

Crude Oil Windfall Profit Tax, Third Quarter, 1984

By Michael Alexander*

Windfall profit tax liability after adjustments for the third quarter of 1984 was \$2.2 billion. This was the lowest amount of reported windfall profit tax since the first full quarter (June 1980) for which liability was reported. The total reported windfall profit tax after adjustments since the enactment of the Crude Oil Windfall Profit Tax Act amounted to more than \$70 billion through September 1984.

Windfall profit, defined as the removal value less the sum of the adjusted base value and state severance tax adjustment, declined by almost 70 percent from a high of \$11.9 billion for the quarter ending June 1981 to \$3.9 billion for the quarter ending September 1984 (Figure A). The decrease in windfall profit was a result of declining removal prices (generally the price for which oil is sold) and rising adjusted base prices and state severance tax adjustments.

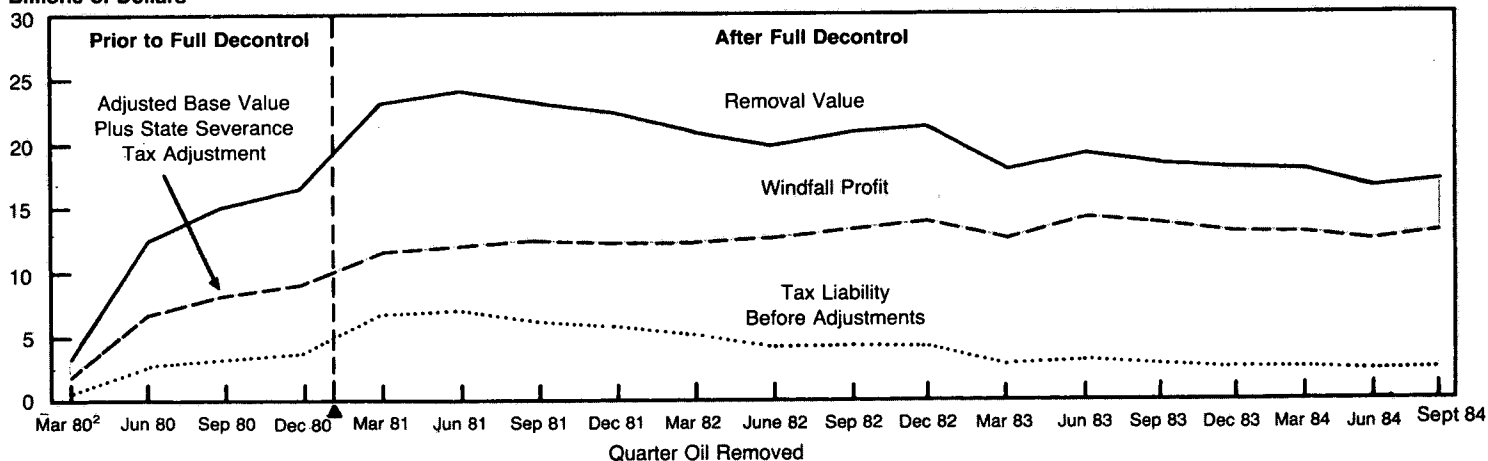
Since June 1981, when the average removal price for domestic crude oil was at its height, the removal price fell by almost 20 percent from \$33.09 to \$26.53 per barrel for the quarter ending September 1984 (Figure B). The downward trend in the removal price began in early 1981 because of a decrease in U.S. demand for oil and gasoline, a result of a sluggish economy and increased conservation efforts. The declining prices continued through 1983, primarily because of an abundant supply of foreign crude oil relative to world wide demand, which created a downward force on removal prices for domestic crude oil.

In 1984 the United States experienced economic growth and increased demand for oil and gasoline products, pushing the price of crude oil up in the second quarter after a slight decline in the first quarter. The third quarter removal price experienced a decline of \$.12 per barrel from the previous quarter while

Figure A

Components¹ of Windfall Profit Tax Liability Before Adjustments: Aggregate Values By Quarter Oil Removed

Billions of Dollars



¹Some returns report windfall profit tax liability only; therefore, data for removal value, adjusted base value and state severance tax adjustment have been adjusted to reflect totals as if all returns reported this detail.

²One month only.

