounted to \$2.27 billion. The average bonus per acre leased in the Central GOM was \$110.21 for Sale 157 and \$154.89 for Sale 166. The average bonus per acre leased in the Western GOM was \$103.35 for Sale 161 and \$131.91 for Sale 168. First year rentals from these four sales totaled \$118.9 million.

In 1998, sales 169 and 171, in the Central GOM and Western GOM, respectively, attracted 1,674 bids, resulting in 1,129 tracts being leased covering an area of

6.26 million acres (2.53 million ha). This acreage leased was 14.5 percent of the total acreage offered in the two sales. Total bonuses for these two sales amounted to \$1.32 million. The average bonus per acre leased in the Central GOM's sale 169 was \$191.23 and for the Western GOM's sale 171, the average was \$246.34.

In 1996 and 1997, sales 144 and 149 in the Beaufort Sea and Cook Inlet, respectively, attracted 33 bids, which resulted in 31 leases covering 110,000 acres (44,500 ha). Total bonuses accepted for these two sales amounted to \$14.7 million. The average bonus per acre leased in this Beaufort Sea sale was \$144.26. First year rentals from these two lease sales totaled \$577,759.

In 1998, sale 170 in the Beaufort Sea, Alaska, attracted 31 bids, resulting in 28 tracts being leased covering 86,370 acres (34,954 ha). Total bonuses for this sale amounted to \$5.33 million, with an average of \$61.67 per acre.

Tables 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, and 2-5 present leasing statistics for individual sales for Alaska, Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Pacific regions, respectively. Table 2-6 provides a regional breakdown of leasing acreage and status. At the end of 1998, there were 43.93 million acres (17.78 million ha) in active lease status.