



January 14, 2014

Distribution:

**ARKeX Ltd. and TGS-NOPEC Geophysical Company ASA Labrador Sea Gravity Gradient
Survey Commencement on Environmental Assessment**

On January 9, 2014, ARKeX Ltd. (ARKeX) and TGS-NOPEC Geophysical Company ASA (TGS), ARKeX will be the operator, submitted to the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NLOPB) a project description for a non-exclusive geophysical program utilizing gravity gradiometry. The C-NLOPB determined that the Project would require an authorization pursuant to Section 138(1) (b) of the *Canada-Newfoundland Atlantic Accord Implementation Act* and Section 134(1) (b) of the *Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Newfoundland and Labrador Act*, referred to herein as the Accord Acts.

The attached project description outlines the activities proposed for the program. A geophysical survey is proposed for 2014 with subsequent surveys proposed for following years until 2018. In either year the proponent may use a fixed wing aircraft or a small dedicated marine vessel.

The C-NLOPB has determined that your agency is in the possession of environmental or fishery related experts that are required in the completion of this assessment.

This letter seeks, pursuant to the Accord Acts, to identify the departments or agencies that may have expertise and to set a timetable for conducting the determination, and seek comments on the attached draft scoping document.

Timing of Assessment

The C-NLOPB requests that the determination be carried out in as timely a manner as possible, and propose the following schedule:

| Expertise Request | Response by January 28, 2014 |
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| Review of draft EA | Response approximately 4 to 6 weeks after receipt of document. |
| Review of revised EA or addendum, if required | Response approximately 2 weeks after receipt of document. |
| Preparation of EA determination | 3 weeks for completion (may commence during review of final EA or addendum); includes review of all drafts. |

Pursuant to the Accord Acts, the C-NLOPB requests that you review the attached information and inform the C-NLOPB by **January 28, 2014** of your determination. If you determine that you are in possession of any specialist or expert information or knowledge please advise the C-NLOPB of the nature of that information or knowledge and the person to contact for assistance by **January 28, 2014**.

If no response is received from you by the date indicated above, the C-NLOPB will assume that your department or agency is not in possession of specialist or expert information or knowledge.

Species at Risk - Section 79(1) Notification of Competent Minister

Pursuant to Section 79(1) of the *Species at Risk Act (SARA)*, the C-NLOPB hereby informs the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (the Competent Ministers) that the following Schedule 1 Species are likely to be in the project area under the jurisdiction of the C-NLOPB. A determination of the likelihood of adverse affects on these species will be undertaken during the determination process.

- Endangered: Turtle, Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*)
Whale, Blue (*Balaenoptera musculus*)
Whale, North Atlantic right (*Eubalaena glacialis*)
Gull, Ivory (*Pagophila eburnea*)
- Threatened: Wolffish, Northern (*Anarhichas denticulatus*)
Wolffish, Spotted (*Anarhichas minor*)
- Special Concern: Wolffish, Atlantic (*Anarhichas lupus*)
Whale, Fin (*Balenoptera physalus*)
Whale, Sowerby's beaked (*Mesoplodon bidens*)

If you have any questions on the attached, or wish to discuss the above, I may be reached at 709-778-1431 or via email at <dhicks@cnlopb.nl.ca>.

Yours truly,

Original signed by Darren Hicks

Darren Hicks
Environmental Analyst

Attachments

Cc D. Burley
E. Young

DISTRIBUTION:

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| Federal Agencies | |
| Mr. Jason Kelly Department of Fisheries and Oceans P. O. Box 5667 St. John's, NL A1C 5X1 | Mr. Jerry Pulchan Environment Canada Newfoundland District Office 6 Bruce Street, Mount Pearl, NL A1N 4T3 |
| Mr. Randy Decker Transport Canada P. O. Box 1300 St. John's NL A1C 5X1 | Ms. Allison Denning Health Canada Healthy Environments and Consumer Safety Branch Suite 1625, 1505 Barrington Street Halifax, NS B3J 3Y6 |
| Ms. Carol Lee Giffin National Defence P. O. Box 99000 Stn. Forces Halifax, NS B3K 5X5 | Ms. Angela Donato Natural Resources Canada 580 Booth Street, 3rd Floor Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E4 |
| Provincial Agencies | |
| Mr. Bas Cleary Department of Environment and Conservation P. O. Box 8700 St. John's, NL A1C 4J6 | Mr. Tom Dooley Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture P.O. Box 8700 St. John's, NL A1C 4J6 |
| Mr. Fred Allen Department of Natural Resources P. O. Box 8700 St. John's, NL A1C 4J6 | |
| Nunatsiavut Government | |
| Mr. Tom Sheldon P.O. Box 70 12 Sandbanks Road Nain, Labrador A0P 1L0 | |