*Foreign Special Projects Section. Prepared under the direction of Marvin Schwartz, Acting Chief.

the adjusted base price and state severance tax increased by \$.27 a barrel, causing the windfall profit to decline by \$.39 per barrel. The adjusted base price increased chiefly as a result of an inflation adjustment derived from the Gross National Product (GNP) "implicit price deflator" [1].

The following table is a summary, by quarter, of tax liability before and after adjustments since the tax went into effect in 1980. The adjustments were necessary because of errors by withholding agents during previous quarters or, more frequently, because of application of the net income limitation.

Windfall Profit Tax Before and After Adjustments
(Millions of Dollars)

Quarter Ending	Tax Before Adjustments	Total Adjustments	Tax After Adjustments
Total	\$75,233	-\$5,051	\$70,182
Mar. 1980 ¹	788	-	788
June 1980	2,842	-21	2,821
Sept. 1980 ...	3,413	-88	3,325
Dec. 1980	3,918	-927	2,991
Mar. 1981	6,953	+242	7,195
June 1981	7,253	-107	7,146
Sept. 1981 ...	6,344	-251	6,093
Dec. 1981	6,007	-497	5,510
Mar. 1982	5,222	-221	5,001
June 1982	4,283	-295	3,988
Sept. 1982 ...	4,404	-445	3,959
Dec. 1982	4,440	-634	3,806
Mar. 1983	3,320	-193	3,127
June 1983	2,951	-203	2,748
Sept. 1983 ...	2,822	-300	2,522
Dec. 1983	2,736	-465	2,271
Mar. 1984	2,622	-228	2,394
June 1984	2,468	-218	2,250
Sept. 1984 ...	2,447	-200	2,247

¹One month only.

The net income limitation generates an adjustment because it limits the windfall profit to 90 percent of the net income per barrel of oil and was estimated by certain taxpayers for the current quarter ending September 1984 (see the following computation below). The adjustments to the previous quarter include under- or over-withholding from previous quarters that the depositing or withholding agent (usually the first purchaser) corrects by adjusting the amounts withheld in succeeding quarters. Producers claim as a refund or a credit on their income tax returns additional over-withholding of windfall profit tax, due to error or the net income limitation, that has not been corrected by the withholding agent [2].

Adjustments to tax, third quarter 1984
(Millions)

Net income limitation	-\$194
Prior quarters	-6
Total Adjustments	-\$200

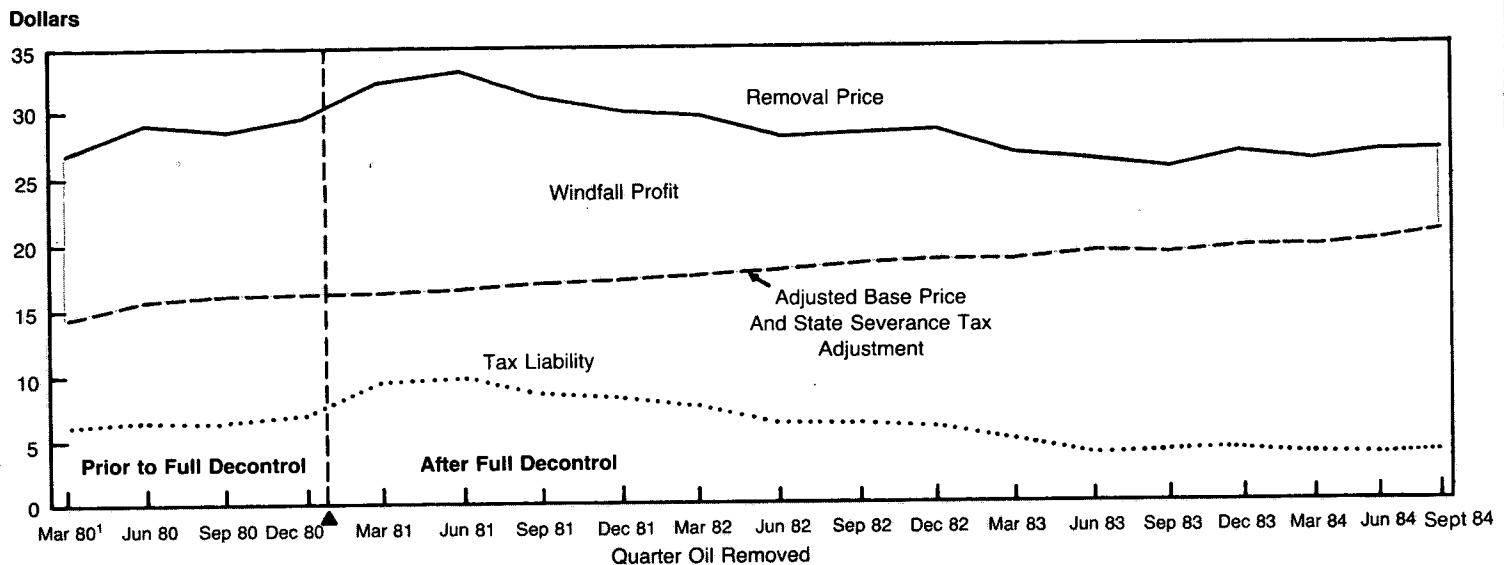
Based on returns of taxpayers that provided complete detail on the windfall profit tax computation [3], tier one oil continued to dominate production for the quarter ending September 1984. Tier one oil (all domestically produced crude oil other than oil specifically classified as tier two or tier three, or oil explicitly exempted from the tax) represented 59 percent of total production. Tier two oil, which represented 9 percent of total production, is oil produced from stripper well property not qualifying for the stripper exemption and oil from economic interests in a Naval Petroleum Reserve held by the United States. Tier three oil, which is heavy oil, incremental tertiary oil and newly discovered oil (63 percent of tier three), accounted for 32 percent of total production. Tier three oil, which is generally taxed at a rate lower than tier one oil, accounted for a steadily increasing percentage of total production.

DATA SOURCES AND LIMITATIONS

The windfall profit tax is reported on the Quarterly Federal Excise Tax Return, Form 720. Form 6047, Windfall Profit Tax, shows how the tax is computed and is filed as an attachment to Form 720. Tabulations in this article are based on the Form 6047. Returns are due 2 months after the end of the quarter in which the oil is removed. Data are based on all returns with a tax liability of \$1 million or more before adjustments and a 10-percent sample of all other returns.

Sampling and nonsampling errors were controlled by a variety of methods. Although efforts were made to secure missing returns, some returns may have been omitted because of time and resource constraints. Attempts were made to correct imbalances in taxpayer entries for the components of windfall profit; if this proved impossible, an out-of-balance return was treated as a return on which the components were not reported, and therefore only the tax liability for each tier was tabulated. However, to account for returns not reporting the tax computation detail (for Figure A only), the components were adjusted using a factor derived from the relationship of the tax liability for those reporting all of the tax computation detail to the total reported windfall profit tax liability. A number of verification checks were performed at all stages of manual data abstraction and computer tabulation.

Figure B
Components of Windfall Profit Tax Liability:
Averages per Barrel by Quarter Oil Removed



NOTE: Because of price controls during 1980, there were cases where the removal price was less than the adjusted base price and no Form 6047 was filed. The data in the figure are based on information reported.

¹One month only.

The Statistics of Income Bulletin also includes data on excise tax collections. The excise tax collection figures show the liability after adjustments, as reported on Form 720, from returns entered into the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) computerized Business Master File (BMF) each quarter. A number of considerations affect comparisons of data from these two sources. Returns are not due until 2 months after the close of the taxable quarter; however, the interval between the close of the taxable period and the final recording of the return often varies, so that the quarterly BMF totals usually represent several taxable periods. On the other hand, the data presented here have been tabulated for specific taxable periods. As a result, the two sets of statistics are not directly comparable.

DEFINITIONS

Brief definitions of the terms used in the tables are given.

Adjusted Base Price.--The base price multiplied by the inflation adjustment, which is derived from the Gross National Product (GNP) "implicit price deflator."

Adjustments to Liability.--Corrections applied to the current quarter's liability to correct for the net income limitation and over- and under-withholding in previous quarters.

Base Price.--For tier one oil, the upper tier ceiling price, as defined by Department of Energy price control regulations, which would have applied to the oil had it been produced and sold in May 1979, reduced by \$0.21. For tiers two and three oil, the base prices were \$15.20 and \$16.55, respectively, adjusted for grade and quality.

Crude Oil.--The term applies only to natural crude petroleum and does not include synthetic petroleum, such as oil from shale or tar sands. It does, however, include natural gas liquids treated as crude oil under the June 1979 energy pricing regulations issued by the Department of Energy.

Deposit Requirements.--The timing of any first purchaser to deposit amounts withheld depends on the identity of the first purchaser. Major refiners, other than independent refiners, are required to make semi-monthly deposits of the withholding tax. All other first purchasers are required to make withholding deposits no later than 45 days after the oil is removed from the premises, except independent refiners that purchase oil under delayed payments contracts. The latter are required to make deposits by the first day of the third month beginning after the month of removal.

Exempt Alaskan Oil.--Oil from a reservoir other than the Sadlerochit reservoir that has

been commercially exploited by any well north of the Arctic Circle; and oil produced north of the divides of the Alaska and Aleutian Ranges, and at least 75 miles from the nearest point of the Trans-Alaskan Pipeline System.

Exempt Charitable Oil.--Oil produced from economic interests held by qualified charitable medical facilities, educational institutions, and child care organizations (as defined in Internal Revenue Code section 170), if such interest was held on January 21, 1980, and at all times thereafter; and oil produced from interests held by a church on January 21, 1980, if, before January 22, 1980, the net proceeds from such oil were dedicated to the support of a medical facility, educational institution, or child care facility.

Exempt Governmental Oil.--Oil produced from an economic interest held by a state or a political subdivision (including agencies and instrumentalities), the net income from which is used for public purposes.

Exempt Indian Oil.--Oil produced from mineral interests held by or on behalf of Indian tribes or individuals on January 21, 1980, which is one of the following: (a) production received by Indian tribes and individuals from Tribal Trust Lands (the title to such land is held by the United States in trust for the tribes); (b) production from land or mineral interests held by an Indian tribe eligible for services provided to Indians by the Secretary of the Interior; or (c) oil, the proceeds from which are paid into the U.S. Treasury to the credit of tribal or native trust funds pursuant to law. This exemption also applies to production of any Alaskan Native Corporation prior to 1991, including wholly-owned subsidiaries of the native Indian corporation as clarified by IRS on September 3, 1982.

Exempt Royalty Oil.--Qualified royalty owners are exempt from the windfall profit tax on two barrels of oil per day for each day of the calendar quarter for oil removed after December 31, 1981. For 1985 and thereafter, three barrels per day will be exempt.

Exempt Stripper Oil.--Oil removed from stripper wells after 1982 may qualify for exemption from the windfall profit tax if the following conditions are met:

- (1) The oil must be removed from a stripper well property after 1982.
- (2) The oil must be produced by an independent producer.
- (3) The oil must be attributable to the independent producer's working interest in the property.
- (4) The stripper well property must not be a property transferred by a nonindependent producer on or after July 23, 1981.

Net Income Limitation.--The windfall profit on a barrel of oil may not exceed 90 percent of the net income attributable to the barrel.

Net Revenue.--This equals the gross revenue from the windfall profit tax, or excise tax (excluding that amount attributable to U.S. government interests), less the reduction of income tax resulting from taxpayers claiming deductions for windfall profit tax paid. Figures presented in this report are gross liabilities.

Removal Price.--Generally, the price for which a barrel of oil is sold. In some instances, a constructive sale price is used.

Sadlerochit Oil.--Crude oil production from the Sadlerochit reservoir in the Prudhoe Bay oil field in Alaska.

State Severance Tax Adjustment.--A tax imposed by a state with respect to the extraction of oil. The windfall profit is reduced by the amount by which the severance tax exceeds that which would have been imposed had the oil been valued at its adjusted base price.

Stripper Oil.--In general, oil from a property for which the average daily production per well has been 10 barrels or less for any consecutive 12-month period after 1972.

Tier One Oil.--All domestically produced crude oil other than any oil classified in tier two or three, or explicitly exempted by law from the tax. This includes the bulk of domestic oil from reservoirs proven to be productive before 1979.

Tier Two Oil.--Any oil from a stripper well property within the meaning of the June 1979 Department of Energy pricing regulations and oil from a U.S. economic interest in a Naval Petroleum Reserve. Note that the Crude Oil Windfall Profit Tax Act of 1980 defined tier two oil as from a "National" Petroleum Reserve. This was amended to read "Naval" Petroleum Reserve by the Technical Corrections Act of 1982.

Tier Three Oil, Heavy Oil.--All crude oil (1) produced that had a weighted average gravity of 16.0 degrees or less on the American Petroleum Institute (API) scale, corrected to 60 degrees Fahrenheit, for the last month of production before July 1979, or (2) oil from a property with a weighted average gravity of 16.0 degrees API or less, corrected to 60 degrees Fahrenheit, for the taxable period.

Tier Three Oil, Incremental Tertiary Oil.--Production in excess of a base level on a property on which a qualified tertiary recovery project (one using one of several specific

chemical, fluid or gaseous recovery methods to extract oil not recoverable using standard techniques) has been undertaken. The nonincremental oil (i.e., the amount of production up to the base level) remains in the otherwise applicable tier.

Tier Three Oil, Newly Discovered Oil.--Crude oil sold after May 31, 1979, and produced from (1) an outer continental shelf area for which the lease was entered into on or after January 1, 1979, and from which there was no production in Calendar Year 1978 or (2) an on-shore property developed after Calendar Year 1978.

Windfall Profit.--The excess of the removal price of the barrel of oil over the sum of the adjusted base price and the state severance tax adjustment.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- [1] The inflation adjustment, calculated by the Internal Revenue Service, Research Division, is published quarterly in the Internal Revenue Bulletin. (See Internal Revenue Bulletin 1985-23, June 10, 1985.)
- [2] See also Alexander, Michael, "Crude Oil Windfall Profit Tax for 1983," Statistics of Income Bulletin, Fall 1984, pp. 59-65.
- [3] At the inception of the windfall profit tax (March 1980), taxpayers were not required to complete the detail called for on the Form 6047, which shows how the tax is computed. However, taxpayers have been required to provide full information as of January 1981.
- [6] Staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation, General Explanation of the Crude Oil Windfall Profit Tax Act of 1980, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981.
- [7] See also Belal, Carol, and Clark, Phil, "Windfall Profit Tax Liability for 1980," Statistics of Income Bulletin, Fall 1981, pp. 50-54.

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Table 1.--Windfall Profit Tax Liability by Oil Tier, Tax Rate and Aggregate Components of Windfall Profit for Quarter Ending September 1984

[Money amounts are in millions of dollars]

Oil tier and tax rate	Number of barrels of oil (000's)	Removal value	Adjusted base value	State severance tax adjustment	Windfall profit	Tax liability before adjustments
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Returns with tax liability shown by oil tier and tax rate, total	638,325	16,940	12,831	192	3,917	2,382
Tier one, other than Sadlerochit oil:						
Taxed at 70 percent	262,352	7,372	4,577	110	2,685	1,853
Taxed at 50 percent	23,905	691	419	16	256	131
Tier one, Sadlerochit oil:						
Taxed at 70 percent	90,155	1,604	1,553	11	40	29
Taxed at 50 percent	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tier two oil:						
Taxed at 60 percent	57,785	1,653	1,201	23	429	244
Taxed at 30 percent	2,080	60	44	1	15	5
Tier three oil (taxed at 30 percent):						
Newly discovered oil ¹	126,819	3,695	3,315	25	355	79
Incremental tertiary oil	42,438	1,169	1,040	7	123	36
Heavy oil	32,791	694	680	(²)	14	5
Returns with total tax liability only	-	-	-	-	-	65

¹Newly discovered oil is taxed at 22.5 percent beginning in 1984.²Less than \$500,000.

NOTE: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

Table 2.--Windfall Profit Tax Liability for Returns Reporting Components of Windfall Profit by Oil Tier and Tax Rate for the Quarter Ending September 1984¹

Oil tier and tax rate	Average daily production (000's) (barrels)	Removal price	Adjusted base price	State severance tax adjustment	Windfall profit	Tax liability before adjustments
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
All returns, total	6,938	26.53	20.10	.30	6.13	3.73
Tier one, other than Sadlerochit oil:						
Taxed at 70 percent	2,852	28.09	17.44	.41	10.24	7.06
Taxed at 50 percent	260	28.92	17.53	.68	10.71	5.48
Tier one, Sadlerochit oil:						
Taxed at 70 percent	980	17.79	17.22	.12	.45	.31
Taxed at 50 percent	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tier two oil:						
Taxed at 60 percent	628	28.61	20.79	.39	7.43	4.21
Taxed at 30 percent	23	28.92	21.36	.41	7.15	2.17
Tier three oil (taxed at 30 percent):						
Newly discovered oil ²	1,378	29.13	26.14	.19	2.80	.62
Incremental tertiary oil	461	27.54	24.50	.15	2.89	.86
Heavy oil	356	21.17	20.75	-	.42	.15

¹All amounts are average dollars per barrel.²Newly discovered oil is taxed at 22.5 percent beginning in 1984.

NOTE: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

Table 3.--Windfall Profit Tax Liability by Oil Tier, Tax Rate and Aggregate Components of Windfall Profit for January - September 1984

[Money amounts are in millions of dollars]

Oil tier and tax rate	Number of barrels of oil (000's)	Removal value	Adjusted base value	State severance tax adjustment	Windfall profit	Tax liability before adjustments
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Returns with tax liability shown by oil tier and tax rate, total	1,887,403	49,802	37,202	606	11,994	7,536
Tier one, other than Sadlerochit oil:						
Taxed at 70 percent	795,741	22,479	13,797	349	8,333	5,732
Taxed at 50 percent	71,843	2,077	1,253	53	770	398
Tier one, Sadlerochit oil:						
Taxed at 70 percent	296,625	5,231	5,073	33	125	91
Taxed at 50 percent	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tier two oil:						
Taxed at 60 percent	160,300	4,587	3,317	66	1,204	679
Taxed at 30 percent	6,486	189	137	3	49	15
Tier three oil (taxed at 30 percent):						
Newly discovered oil ¹	344,245	10,093	8,886	81	1,126	254
Incremental tertiary oil	117,393	3,172	2,791	20	360	110
Heavy oil	94,953	1,975	1,948	(²)	27	14
Returns with total tax liability only	-	-	-	-	-	243

¹Newly discovered oil is taxed at 22.5 percent beginning in 1984.²Less than \$500,000.

NOTE: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

Table 4.--Windfall Profit Tax Liability for Returns Reporting Components of Windfall Profit by Oil Tier and Tax Rate for January - September 1984¹

Oil tier and tax rate	Average daily production (000's) (barrels)	Removal price	Adjusted base price	State severance tax adjustment	Windfall profit	Tax liability before adjustments
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
All returns, total	6,888	26.39	19.71	.32	6.35	3.99
Tier one, other than Sadlerochit oil:						
Taxed at 70 percent	2,904	28.25	17.34	.44	10.47	7.20
Taxed at 50 percent	262	28.91	17.44	.74	10.72	5.54
Tier one, Sadlerochit oil:						
Taxed at 70 percent	1,083	17.64	17.10	.11	.42	.31
Taxed at 50 percent	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tier two oil:						
Taxed at 60 percent	585	28.62	20.69	.41	7.51	4.24
Taxed at 30 percent	24	29.14	21.12	.46	7.55	2.31
Tier three oil (taxed at 30 percent):						
Newly discovered oil ²	1,255	29.33	25.83	.24	3.27	.74
Incremental tertiary oil	428	27.02	23.77	.17	3.07	.94
Heavy oil	347	20.80	20.52	-	.28	.15

¹All amounts are average dollars per barrel.²Newly discovered oil is taxed at 25.0 percent beginning in 1983.

NOTE: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

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Table 5.--Exempt Oil Volume by Tier and Category, Quarter Ending September 1984

[Thousands of barrels]

	Total	Tier one	Tier two	Tier three		
				Newly discovered oil	Incremental tertiary oil	Heavy oil
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Total	82,747	17,736	49,576	13,612	1,243	580
Exempt governmental interest	17,233	13,549	644	1,906	733	402
Exempt charitable interest	1,009	466	319	150	67	7
Exempt Indian oil	969	382	305	228	47	7
Exempt Alaskan oil	7,471	43	-	7,428	-	-
Exempt Royalty oil	11,550	3,296	3,793	3,900	396	165
Exempt Stripper oil	44,515	-	44,515	-	-	-

NOTE: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

Table 6.--Exempt Oil Volume by Tier and Category, January - September 1984

[Thousands of barrels]

	Total	Tier one	Tier two	Tier three		
				Newly discovered oil	Incremental tertiary oil	Heavy oil
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Total	235,264	52,942	136,619	40,840	3,179	1,684
Exempt governmental interest	51,007	40,414	2,159	5,448	1,819	1,166
Exempt charitable interest	3,025	1,413	944	489	157	22
Exempt Indian oil	3,461	1,195	1,510	624	109	23
Exempt Alaskan oil	24,806	185	73	24,547	1	-
Exempt Royalty oil	31,505	9,735	10,473	9,731	1,094	473
Exempt Stripper oil	121,460	-	121,460	-	-	-

NOTE: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.